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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JAN 16 1990

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Reno Main Post Office

other names/site number Reno Downtown Station

### 2. Location

street & number 50 South Virginia Street

not for publication

city, town Reno

vicinity

state Nevada

code NV

county Washoe

code 031

zip code 89501

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic U.S. Post Offices in Nevada,  
1891 - 1941

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility, meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Ronald M. Gane Deputy SHPD  
Signature of certifying official

11/3/89  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

U.S. Postal Service  
Signature of commenting or other official

1-10-90  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Amy Federman  
Signature of the Keeper

2/28/90  
Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Other: Starved Classical

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Terra cotta

roof Tar composition

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Reno Downtown Station is a three-story terra-cotta building on a raised basement platform. Relatively flat and symmetrically-arranged, the building is horizontal in elevation. Strong vertical elements, however, including nine two-story window bays anchored by massive entry salients near the corners, counter and balance the horizontal massing. Above these bays is a fretwork course which delineates the third story and its squat thirteen window bays. Eagles with outstretched wings perch permanently in terra cotta near the top of the entry salients above the third story window bays. They rest on a fluted cornice against the inward stepping parapet. Zigzag and sunburst panels in the two-story bays, decorative grilles, and other ornamental elements impart an Art Deco flavor to this Moderne building.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Reinforced concrete foundations, basement walls, floor slabs floors with steel framing provide the structural support for the building. The exterior walls are textured, light green terra-cotta blocks, with dark green terra-cotta ornamentation. Aluminum is used for the window sash, doors, and various decorative detailing. The roof is composition tile.

The building's south facade fronts along Mill Street; its north facade, which is essentially identical to the south, opens to a parking lot and the Truckee River. Both facades contain public entrances, but the north, with two entrances and the parking lot, is the primary.

Rising from the base provided by the terra-cotta-faced concrete basement platform, the three-story south and north facades are divided into three distinct sections. The central section is divided into nine window bays which extend from the basement platform into the second story. Beneath the first floor sash are plain terra-cotta panels which are fronted by metal zigzag grilles. The sash is metal and

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1934-1941

Significant Dates

Site Acq.-1932

Const.-1933

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Frederick J. DeLongchamps

Architect/Builder

DeLongchamps, Frederick J, Consulting Architect/Federal Government; McDonald Engineering Co., Chicago, Contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Reno Downtown Station is an outstanding example of a combined post office and federal office building for a medium-sized city. Designed by Frederick J. DeLongchamps, Nevada's most prolific twentieth century architect, the Art Deco/Moderne building is distinctive in its design, use of materials, and level of detail. Rigidly formal, the building projects a monumental quality that proclaims a strong federal government. The building is Reno's second federal building and replaced the city's 1909 federal building (razed). The first building represented Reno's early growth while the second represents the federal government's response to the Depression through its massive public works programs. Having been recently renovated, the building is well-preserved and essentially unaltered.

ARCHITECTURE

The Reno Downtown Station is the only example of the Art Deco/Moderne styling in a federally-constructed post office in the entire state. It is also among the best public buildings in the state in this style. Rigidly formal in its symmetry and low massing, solid in its bulk and material, and monumental in its demeanor, the building conveys the dignity and permanence of the federal government. Although the building has been stripped of major historical architectural elements, it is, nonetheless, true to its Classical roots. (This style has been termed "Starved Classical.") Detailing of the building's exterior is sparse, but effective in evoking a feel of quality and sophistication. The zigzag of the grille-work, the geometric sunbursts of the spandrels, and the eagles atop the entry salients suggest the Art Deco, yet the fretwork and reeding courses retain the historic.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

1. Reno Evening Gazette, various articles 1928-1934.
2. Rowley, William D. Reno, Hub of the Washoe Country.  
Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1984.
3. Original Floor Plans, 1932.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

USPS Facilities Service Center  
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 1.24

UTM References

A 

1	1	2	5	8	4	10	0
Zone		Easting				Northing	

4	3	7	18	5	8	10	
Zone		Easting				Northing	

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing	

Zone		Easting				Northing	

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing	

Zone		Easting				Northing	

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing	

Zone		Easting				Northing	

Quadrangle name: Reno

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is bounded on the west by South Virginia Street, on the south by Mill Street, on the east by South Center Street, and on the north by the Trukee River. (Parcel No. 11-110-01)

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property originally purchased by the federal government for the post office site.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

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divided into four sections, two square lights in the upper and two narrow vertical lights in the lower. Dark green spandrels, with a sunburst pattern, extend from the tops of the windows to the second floor windows. Also of metal sash, these windows are divided into two vertical sections by a single mullion. Bracketing and separating the bays are ten fluted terra-cotta piers which extend to the tops of the windows. In the plain terra-cotta field above the window bays are the incised letters "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE." A fretwork belt course defines the third floor level and introduces a distinctively horizontal element to the facade. Above the belt course and aligned over the first and second floor bays are the third story window bays. They are the same horizontal dimension as the lower bays, but are reduced vertically. The sash is identical in configuration and size to the second floor sash. Above the window bays is a plain terra-cotta field terminating in a decorative belt course which marks the bottom of the stepped parapet. The course consists of molded reeding with regularly-spaced tri-part moldings resting on a volute base and extending above the reeding. Above this reeded course are two plain courses, each stepping inward from the facade plane.

Flanking the central section are massive entry salients which somewhat resemble the propylons of ancient Egyptian architecture. The salients project in two steps from the facade plane and rise in one stepped course above the parapet. Rising from the basement platform in each of the salients is a single opening which extends to the same level as the central bays. Defining the opening is a plain, recessed frame and vertical courses which step inward to the door and window frames. As the salient extends above the fretwork course, it slightly narrows and then steps inward, in correspondence with the parapet, above the reeded course. Each salient contains a paired window bay which is centered between the fretwork and reeded courses of the third story. As with the other third story bays, the openings are defined by plain, recessed terra-cotta frames. A thickened terra-cotta mullion divides the metal-framed, single-light sash. The areas above the bays consist of a reeded pattern which descends from the reeded course of the parapet. Above this reeded field, and perched on the parapet, is a bas relief eagle with its wings stretching along the third parapet course. The dominating mass and crowning eagle clearly

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delineate the entry portals through which the building's visitors must pass.

Within each entry portal (the southwest salient does not have an entry) are double aluminum-framed glass doors. The exterior approaches consist of six granite steps and granite entry landings. Square terra-cotta planters flank the stairs and landings. Projecting over the entry landings are flat marquees with zigzag-patterned fasciae. Above the marquees are metal sash three-light transom windows with terra-cotta spandrels above. Zigzag-pattern metal grilles are set in front of the windows and extend from the marquees to the tops of the bays.

Outboard of the entry salients, on the same plane as the central section, are the facade corners which contain a single bay alignment. In contrast to the central section and the entry salients, the first and second floor window openings are distinct. The first floor bays, smaller than the central bays but using the same sill line, and the second floor bays, which terminate at the tops of the second floor windows, are identical in size. Unlike the third story bays in which the frames are defined, these bays are unadorned. The bays of the three floors are of the same vertical dimension, but the third floor bays are narrower. The sash is metal with only one light in each.

The west side facade fronts along Virginia Street. Divided into seven window bays, the facade is identical in material and detailing to the described central section of the north and south facades, featuring: fluted piers separating two-story bays, a fretwork course, squat third story window bays, and an inward stepping parapet defined by molded reeding course.

The eastern facade, which fronts along Center Street, is the rear of the building; it contains the loading platform. The platform is concrete and is covered by a metal marquee which is suspended by metal rods from the facade. Seven bays provide pedestrian and loading access from the workroom to the platform. The portion of the facade above the marquee is identical to the described west facade (the marquee intersects the facade approximately three feet below the top of the first floor window sash).

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The economy of exterior ornamentation is immediately discarded upon entry to the lobby. The "L"-shaped lobby is notable for its use of materials and level of detailing. From the approach through the three original vestibules to the office doors and to the decorative framing around the original post office box sections, aluminum provides the medium for elaborate sculptural detailing. Dark terrazzo floors and black marble walls provide strong contrast to the soft glow of the aluminum and accentuate the abundant ornamental detailing of the lobby.

The Reno Downtown Station is also noteworthy for having been designed by Frederick J. DeLongchamps who was a native of and practiced in Reno. Born on June 2, 1882, DeLongchamps began his architectural career in Reno in 1907 after having apprenticed in the San Francisco Bay area. He was appointed State Architect in 1919 and served intermittently until 1926 while the legislature abolished, reinstated, and again abolished the position. He became a charter member of the American Institute of Architects in 1912 and served as President of the Nevada Chapter in 1949. In addition to the Reno Post Office, he designed eight courthouses in Nevada, including those in Reno, Carson City, Yerington, Lovelock, and Winnemucca. Other works include the Riverside Hotel in Reno, several buildings at the University of Nevada in Reno, and the State of Nevada's buildings at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco and at the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. He was awarded the "Distinguished Nevadan Award" in 1966. DeLongchamps died on February 11, 1969. A state historic marker, number 242, has been placed at the southwest corner of the building to commemorate DeLongchamps. Further, a thematic nomination of his works was completed by the SHPO's office in 1986.

It is also interesting to note that DeLongchamps' 1910 Washoe County Courthouse is sited diagonally across Virginia Street from the Post Office. Both buildings are associated with Reno's early 20th century efforts to establish a civic identity in the community. They originally formed a visual anchor for the City's principal commercial artery. While both buildings are derived from the Classical, they contrast in their stylistic periods. The Courthouse, in the Beaux Arts tradition is defined by its colonnaded portico and central dome. In contrast, the Classical elements of the

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Post Office have been abstracted to create a Classical form in modern dress.

The building is of statewide significance under Criterion C as a distinctive architectural type and for possessing high artistic values in its lobby detailing. It is also significant under Criterion B, since it was designed by the state's most prominent architect to date.

## POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The Reno Downtown Station is the second of three federal post offices that have been constructed in Reno. The first, constructed in 1910, symbolized the federal government's recognition that Reno had indeed become a stable city. Then as Reno grew, the Neo-Classical building became too small and a new post office with federal offices was constructed. This building also symbolizes the federal government. Even though its origin lies in the 1920s, it is a product of the recovery programs initiated by President Hoover during the early years of the Depression. Thus, it also symbolizes the Depression era public works programs. With the completion of the new Reno Main Post Office by the airport in the mid-1970s, the city's second federal building became the Downtown Station. While with the diffusion of various federal offices to other buildings the Station has lost its function as the center of federal government in the city, the building itself, however, retains that symbolic and historic link with the federal government and the Depression era. As such, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

The building appropriation, site acquisition, and construction of the Reno Post Office were important events in the progress of the city. Various civic groups worked through Senator Tasker Oddie to gain the appropriations for the new building. Controversy and lawsuits surrounded the selection and acquisition of the site. First, protests were lodged to Senator Oddie that appropriate hearings had not been conducted nor had sufficient evidence been taken on the site that was rumored to be favored by the government (offered by George Wingfield, a major mining, banking, and political figure). Eventually the Wingfield property along with the Carnegie Library site would become the home of the new post office. In spite of a lawsuit brought by an heir of the



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library site, the city and county donated it to Uncle Sam so that the post office, which would complete the city's civic center, could be built.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Reno is in western Nevada's Washoe County and serves as the county seat. Founded in 1868 during the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad, Reno became an important transportation link with the gold and silver mines of nearby Virginia City. Reno is still an important regional distribution center, but the primary economic base is now tourism. In 1980 its population was 100,756.

Reno was founded in 1868 as a railhead for the Central Pacific Railroad. At that time the site on the Truckee Meadows consisted of clumps of sagebrush and fields of grain; virtually the only structures were a small inn and toll bridge on the Truckee River run by Myron Lake. It was this site that the Central Pacific Railroad selected for its western Nevada station. Lake sold 80 acres to the railroad, which platted the townsite on the north side of the Truckee River on April 1, 1868. The name Argenta was selected for the new town; in late April, however, its name was changed to Reno, for Virginia loyalist General Jesse Lee Reno.

On May 9, 1868 400 lots were offered at auction. Though only 70 lots sold, within a week of the auction 13 buildings had been constructed. On June 19 the Central Pacific opened from California into Reno, and the town boomed as a shipping and supply center for the surrounding region, which was rich with both mineral and agricultural assets. By the fourth of July Reno had a newspaper, "The Crescent," which moved to Reno from Washoe City. Many people also left Washoe City, as well as Carson City and nearby settlements, to relocate in Reno. By June of 1871 Reno was able to capture the Washoe County seat from Washoe City.

Reno's first official postmaster was probably Samuel M. Jamieson. Reno's 1871 city directory lists him as postmaster and includes an advertisement for his store on Reno's Commercial Row: "Dealer in Books, Stationery, Papers, Magazines, Cigars, Tobaccos, Yankee Notions." Jamieson, who arrived in Reno in 1868 from Pennsylvania, was active in civic affairs.

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Reno's boom ended with the end of the Comstock Lode boom in 1878; it became a more stable community (from 1890 to 1900 its population grew from 3,563 to 4,500) until the discovery of the Tonopah and Goldfield mining bonanzas at the turn of the century. In the early 1900s Reno developed into a center for another industry: the divorce industry. When the Nevada legislature liberalized its divorce residency requirements to six months, Reno became a popular and well-publicized temporary home for those awaiting divorces. (Reno became even more popular in 1919 when the residency requirements were reduced to three months and again in 1931 when they were reduced to six weeks.) By 1910 Reno's population had more than doubled from its 1900 population, to 10,867. Reno continued to grow, to 12,016 in 1920 to 18,529 in 1930 and to 21,317 in 1940. Growth following World War II was dramatic, as Reno developed into Nevada's financial and professional center and--with its divorce trade and legalized gambling--"The Biggest Little City in the World." Reno's population rose from 32,497 in 1950 to 51,470 in 1960 to 72,863 in 1970. By 1980 Reno's population topped the 100,000 mark, when it reached 100,756.

The Reno Downtown Station originally served as Reno's Main Post Office until the completion, in 1975, of a new Main Post Office located near the airport. The Downtown Station is in the downtown business district at the northeast corner of South Virginia and Mill Streets on the southern bank of the Truckee River. (A portion of the Downtown Station site was previously occupied by Reno's Carnegie Library, which was demolished for the construction of the post office.) The surrounding uses are primarily commercial and government office. Directly across Mill Street to the south is the modern, domed Pioneer Auditorium. The Washoe County Courthouse and the Riverside Hotel are west of the Auditorium and Downtown Station across Virginia Street. The Downtown Station, Courthouse (Neo-Classical, 1910), and Riverside Hotel (Gothic Revival, 1927) were designed by Frederick J. DeLongchamps, Nevada's most prominent architect in the 1910s - 1930s. The Mapes Hotel (Art Deco, late-1930s), which is built on the site of the original Reno Federal Building (1909), is across the Truckee River (at Virginia Street) from the Station. A parking lot is to its east. Across Center Street and to the east is a modern, eight-story hotel.

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LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE  
RENO DOWNTOWN STATION

"Postoffice Site For Reno Sought" reported the Reno Evening Gazette on July 2nd, 1928. It was explained that the Treasury Department did not intend to erect Reno's new post office on the site of its present one, and was advertising for lots. The site of the present post office on Virginia Street did not meet the Treasury Department's requirement of 38,805 square feet. It was also noted that when it was announced two years before that a new federal building would be built in Reno, it was stated the Treasury department was considering a lot on the corner of Mill and Center owned by George Wingfield, prominent Reno banker and real estate broker. The building would cost \$450,000 and \$115,000 had been authorized for a new site or a temporary post office. Reno postmaster George F. Smith had received no word regarding the site or building.

On August 2nd it was reported that three sites had been offered and the expected arrival of the site inspector was attracting interest. The Gazette concluded by noting that the old post office site was "in the heart of the business district" and was estimated to be worth \$175,000 to \$200,000. A week later the paper reported that "two high government officials," First Assistant Postmaster General John H. Bartlett and Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Carl T. Schuneman, would be inspecting the sites within the week, at the request of Senator Tasker L. Oddie. The paper explained that a year previously "a special inspector" had reported favorably on the Wingfield site, but that complaints had been made that evidence had not been taken or hearings conducted, Virginia Street business men and property owners had protested to Senator Oddie. Oddie had assured them that no final decisions would be made until all objections had been heard.

On Saturday August 11th a Gazette article reported that all those with "bona-wide suggestions" [sic] regarding the post office were invited to speak with the two government officials on Monday. They were to inspect the sites that day, along with city and county officials and Senator Oddie. "Moving of Reno Postoffice Opposed By Business Men at Hearing Today Attended by Government Officials" headlined the Gazette on Monday, August 13th. The officials had determined that

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only two sites were suitable: the site of the present Virginia Street site and a site bounded by the river and Mill, Center, and Virginia Streets. If the present site were used a four-story building would be necessary. And the second site was desirable only if the entire block, which included the library, was included. Many at the hearing were concerned about property values along Virginia Street if the post office moved. There was also protest against selling the library. The paper reported:

The hearing this morning was attended by a large group of business men who protested against moving the postoffice from the present site. There was no one present to speak in favor of the site south of the river. Both Bartlett and Schuneman asked repeatedly during the hearing if there was anyone in town who favored moving the postoffice to the new site.

It was reported that Bartlett "pictured a civic center south of the river with the new building occupying the center of the block with a park around it. He also spoke of the possibilities at some future time of moving the federal court here and said the department should plan now for this eventuality." Bartlett was quoted as saying:

"We have no private opinions or policy to follow except to do what is best for the people. There is no politics in it. I mean that. You have a very generous appropriation for a city of this size and we want to give you a good building. And I want to compliment Senator Oddie for the work he did in securing the appropriation of such a large amount for Reno."

The paper concluded by noting that Bartlett and Schuneman had "about two hundred postoffice sites to select within the next month and expect to spend a busy month doing it. They have been traveling over the entire country on missions similar to that which brought them to Reno."

An article of September 20th reported that a bill might be introduced in the next legislature directing the library trustees to convey the library property to the federal government. Previously, government officials had said they did not want to bring condemnation proceedings and library

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trustees had said they did not want to convey the property to the government. It was also reported that "several postoffice architects and engineers visited Reno recently to study the postoffice problem."

On October 17th it was reported that the "Investigators from Washington" had recommended the property at Center and Mill Street for the post office. The Riverside Realty Company (George Wingfield, President) had offered the site for \$80,000. The property had a frontage on Mill Street of 134.2 feet and extended back to the river, approximately 195 feet. The report also recommended that the adjoining 65 foot lot on Mill owned by Mrs. Owen Coughlin be purchased, but stated that the owner was asking more than it was worth (the site was occupied by a "large two-story house erected many years ago by the late George Holesworth"). The paper observed that "Nothing is said in the report, it is understood, regarding the proposed acquisition by the government of the land occupied by the Reno public library at the corner of Virginia and Mill Streets."

Over three years later, on February 18, 1932, the Gazette reported: "Postoffice Work to Begin Soon Says Smith." Postmaster Smith had received instructions that Mrs. Katherine Coughlin was to vacate her property, which the government had acquired for \$45,000 through condemnation. The Wingfield part of the property had been purchased for \$85,000 and "the old library lot was donated by the city and the county." A bill had already been introduced in the House to accept the deeds subject to easements of irrigation ditches running through the back part of the property.

An article of March 23rd described excavation plans for the building and the building itself, noting that it would occupy a 180 x 90 foot site, would be located midway and surrounded by a large lawn and trees. The structure would be steel and concrete with terra-cotta facings ("The original plans called for stone facings but these were later eliminated because of excessive cost").

"Plans Completed for Federal Structure" reported the Gazette on May 25th. A sketch of the building was published, along with the news that architect F. J. DeLongchamps plans had been approved, bids would soon be requested, and con-

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struction was to start on August 1st and take 350 days. The article described the building, predicted to be "one of the most beautiful federal structures of its kind in the country," in detail.

On July 28th it was announced that Landis & Young of Georgetown, Texas had submitted the low construction bid of \$418,000. But on August 3rd it was reported that the \$430,000 available for construction might be cut 10%, according to the provisions of the economy bill passed by the last congress, though Senator Oddie was attempting to prevent the cut. On the 17th it was reported that the cost had indeed been cut, to \$370,000; DeLongchamps had flown to Washington to confer with government officials.

Matters were further complicated when Myron C. Lake sued to gain possession of the old library property (September 8th article). Lake was an heir of the original donor of the library property, M.C. Lake, who had specified that it be used only for a park. Better news was reported on September 14th, when it was announced that the MacDonald Engineering Company of Chicago had submitted the low construction bid of \$337,088. On October 13th it was reported that the contract had been signed with MacDonald; the final bid was \$363,660, after some adjustments were made.

In other news, a banner headline of October 31st read: "Bank Holiday Declared." The Lieutenant Governor of Nevada had declared a twelve-day bank holiday because of the business and financial crisis in the state; the First National Bank, however, planned to open as usual. An article of December 31st also noted that the value of building construction in Reno in 1932 was approximately 50% of the 1931 total.

But finally, on November 14th, 1932 it was reported that ground-breaking for the post office would begin the next day. A short ceremony was planned, with Senator Oddie turning the first shovel of earth and Fred DeLongchamps and others also participating. Schools would be dismissed early and businesses had been asked to close as well. On December 21st it was reported that the Reno Chamber of Commerce was requesting that local workers and contractors be given employment on the project. It was soon reported that excavation was almost completed and that nearly all subcontracting work had been

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already awarded; local bids had been higher than others (December 30th article).

On July 18th, 1933 it was reported that Treasury officials in Washington were considering adding a fourth floor to the Reno post office; the plans had been drawn for some time and the proposal had been discussed with Senator P. A. McCarran. The paper reported that Postmaster Smith had said the cost "would not be excessive and that so many new government agencies are being created that there will be insufficient office space in the structure."

By October of 1933 the paper could report that the large, granite American eagles were being installed above the entrances to the building (October 26th). Other good news was reported on January 22nd, 1934: \$717,205.24 in CWA projects had been approved so far for Nevada, with Washoe county receiving the largest share, of \$254,079.13.

On February 21st, 1934 it was reported that William Kinnikin had replaced George Smith as Postmaster. The paper gave Smith credit for securing Reno's new post office (along with Sen. Oddie) and for assisting in planning its work rooms and lobby. The building was expected to be ready for occupancy March 1st and the old building would be occupied by the "NRA and possibly other government agencies." (On March 15th it was reported that the old post office building would house the Federal Emergency Relief Administration headquarters.)

"New Postoffice to be Opened Next Week" reported the Gazette on February 26th. "Finishing touches" on the building were being "rushed to completion." Federal agencies that would occupy the building included the U.S. weather bureau "which will occupy spacious offices on the top floor," the U.S. veterans bureau, the internal revenue bureau, and the United States attorney's office. On Saturday March 3rd several extensive articles featured Reno's new post office, which was scheduled to open on Monday. A history of the post office in Reno was given, the evolution of the new post office was detailed (the paper noting: "there was some opposition to moving the post office across the river"), four photos of the new building were published, and the building was described in detail (one article alone described the building's 70 clocks).

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The building functioned as Reno's Main Post Office until 1975 when it was replaced by a new facility near the airport. Lack of area for building and site expansion necessitated the construction of a new main office on a site large enough to provide space for a building, maneuvering and parking areas for postal vehicles and employees, and parking for customers.

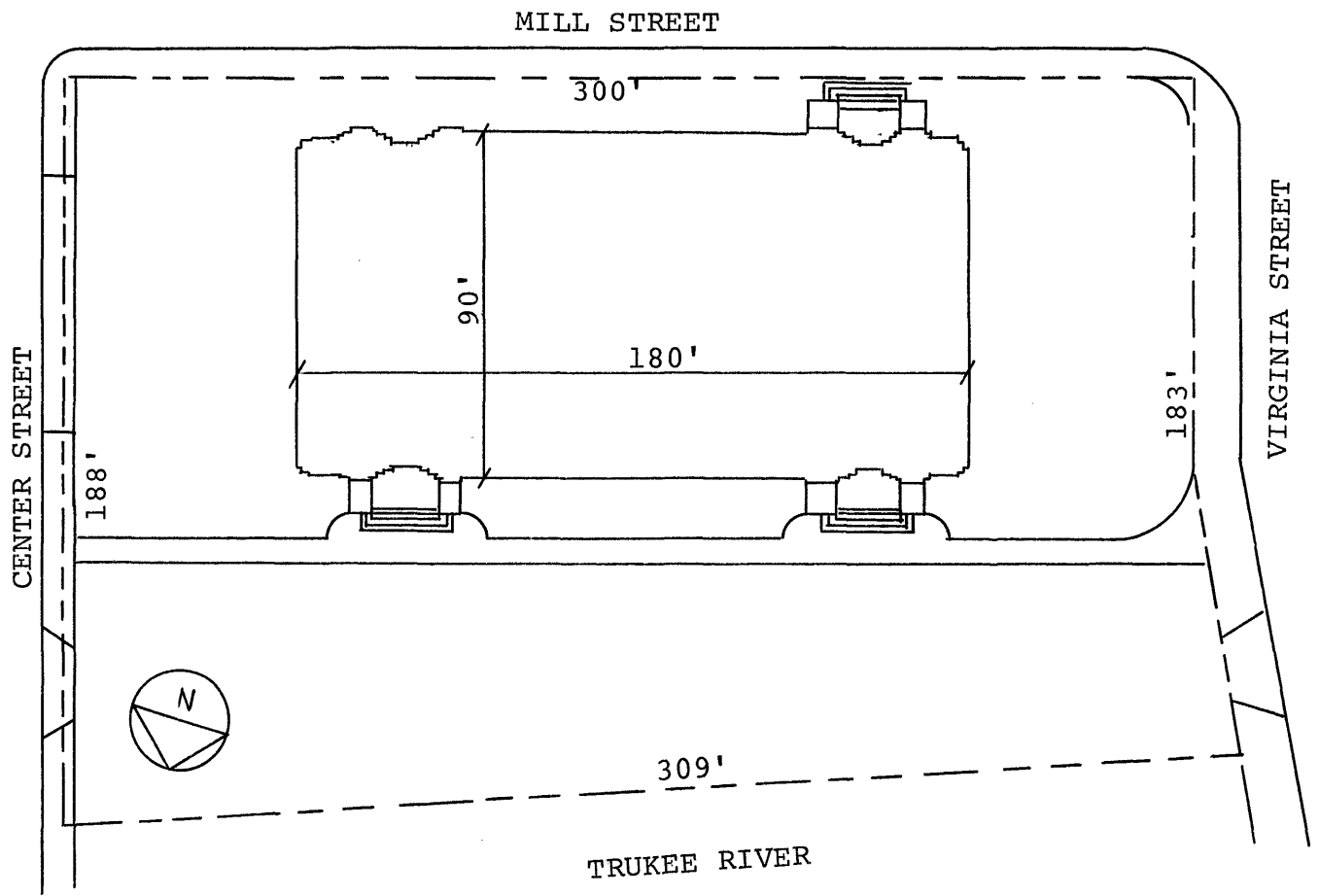
The building has retained a postal function, but as a station which provides post office box and window counter service. The work area of the main floor was extensively renovated in the mid-1980s to continue this function. The additional function as a federal office building has also changed; lack of adequate parking and competition from newer, modern buildings has resulted in a largely vacant building.



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The following information is the same for all the photographs listed:

1. Reno Downtown Station
2. Reno, Nevada
3. Jim Kolva
4. June 1988
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #2)

6. View to south

Photo No. 2 (negative #15)

6. View to northwest

Photo No. 3 (negative #20)

6. View to northeast

Photo No. 4 (negative #10)

6. Door to offices in main lobby area