

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 08 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 Horton United States Post Office

other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 825 1st Ave. East

not for publication

city, town Horton

vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Brown code 013 zip code 66439

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

1

Noncontributing

           buildings

           sites

           structures

           objects

1

           Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Kansas Post Offices that Contain Treasury

Department Section Artwork, 1936-1942

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.

Ramon Powers State Historic Preservation Officer

February 17, 1989

Signature of certifying official

Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

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:)

Beth Boland

10/17/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

20th Century Revival: Classical  
Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Other: Tar and gravel

other Stone: limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Horton United States Post Office (c. 1937-1938) is located at 825 1st Ave. East in Horton, Brown County, Kansas (pop. 2,130). The one story, flat roofed, red brick building has an eastern facade orientation. The building measures approximately sixty feet by sixty feet. A double door surmounted by a fanlight pierces the center of the building's facade. Steps lead up the doorway. Two pairs of large, double hung windows flank the doorway. A similar fenestration treatment is employed on the lesser elevations. This post office is an example of a smaller class C or D standardized design type that was repeated throughout the country during the 1930s.

The mural "Picnic in Kansas" was installed on the north wall of the Horton Post Office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller class C and D post offices. "Picnic in Kansas" is a tempera on canvas mural depicting a group of people, probably a large family group, picnicing in a clearing on a hot summer day. Family members sit around a wooden table in the center of the canvas. A man lies napping on the ground in front of the table. Couples frame the canvas. Groves of willow trees lead down to the rolling countryside that stretches out beyond. Evett employed a primary palette of greens, browns, and blues for "Picnic in Kansas".

"Picnic in Kansas" was installed on September 17, 1938. It measured 11' by 4' before installation and is surmounted by a cornice moulding. It was attached to the wall with white lead and Damar varnish and appears to have been varnished. In 1973 its condition was assessed as good and remains as such.

"Changing of Horses for the Pony Express" was installed on the west wall of the Horton Post Office above the post office boxes. This location is unusual in that most of the smaller class C and D type post offices only received one piece of Section artwork and that was placed above the postmaster's door. "Changing of Horses for the Pony Express" is an oil on canvas mural depicting the short lived pony express route

**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)

Art  
Politics/Government  
Social History

Period of Significance

1939  
1939  
1939

Significant Dates

1939  
1939  
1939

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Evett, Kenneth: Artist  
Simon, Louis: Supervising Architect

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

The Horton United States Post Office (c. 1937-1938) is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources nomination at the local and state levels of significance under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Treasury Department's Section program and for the artistic significance of the two murals that it contains. The murals, "Picnic in Kansas" and "Changing of Horses for the Pony Express" were painted by Colorado artist Kenneth Evett (1913 - ?) in 1938 and 1939 respectively.

"Picnic in Kansas" is a tempera on canvas mural depicting a group of people, probably a large family group, picnicing in a clearing on a hot summer day. Family members sit around a wooden table in the center of the canvas. A man lies napping on the ground in front of the table. Couples frame the canvas. Groves of willow trees lead down the rise to the rolling countryside that stretches out beyond. The picture has a Thomas Hart Benton quality to it, the swirling motion, the curves of the land and bodies, and the pictorial choices are all very sophisticated. Evett employs a primary palette of greens, browns, and blues for "Picnic in Kansas". Evett described his method of painting the mural in a 1938 questionnaire required by the Section as to first underpaint with terra verde and white, then to build the highlights in opaque and finally to glaze the shadows. Evett has selected a scene common to everyday life and through the focus and presentation of the mural raises it to represent the democratic tradition, the core and substance of the Section program. "Picnic in Kansas" is representative of the regional, social realism that was funded under the Section program.

Evett received the contract for "Picnic in Kansas" on February 9, 1938 and installed the mural on September 17, 1938. The mural was installed on the north wall of the Horton Post Office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. It measured 11' by 4' before installation and is surmounted by a cornice moulding. Evett received \$670 for the commission.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Falk, Peter Hastings. Who Was Who in American Art. (Madison, CT: Soundview Press, 1985).

General Services Administration. Treasury Department's Section Records. Horton, Kansas.

National Archives. Public Building Services (RG121), Technical Questionnaires (Series 134) and Correspondence with Artists (Series 126).

Svedlow, Dr. Anthony V. (Mulvane Gallery, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas). Personal interview with Martha Hagedorn-Krass, January 8, 1988.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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:  
Kansas State Historical Society

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 

1	5
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2	8	3	1	2	0
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4	3	9	2	8	6	7
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Zone      Easting                      Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone      Easting                      Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on Lots 7-14; Block 21, Horton, Kansas. The property is bounded to the east by 1st Ave. East, to the north by East 9th, and to the west and south by adjacent property lines.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian  
organization Kansas State Historical Society date February 17, 1989  
street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264  
city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612

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that crossed northeastern Kansas in 1860 and 1861. The action focuses on a white horse and its rider, as family members and station help gather to bid the pony express rider goodbye. The action is rigid and frozen. Evett employs a primary palette of brown, olive, and blue for the mural.

"Changing of Horses for the Pony Express" was installed on December 1, 1939. It measured 9'6" by 5' before installation and is surmounted by a cornice moulding. Evett coated the mural with a mixture of beeswax and turpentine, suggesting that pure turpentine be used to thoroughly clean the mural followed by a light application beeswax and turpentine. In 1973 the mural's condition was assessed as good and remains as such.

A varnished wooden vestibule projects into the lobby, cutting off some view of the mural "Picnic in Kansas". This is a traditional design feature found in most of the post offices included in this nomination. "Changing of Horses for the Pony Express" is clearly visible above the post office boxes. The lobby floors and wainscoting retain their original tiles. The postmaster's door, the bulletin boards, and the post office box surrounds retain their original varnish, wooden surrounds. The original hanging light fixtures have been replaced with almost flush mounted fluorescent lights.

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"Changing of Horses for the Pony Express" is an oil on canvas mural depicting the short lived pony express route that crossed northeastern Kansas in 1860 and 1861. The action focuses on a white horse and its rider, as family members and station help gather to bid the pony express rider goodbye. Evett employs a primary palette of brown, olive, and blue for the mural. The mural is in a different style from "Picnic in Kansas", its style is narrative, the action is rigid and frozen. "Changing of Horses for the Pony Express" is representative of the historically based, illustrative realism that was funded under the Section program.

Evett received the contract for "Changing of Horses for the Pony Express" on April 14, 1939 and installed the mural on December 1, 1939. The mural was installed on the west wall of the Horton Post Office lobby above the post office boxes. The mural measured 9'6" by 5' before installation and is surmounted by a cornice moulding. Evett received \$670 for the commission.

The extent of community involvement in the development of the subject material and presentation of the murals is not clear in the Horton case. Evett received the commissions as a result of an honorable mention in a Section competition. Horton and Wichita were the only two post offices in Kansas to receive more than one piece of Section artwork. The story behind Evett's double commission is not apparent but the Section did grant multiple commissions to individual artists in other states as well.

Evett, who became a Cornell University art professor, was interviewed by the Smithsonian Institution in 1954 about his work under the Section and the W.P.A. programs. Evett started painting in 1933, studying under Thomas Hart Benton in 1935 and also at various schools. He entered "practically every available competition that came along and in no time at all even though God knows we weren't ready for it, we were painting murals." Evett was responsible for the Section murals in the Caldwell, Kansas; Golden, Colorado, and Pawnee City, Nebraska post offices.

Please see the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources cover nomination for additional information.

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Trovato, Joseph. Interview with Kenneth Evett at Cornell University,  
October 10, 1964. (The Oral History Collections of Archives of American  
Art. Smithsonian Institution).