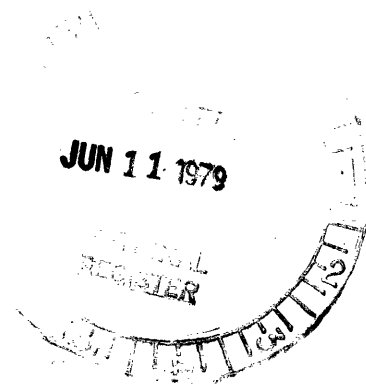


5. UNITED STATES COURT HOUSE AND POST OFFICE  
101 East Holmes Avenue

United States Postal Service  
James T. Coe, Field Supervisor, Real Estate  
Field Real Estate and Buildings Office  
Federal Annex Building, Room 418  
Atlanta, Georgia 30304



Lot 8 and East 22' of Lot 9, Block 302, Old Town; 166' (Holmes) X 169'  
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1932-35: Louis A. Simon, supervising architect  
Edgar L. Love, Huntsville, associated architect  
Miller, Martin and Lewis, Birmingham, associated architects  
Neal A. Melick, supervising engineer  
Algernon Blair, Montgomery, contractor  
1965: One-story addition on the east side

DESCRIPTION

The Court House is a three-story and basement, detached building of beige brick with a flat roof. It is a regular, symmetrical block with entrance centered in a slightly projected pavilion faced with limestone. The windows are vertically aligned while the second floor is separated from the attic by a bold limestone cornice. The top is cleanly cut; the front pavilion extends above the main mass of the building and has four shallow pilasters below the second floor cornice. The middle bays of the Jefferson street facade are also pilastered. The triple sash windows of the first floor have masonry lintels with a Greek key fret in each corner. The doorway has a shallow, tall, pedimented frame decorated at the top by three anthemions.

The federal courtroom on the second floor is decorated with a large mural painted Xavier Gonzalez that was commissioned by the WPA. He painted it on Belgium linen while he was teaching at Sophie Newcomb in New Orleans, and it was installed in 1937. The mural depicts five figures, male and female, engaged in various activities presumably representing the arts, industry, agriculture, and the family. They are abstractly placed against a landscape cut by a winding river (the Tennessee) with a large dam (TVA) on one side and plowed fields, orchards, and woodlands on the other. In the background are a cluster of buildings representing civilization and/or urban development and industry.

The courtroom itself is unchanged having shallow, fluted pilasters along the side walls below a frieze decorated with blue rectangles of gold abstract designs.

United States Court House and Post Office  
101 East Holmes Avenue  
Huntsville, Alabama

Continuation:

SIGNIFICANCE

The Huntsville Court House and Post Office was erected to replace a marvelous Romanesque Revival pile that was said to be outdated. The government approved \$200,000 for the construction of the 1932 Court House, but it was built for only \$169,000. It was probably built to a standard government design although Edgar Love, a Huntsville architect, and Miller, Martin and Lewis, a Birmingham firm, were associated architects on the project. (Love died in the Yarbrough Hotel across the street from the Court House just as it was completed and never saw the result of his last major commission.)

The Court House/Post Office is one of only two buildings in the central business district in the Neo-Classical Revival style, sparse though it is. The detailing is minimal so that the beige brick, clean lines, elevated central portion, and vertical styling of the pavilion can be interpreted as being influenced by Art Deco. Its erection during the Depression years constituted the only major building activity in the downtown. The structure also contains in excellent condition the mural painted for it by Xavier Gonzalez who still lives in New York city.

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General Services Administration Historic  
Preservation Officer

