

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

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RECEIVED OCT 25 1985

DATE ENTERED DEC 3 1985

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Yuma Main Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Yuma Downtown Postal Annex

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

370 West Third Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Yuma

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3

STATE

Arizona

CODE

04

COUNTY

Yuma

CODE

027

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	NA <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

United States Postal Service, Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

CA 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Yuma County Assessor

STREET & NUMBER

168 - 2nd Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Yuma

STATE

AZ 85364

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None Known

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE NA

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Yuma Postal Annex, originally the Main Post Office, is a two-story tile-roofed structure with a Spanish Colonial Revival influenced architectural style. The front entrance is defined by a six-column loggia. The interior has not been altered and has a tile floor and wainscotting.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building appears to be in excellent structural condition. It has not been expanded or remodeled. Both the interior and exterior of the structure are in their original condition.

Six flights of granite steps lead to a loggia which dominates the front elevation. The structure is constructed of tile covered with terra cotta and carved tufa stone. It is two stories with a full basement. The roof is tile and there is a light well which provides light to the interior second floor rooms.

Architecturally, the building has aspects of Beaux-Arts Classicism and the Spanish Colonial Revival -- styles which were most popular between 1890 and 1920. Specific features of note include the following:

- * Prominent loggia.
- * Six smooth shaft columns with Corinthian capitals.
- * The voussoirs of the column-supported arches have been accentuated with decorative moulding.
- * Two moulded belt courses separate the first and second floors.
- * Balconies with wrought iron railings.
- * Wrought iron gates over windows on the lower floor.
- * Bracketed projecting cornice with decorative panels.
- * Spanish tile roof.

The interior retains its original tile floor and wainscotting as well as furniture and light fixtures. Since it is in its original condition, the structure possesses a high degree of architectural integrity.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Built 1933

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Roy Place, Architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Yuma Postal Annex is finely executed in design and well-crafted in the use of native Arizona stone. Although constructed in the Depression Era, the building design is characteristic of the Beaux-Arts tradition that dominated federal design philosophy prior to 1930. The use of design style represents the final stage of the Beaux-Arts before the transition to the Starved Classicism. The building is imposing yet visually pleasing and is the best example of its design style in the city. Finally, it is the city's first federally constructed post office and its construction was a significant local event.

ARCHITECTURE

The Yuma Annex (former MPO) is a stately building that is imposing yet not overpowering. A monumental quality is provided by the raised entry platform and an arched loggia supported by six stone columns. The building is unusually well-crafted in its use of native Arizona stone for the facade. Examples include bas relief stylized eagles over the loggia; detailing of the loggia arches and capitals; scroll bracket supported sills; molded belt courses; and molded balconies. Ornate wrought iron window grilles and balcony railings enrich the quality of the facade.

It is important to note that the use of native stone, particularly for an entire facade, is extremely rare. Countless cities throughout the United States had lobbied for the use of stone from local quarries and most all experienced the result of Prescott's citizens: the use of local stone was rejected.

The design has strong Beaux-Arts roots and the final execution is best described as Spanish Colonial Revival. The strength of the design in the context of its use during this stage of the Depression is unusual and probably influenced by the building's architect, Roy Place. For the most part, the last of the Beaux-Arts inspired designs were concentrated in the late 1920s to the early 1930s (usually not later than 1932 to 1933). Designs subsequent to this period transitioned to efficiency and standardization in the form of Starved Classicism.

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According to the Yuma Building Survey (1978) ". . . the U.S. Post Office epitomizes the character" of the institutional architecture in Yuma, which stylistically represent the city's best architecture. Yuma's major public buildings were constructed in the decade of the 1920s and represent the Spanish Colonial Revival (City Hall and Roosevelt School); the Second Renaissance Revival (3rd Yuma County Courthouse); and Neo-classical (Fourth Avenue Junior High School). Thus, the Yuma Postal Annex is representative of an important period of public building in the community and perhaps closes the chapter of the Beaux-Arts in the city.

The building's architect, Roy Place of Tucson, was an important southern Arizona architect. Mr. Place was born in San Diego, California, on December 17, 1877. He moved to Tucson in 1917 with John Lyman, with whom he had won the design commission for the Agriculture Building on the University of Arizona Campus. In the following 20 years, Place made a significant contribution to the architectural character of the campus, designing approximately 15 major buildings. In addition to his work on the University of Arizona campus, he designed many of southern Arizona's landmark buildings including the following National Register listed buildings: Tucson's Pima County Court House and the Cochise County Court House in Bisbee. During the period in which he designed the Yuma Post Office, he was also involved in designing a large body of work for the University of Arizona. During this stage of his career he made extensive use of the Italian and Spanish Romanesque Revival forms as evidenced by his U of A buildings. Mr. Place died on September 25, 1950.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The Yuma Annex was the first federally constructed post office in the City of Yuma. The construction of the post office is also associated with a period of major public building in the city including the Yuma City Hall in 1921 and the 3rd Yuma County Court House in 1928. Thus, the three buildings are representations of three levels of government from an important era of civic building in the community. The Yuma Annex, in its representation of the federal government, also symbolizes the importance of Yuma as a growing regional center. The federal building signified permanence and stability.

The construction of the building was a major civic event, one that captured headlines in the Yuma Morning Sun. The selection of the site involved a vigorous interaction among local citizens. Efforts to secure additional appropriations on the part of local civic groups required the involvement with elected representatives in Washington. Finally, the use of native Arizona stone, resulted in the reopening of the Wickenburg quarry and the re-employment of 50 quarry and plant workers. Although not reported in the Morning Sun, it is possible that the use of the Arizona stone may have been due to the lobbying efforts of Arizona Senator Carl Hayden.

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LOCAL CONTEXT

Located on the Colorado River in the southwestern corner of the state, Yuma is the seat of Yuma County and the area's trade and cultural center. Yuma and the surrounding area has shown substantial growth since 1960 and had a 1980 population of 42,481. Agriculture, retail trade, tourism, military and manufacturing are major contributors to the local economy. The climate has also contributed to Yuma's location as a major retirement area.

The Yuma area has historically been a crossing point of the Colorado River ranging back to the days of early Spanish exploration. The predecessor of Fort Yuma (Camp Calhoun) was established on the California side of the Colorado in 1849 to provide protection to the gold seekers crossing the river on their journey to California. Louis F. Jaeger established a ferry across the river in 1850 and steamboat operations up the Colorado River were initiated in 1852. Colorado City was founded in 1854, washed away by flooding in 1862, reconstructed as Arizona City, and then renamed Yuma in 1871. The establishment of a post office at Colorado City took place on December 2, 1857 and the Yuma Post Office was officially established on October 1, 1866 with Francis Hinton as postmaster. The designation of Yuma as a county seat, U.S. port of entry and an army quartermaster depot, the establishment of the territorial prison, and completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad provided the growing community with a solid economic base by the late 1870s. Growth was relatively slow between 1870 and 1900, increasing from 1,144 in 1870 to 1,773 in 1890, then declining to 1,519 by 1900.

In the early 1900s, the community began a new phase in its economic base. The use of the Colorado River for irrigation, particularly the completion of the Laguna Dam in 1909 and the Yuma Syphon in 1914, and the resultant boom in agricultural production, contributed to a surge in growth. The 1900 population of 1,159 nearly doubled by 1910 to 2,914, then again increased substantially to 4,237 in 1920. Although the rate of growth declined, the population continued to increase to 4,892 in 1930 and 5,325 in 1940. The period between 1920 and 1930 saw an extensive redevelopment of the Main Street businesses and the construction of several major public and educational facilities. The major public buildings constructed during this decade include the Spanish Colonial Revival City Hall (1921), the Second Renaissance Revival Yuma County Courthouse--3rd (1928), the Spanish Colonial Revival influenced Roosevelt School (1926), and the Neo-Classical Fourth Avenue Junior High School (1920).

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The Yuma Annex is located at the south end of the central business district along the west side of Main Street north of the Third Street intersection. The two-story Lee Hotel (pre-dating the post office) is located immediately to the south on the northwest corner of the intersection. The Chamber of Commerce is located across Main Street to the east and commercial uses are located along Main Street to the north.

LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF THE YUMA POST OFFICE CONSTRUCTION

The site acquisition and construction of the Yuma Post Office was reported in the Yuma Morning Sun between 1931 and 1934.

The first hope for a federal building in Yuma was raised on February 1929 with the statement in a document issued by the House of Representatives that Yuma had been allocated \$50,000 out of a \$200 million authorization for new public buildings throughout the United States. Two years later, on March 3, 1931, the headlines of the Morning Sun announced to Yuma readers "Immediate Construction of Yuma Federal Building". Both the Chamber of Commerce and the Morning Sun had received telegrams from Congressman L.W. Douglas advising them that a \$190,000 appropriation had passed Congress in the last week. He also advised that as soon as a site was selected the plans would be drawn and the construction contracts let. The report added that several choice sites were available in the city. The city had an available site just east of the city for a price of \$1.00. Also, a petition had been circulated in the past week which requested that the federal building be located on Main Street.

Headlines with post office news again greeted Yuma citizens on March 15th: "U.S. Not Prejudiced on P.O. Location". David McIntyre, postmaster, had posted the request for bids the day before and the only stipulation placed on site offers was that they preferably be corner lots. The date for the opening of the bids was set for April 8th. The April 9th issue of the Morning Sun reported that 20 bids had been offered for the post office site. The city had offered two lots.

Yuma's new Masonic Temple was dedicated in April and work had begun on the army airways operations building. In May it was announced that a U.S. radio station was assured for Yuma. Also in May, low copper prices had forced the closing of the United Verde Mine in Jerome.

On May 17th it was reported that the city council was urging the selection of the city lot for the post office site. The Women of the Southwest District, Arizona Federation of Women's Clubs, in a council meeting also passed a resolution that the city lot be taken so that the entire appropriation could be used for building construction. G.A. Kirk of the Treasury Department visited Yuma on June 2nd to review the building sites that had been offered and also to inspect the new custom building in San Luis.

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A public meeting to take comments from the local citizens as to the best location for the federal building was held on June 3rd.

Headlines of June 4th indicated that the site issue had not been resolved: "Citizens Divided on Federal Building Location". Two districts were favored: "Main street versus First street for the new federal building." Apparently the two groups were evenly divided. The advantage of the First street location, offered by the city, was that it was free. The Main street locations (one at the corner of Madison Avenue and the other at the corner of Third Street) were favored because they were centrally located. However, these two and three other Main Street locations were costly, ranging in price from \$32,000 to \$90,000.

J.A. Kirk, representative of the Treasury Department, recommended that since the government was willing to spend \$190,000 on the construction of a fine federal building, it should be possible for those desiring a Main Street location to get together and purchase one of the five sites submitted or reduce the price submitted to the government. Kirk also stated that the two city sites met all the requirements except that they were on one side of the city and too far from the railroad station. There were rumors that after the meeting at the courthouse the owners of certain pieces of property on south Main Street held a meeting and would submit a low bid or make a donation in order to secure the federal building on Main Street. Postmaster McIntyre, who gave a brief talk before the public meeting, said that he had been working in connection with the Chamber of Commerce for four years to secure an appropriation for a federal building; that he hoped the people would get together at once so there would be no delay in securing a site and that he would like to see the whole or nearly all of the \$190,000 used in the building. (Thirteen more column inches were devoted to reporting the opinions of various Yuma citizens.)

The news of July 1st was that Kirk was ready to make his recommendation for the post office site. That recommendation was announced in the Morning Sun on July 5th. The site along Main Street north of the Lee Hotel was offered for \$10,000 by Mrs. A.J. Strum; the price had dropped substantially from the original offer. It was expected that work would begin in the fall.

September 30th brought bad news: the Security Trust and Savings Bank failed on Monday the 21st and was now in receivership.

Three days after the beginning of 1932 the Morning Sun presented good and bad news regarding the anticipated post office. The plans for the building had just been completed by Tucson architect Roy Place. An imposing structure in the Spanish Colonial tradition was shown in a front page sketch. The building would house the post office on the first floor and various federal offices upstairs which would include:

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Reclamation Service, Department of Agriculture Extension Service, Internal Revenue agent, and a Civil Service examination room.

The bad news was that a cloud on the title might bar work on the post office building. Apparently, certain heirs of Dave Neahr, who owned the property more than 48 years ago, had placed a claim against the site asserting that sufficient compensation for the property had never been received by the Neahr estate. Also, the abandonment of the alley that crossed the property appeared to present another obstacle. Some of the property owners would agree to vacate the alley, others would not unless compensation was received. So much for a cheap site.

On March 30th the Morning Sun ran headlines that provided relief for the post office boosters: "Clears Way For Construction of Federal Building". The city council resolved to abandon the alley improvement which allowed the government to accept the lot. It had been feared that unless the title was cleared, Yuma would lose its \$190,000 appropriation.

An article of April 14th reported that the Yuma carrot crop would bring in one-half million dollars.

Articles of August 4th and 28th reported that the law suit brought by the heirs to the post office site had been dropped and that the U.S. court cleared title to the building site.

Another year in the saga of the Yuma post office had opened. On January 26, 1933 the Morning Sun reported that the bids for construction of the post office had been opened. The news of the contract agreement was reported on February 19th. Bannister Field Company of Los Angeles won the job with a bid of \$129,000. Two days later the citizens of Yuma were informed that Arizona stone would be used for the post office. Arizona tufa, mined at the Wickenburg quarry would be used. (The citizens of Prescott had worked diligently to use tufa in their building, but were rebuffed.) The use of the stone would mean that the quarry, which had been idle for the past couple of years, would be reopened. Now the plant could be enlarged with an employment of 50 men at the quarry and plant. Apparently Arizona's esteemed Senator Carl Hayden had some influence in Washington.

At last ground was broken for the new post office on April 8th. Building contractor J.C. Bannister stated that approximately 60 men would be employed during construction and as much of the labor as possible would be locally hired. Two buildings on the site -- the 30-year-old adobe Redondo building and a frame house -- would be razed. An article of July 4th reported that a group of Yuma businessmen were requesting that a cooling system be installed in the building. Senator Henry F. Ashurst stat-

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ed that the request would be considered. July 14th brought the news that the U.S. government was planning to spend \$10 million on Arizona road projects and over 5,000 men would be employed. Concrete work was completed on the building on August 3rd. By September 9th, the new federal building was 51% complete. Architect Roy Place of Tucson was pleased with the progress of the building. The tufa stone arrived at the building site on October 25th; work now moved rapidly after having been delayed in awaiting the stone's arrival.

A milestone in the progress of the building, the cornerstone laying ceremony, was reported on November 12, 1933. The ceremony followed the annual Armistice Day parade, the marchers halting and disbanding in front of the building. The Yuma Indian band opened the ceremony; Mayor Arthur N. Kelley acted as Master of Ceremonies and introduced various dignitaries; and Herbert H. Hotchkiss, secretary to Governor B.B. Moeur, provided the main address. Hotchkiss was substituting for the Governor who had been called back to Washington. Mr. Hotchkiss, in his address, made a plea to Arizona citizens for greater unity in support of the national and state recovery programs. he also stated: "Dedication of the new building marks the passing of a milestone in Yuma's history, just as the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice marks the turning point in the nation's history, a definite upward turn due to President Roosevelt's recovery program.

Building construction progressed rapidly and the April 15th, 1934 issue of the Morning Sun announced that the post office would move to the new building the next day, but the formal opening would be delayed until final inspection the following Thursday. The efforts of local civic organizations that were initiated a year before had met with success when it was reported on May 24th that the requested cooling plant was approved. A budget of \$20,000 was established and bids would soon be let.

The close of the post office construction era brought the beginning of a new project of interest to Yuma citizens. On June 24, 1934 bids had been let for the first 31 miles of the \$27 million All-America Canal project.

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Source: Sanborn Map, Yuma Arizona, July 1927, 1934, page 6.

