



SG-1953

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: U.S. Post Office and Court House

Other names/site number: William J. Nealon Federal Building and United States Courthouse

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 235 North Washington Avenue

City or town: Scranton State: Pennsylvania County: Lackawanna

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ___ B x C ___ D

	11/20/2017
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>U.S. General Services Administration, Federal</u>	<u>Preservation Officer</u>
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	



U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
Andrew McDonald 11/13/2017
Signature of commenting official: Date
Deputy State Historic Pres. officer PA SHPO
Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

1/4/2018
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public - Local
- Public - State
- Public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
-

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Courthouse

GOVERNMENT: Post Office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Courthouse

GOVERNMENT: Post office

GOVERNMENT: Government office

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

By the 1990s, there was a need to upgrade the facilities both to incorporate modern technology and to provide additional space needed by the courts. After extensive studies, a decision was made to renovate the 1931 building as well as build an addition to be physically connected to the existing building. The addition is comprised of an annex (the Annex) and an atrium (the Atrium) and was completed in completed in 1999. The addition is a non-contributing building. The Annex is attached to the 1931 building via the Atrium which unifies the new and the old, both symbolically and functionally. Today, the old and the new are collectively named the Williams J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse. The Atrium now serves as the primary point of access to both the 1931 building and the Annex.

Narrative Description

The U.S. Post Office and Court House was originally constructed as a post office, with space for the federal courts in the upper stories.¹ As time passed, the postal service decreased their presence in the building and the courts have greatly expanded; however, both uses are still found in the building, largely in their historic locations. The courts continue to use the upper floors and there is a branch post office on the first floor. Postal workspaces are now used for various federal office spaces, compensating for the office space in the upper stories that is now used solely for the courts.

The U.S. Post Office and Court House not only retains its original use, but also retains the historically significant features. Overall, the U.S. Post Office and Court House retains a high level of integrity of materials, design, workmanship, setting, location, association and feeling.

Exterior Description

Primary Elevations

The principal elevations, which face Washington Avenue and Linden Street, are sheathed predominantly in limestone with terracotta ornament. (Photo 1; Photo 3; Figure 1). The first floor has a smooth, dressed, grey Concord granite base that reaches to the sill of the first floor windows. The first two floors of limestone have smooth blocks with slightly recessed joints. These floors are separated from the upper two floors by a terracotta belt course and the upper floors are again smooth blocks of limestone. The belt course is decorated with a lighter glazed terracotta pattern of scrolls, cartouches and rosettes. Terracotta blocks with two alternating arabesque patterns are also found between the windows on these first two floors. The cornerstone is found on the east corner of the building, facing Washington Street. It reads:

¹ Clio Group, Inc. *Scranton Post Office and Courthouse Historic Structure Report*. (Philadelphia: Prepared for the U.S. General Services Administration by the Clio Group, Inc., 1986) Vol. I.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

A W MELLON SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
JAMES A. WETMORE ACTING SUPERVISING
ARCHITECT
1930

A plaque listing the Bill of Rights is mounted west of the cornerstone. It also states that it was donated by the Judicial Conference of the United States Committee on the Bicentennial of the Constitution, Judge Damon J. Keith, Chairman, on December 15, 1991.

The light beige matte glazed terracotta cornice is detailed with a billet-and-bead molding, dentils, and a colorful glazed frieze. The colored terracotta work includes a fret pattern underneath the dentils, and alternating lotus and rosettes in the frieze. This facing and ornament extends from the first bay of the Forest Court elevation, across the Linden Street and Washington Avenue elevations, and around the interior elevation now viewed through the annex. The building is topped with a green, glazed-tile, hipped roof; although hidden by the parapet on most elevations, the roof caps the Washington Avenue and Linden Street elevations of the building. The tile was supplied by Ludowici Celadon of Chicago. The rear wings of the building, located along Forest Court, have built-up roofs, punctuated by mechanicals. Air conditioning was added to the building in 1971, altering the roof through the intrusion of additional mechanicals; however, this is not visible from the public areas, and does not detract from the integrity of the structure.

The Washington Street elevation is eleven bays wide and the Linden Street elevation is nineteen bays wide. The windows are evenly spaced with exception to the outer bays, which are more widely spaced. The windows are steel casement, and the lower-level windows are set in a cross pattern, with two lights in each quadrant. The lower, taller, lights are the only operable sections. The end windows have only one light in each quadrant. The upper-level windows are tripartite, steel, casement windows, with two lights set side-by-side the central section. The mullions extend through the stone between the two floors, and there is a recessed panel below each of the three sections.

Facade

On the Washington Street facade, the upper stories are enhanced with fluted Corinthian columns carved of green serpentine with terracotta capitals and bases. (Figure 4.) The trachelium under the capital is elongated and decorated with polychrome glazed terracotta rosettes. A smooth-faced pilaster is found at each end of the colonnade. The capitals mirror those of the columns, using a terracotta motif of acanthus with rosettes.

Inscribed in the belt course between the upper and lower levels are the words "U.S. POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE." A flag pole is mounted on the building below the belt course. The words "WILLIAM J. NEALON FEDERAL BUILDING AND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE" are applied in metal lettering on the first course of stones above

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

the two entrances to the historic building.

Entrances

The primary entrance is centered on the Washington Avenue elevation; the Linden Street entrance is identical. The entrances consist of three sets of double doors reached by ascending stairs that rise from the street level. (Photo 4). The stairs extend several feet from the doors and handrails (added ca. 1953) flank the stairs. The concrete plinths on either side of the entranceway support delicate brass lamps. (Figure 5.) A fluted post sits upon three legs, supporting a six-sided lantern with frosted glass. The doorways are surrounded by beige matte finish terracotta ornamented with rosettes with polychrome glazed centers. Polychrome glazed terracotta rosettes decorate the upper corners of the entrances. The lintel is ornamented with a curvilinear pattern around a cartouche flanked by a block with book-matched acanthus. The interior panels are divided unevenly into three sections, each with marble centers surrounded by latticework and rosettes at each corner.

The doors are surrounded by a classical entranceway with fluted Doric pilasters topped with a simple cornice with dentils. Above this, the top light is shielded by a brass screen of five panels in an inverted imbrication. The bronze doors were crafted by the Newman Brothers of Chicago, ornamented with grilles of zinc, nickel, and aluminum. These doors were recently rehabilitated and reinstalled in 1992 after twenty-five years in storage. The top lights within the entryway include eagles holding an olive branch in one claw, and arrows in the other.

The design is similar to that of the United States seal. The eagles are flanked by parchments. The double doors each contain six symbols, three on each door, each flanked by a stylized Egyptian figure and vertically separated by a row of quatrefoils. The six symbols represent industry (mining carts), commerce (bale of wheat with a plow), exploration (ship), justice (scales), authority (military flags and cannons), and service (Pony Express rider).²

Secondary Elevations

The secondary elevations of the historic portion of the U.S. Post Office and Court House are faced with buff brick laid in an English bond pattern. A limestone belt course separates the lower two and upper two floors, and a limestone cornice crowns the building. A parapet extends from the last four bays of the Forest Court elevation across the southwest end of the building, where the roofline is higher to accommodate Courtroom 3 on the interior. The windows are identical to those on the principal elevations; the upper level windows of the elevation perpendicular to Forest Court have the same mullion extension and decorative panels of those on the façade.

² Tom Kahriger, "Resurrected Solid Bronze Doors Add Glow to Recently 'Scrubbed' Federal Building," *Scranton Times* (February 9, 1992).; Anonymous, "Richly Symbolic Portals," *Scranton Times* (April 5, 1992).

U.S. Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

Lackawanna PA

County and State

The Forest Court elevation is seventeen bays deep, while the elevation perpendicular to Forest Court is only three bays wide. The first floor of the Forest Court elevation has several loading docks, first added in 1948 and altered several times in the late-twentieth century. There is also a window in the northernmost bay and two windows in the southernmost bays. The elevation perpendicular to Forest Court has a central entrance.

Addition

The addition (Annex and Atrium) to the U.S. Post Office and Court House is a four-story reinforced masonry building clad in limestone on the facade to match the historic courthouse building. (Figure 1). The Annex was constructed in 1999 to provide room for additional courtrooms as the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania expanded in the second half of the twentieth century. The Annex holds three courtrooms, associated offices, jury rooms, and other related spaces. It matches the historic structure in massing and scale; however, it does not have the original building's level of ornamentation and is designed to stand apart as a modern structure while not detracting from the historic building. The design and pattern of windows matches the historic structure and the rear of the building is buff brick, also matching the historic block.

The Annex is joined to the historic courthouse via an open atrium (Atrium) constructed of steel and glass. This allows for a notable entrance space and the open design preserves the historic details of the original block, protecting them while making them noticeable to those who enter the building. The Atrium is now the primary entrance and circulation core; the original historic exterior elevations facing the atrium are now therefore interior elevations. Thus the main entrance to the building passes through the Atrium; the historic building is to the northeast and the modern structure is to the southwest of the entrance. The Atrium entrance is set-back from the plane of the North Washington Avenue historic façade. The stairs and bridges that delicately cross it at many levels help orient visitors within the building and provide the public, the courts, and other court functions separate access to the entire complex. (Figure 2).

The walls of the U.S. Post Office and Court House facing the Atrium are English-bond brick rather than stone; however, they do possess the high level of ornamentation common on the principal elevations. The terracotta belt course and cornice are repeated on these elevations, with terracotta ornament that matches the principal elevations present on the limestone-faced portion of the elevation. There is also a three-bay section of the southeast elevation that projects slightly from the rest of the wall and has additional ornamentation. This section is topped with a terracotta cornice, which is detailed with dentils and polychrome patterns much like that of the principal elevations. The only alteration on this secondary cornice is in the repetition of the rosettes and lotus. There are also terracotta panels topping the piers that separate the three central bays of windows.

These panels contain a similar decoration to the acanthus motif found around the entrance

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

bays; however, the scrolls surround the Pennsylvania Keystone rather than an acanthus in the two inner panels and the two outer panels have a central chevron pattern. The remaining walls on the southeast elevation are not decorated, but have occasional window openings. An entrance has been added to the fourth floor at the end of the wing in order to provide access to Courtroom 3.

Interior Description

Generally, a large percentage of the building has been altered and updated in the last twenty-five years. Most of the offices have been modernized and the layouts of the courtrooms and offices have been altered; however, efforts were made to retain character-defining features in the most significant areas, such as courtrooms and hallways. The hallways were maintained, keeping the general layout of the building, and only the interior layouts of the offices were altered. The details such as the floor tile patterns, doors, lighting, and windows were retained as well, and at times replicated in newer sections to maintain consistency. The general layout forms an "E" shape, and consists of a central hallway with offices on the exterior, marked by two light courts that extend through the third and fourth floors. There is additional office space on the interior, as well as stairwells, elevators, restrooms, mechanicals, and storage areas. The main courtroom is located in the center of the "E" on the fourth floor, and this space is utilized on other floors for mechanicals, offices, or libraries.

Basement

The basement is mostly used for mechanicals, storage, and maintenance, with minor office spaces and a gym. The walls are painted concrete block and the floors are polished cement throughout most of the spaces. The ceilings have exposed beams, and there are exposed pipes and external wiring throughout. Fluorescent lights hang from the ceiling. The spaces used for offices have dropped ceilings and are carpeted in most cases.

The elevators, two located midway along the Washington Avenue side of the building and one located midway along the Linden Street side of the building, have metal panel doors. The elevator floors are green tile with white borders, and one retains an Otis Elevator Company plaque in the center. The walls have been modernized and are covered with brushed metal.

The stairways, located adjacent to the elevators, have marble steps with green serpentine baseboards and marble wainscoting. The balustrades are painted wrought iron with alternating twisted and squared members. The handrail is wood and the newel posts are cast-iron, paneled piers with floral detail at the top of each side. The stairways, originally open, have since been closed off from the rest of the building with fire walls and doors.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

First Floor

- **Postal Work Areas**

The former postal work area has been converted into modern office space.

- **Post Office Lobby**

The post office lobby located on the first floor is the building's primary public space and is therefore the most decorative. Although the post office has reduced its presence in the building, the lobby is still largely used for its original purpose. The floors are red "fire flash" quarry tile in a basket-weave pattern framed with white marble. There are intermittent sections of green serpentine diamonds on red marble bordered by white marble. The baseboards are green serpentine, and the walls are grey "Floridene" art marble manufactured by the Johns Manville Company.

The coffered ceilings, about sixteen-feet high, have projecting beams. The crossbeams and the cornice are stenciled. The horizontal-facing sides of the beams and the cornice have a variation of a Greek fret pattern with sunbursts, while the underside of the beams have alternating designs of butterflies and rosettes separated by quartered diamonds. The fret pattern is also found on the ceiling panels, bordering inside the beams and cornice.

There are several small writing tables placed along the center of the lobby. (Figure 6). Each has a glass-topped table with scrolls on the long ends. The tabletop is set on flanking paneled pedestals. The light fixtures, similar throughout the building, are brass and frosted glass pendant lamps.

- **Linden Street Corridor**

The windows facing Linden Street are set about three feet above the floor, and reach to the ceiling. Below the windows are brass heating grates in a diamond pattern. The windows are tripartite steel casement formations with a tall middle light and a shorter upper and lower light in each of the three sections.

The current post office has adapted a former work area into a modern post office branch at the north corner of the building, near the Linden Street entrance, and separated from the historic lobby by a plate-glass partition. The entrance from Linden Street is located at the northern end of the post office lobby. The vestibule protrudes into the lobby, with windows on all sides encased in metal with enamel covering and green serpentine baseboards. The double doors are glass-over-brass panel, and have double push bars.

There are three sets of these double doors leading into the lobby. Around the top of the vestibule is a scrolled border under a brass cornice. The exit signs are also flanked by scrolls.

Across from the entrance is the original elevator, now used strictly by staff and hidden behind

U.S. Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

Lackawanna PA

County and State

wood display cases between marble piers. The elevator is surrounded by a metal frame with enamel and gold-leaf detail in the border. The doors are metal with enamel panels. The original cases for directories and bulletins can also be found in the lobby, with one next to the elevator and several others between the windows in the lobby and the Washington Street entrance.

Mailboxes are found in the Linden Street side of the post office lobby along the western walls. There are two large banks of mailboxes, set into three sections, and one single block. Above each bank is a decorative iron grille painted to resemble bronze. The grilles have twisted vertical pieces framed by scrollwork in three sections mirroring the mailbox sections. The aluminum panel between the boxes and the grille is decorated with dentils and flowers with a row of beading below. The mailboxes themselves are brass with Greek key borders. The locks feature a sunburst design with a dial in the middle that turns to the letters A-J inscribed within the sunburst. They are found in four different sizes; the smallest two types have windows to view the contents. An additional section of mailboxes is found in the center of the lobby, angled along the corner between the Linden Street and Washington Avenue corridors. It is designed to serve as a table as well as provide mailbox space.

▪ Washington Street Corridor

The central entrance from Washington Street is the primary entry into the building. The three double doors from the vestibule are the same as the Linden Street entrance: glass-over-brass panel with double push bars on the inside. This vestibule, however, extends on the exterior and is marble-faced rather than metal.

Above each entrance is a piece of decorative brass scrollwork, flanked by an acorn motif within a rectangular border. Above the decorative work is metal scrollwork with enamel like that topping the Linden Street vestibule, and an exit sign framed by scrolls. Between the doors is a brass display case, marked by the word "BULLETIN" in brass letters.

The main elevators, now blocked from public access by a large display case set in the center of the corridor, are located across from the Washington Avenue entrance. The pair of elevators is similar to the elevator off the Linden Street corridor; the doors are paneled metal with enamel and they are bordered by metal with enamel and gold leaf detail. These elevators are also surrounded by green serpentine with brass scrollwork bordering on all sides. Directly above each door is a brass floor dial and centered above the elevators is a clock surrounded with brass detail.

To the east of the elevators is a letter drop, which is posted in brass letters above the openings, as well as on a small metal sign hanging outward from the wall. The drop consists of three mail slots cut into the wall. A plaque above the slots indicates the last pick-up times.

To the east of the entrance, service windows remaining from the former post office use are located on both walls of the corridor. (Photo 6.) These windows are placed in groupings,

U.S. Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

Lackawanna PA

County and State

with two windows in the outside set and three windows in the middle set. The surrounding metalwork resembles that of the grilles above the mailboxes on the Linden Street side; wrought iron grilles are above the windows and a pressed brass border with flowers and dentils is found along the top of the windows. The windows are also decorated with a foliated border around each window and the groupings have paired borders between each set. Below each window is a metal panel and above is a top light. Each window is protected with a metal grille on the outside that can be raised and lowered. The service windows on the west wall have the hours posted in the top light. Instead of a service window, the northernmost position contains a metal panel with post office box rental fees posted on a modern sign.

Formerly, the Washington Avenue corridor ended at the south end of the post office lobby; however, the hallway has since been opened to the adjacent atrium.

Second Floor

▪ Hallways

The second floor hallways have largely been maintained; however, portions that were formerly not ornamented have been modernized. The northern and southern hallways have plaster walls with wood chair rails. Several of the office entrances have maintained or replicated the historic appearance by using wooden doors with glass upper panels and square windows flanking the doorway on one or both sides; however, the windows vary between frosted glass and the historic transparent glass and some have paneled doors with no windows. The tile floors, laid in a standard square pattern, have been maintained throughout the building although some are now covered with carpet; however, the carpet can be removed without harming the tile. On the second floor, the only portion of the hallway that was historically open to the public, and therefore ornamented, was between the Washington Avenue elevator entrance and the Linden Street elevator lobby. This area retains many of the office entrances as well as the tile floor, the green serpentine baseboards, and the marble wainscoting. Light fixtures have been replaced, and now feature modern frosted half spheres.

On the eastern wall of the second-floor hallway facing Washington Avenue is another set of service windows. These windows are wood and much simpler than the windows in the post office lobby on the first floor. There are three windows with textured glass in a single pane with a top light. The outer windows are covered with metal grilles. Recessed panels are found above each window and a simple sill is located below.

▪ Work Spaces

The offices and other workspaces of the second floor are all modern renovations to the historic floor plan and office style. These spaces were historically very plain, with unornamented plaster walls. Oak paneling and chair rails were historically only found in the offices of the senior-level staff. The walls remain covered with plaster, the floors are carpeted, and the ceilings have been dropped to hide the modern mechanicals and air conditioning. Several of the formerly open spaces have been separated into smaller offices

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

or divided by partitions. Chair rails have been placed in some of the offices for a more historic appearance, such as the District Attorney's office in the eastern corner. As mentioned above, some of the wood-and-glass doors have been retained or replicated, although it has not been completed consistently. This floor was originally used for postal workspace; as the presence of the post office declined, this space was relegated to court-related uses such as jury rooms, holding cells, and offices.

- Courtrooms

Courtrooms 5 and 6 are found on the second floor, in the center portion of the building. The spaces were converted in the historic courthouse building in the 1990s when the annex was constructed and major rehabilitations were completed in the historic building. These new courtrooms are paneled in blonde sycamore and the ceilings are coffered. The lights have been replicated from the original pendant lamps found in the historic portions of the building. The floor is carpeted, and the furnishings are blonde sycamore to match the wall panels.

- Restrooms

The restrooms have largely retained their historic appearance on all floors. Some fixtures have been replaced with modern parts due to the lack of availability of pieces that match the originals. The walls and partitions are marble, reaching about six feet in height, where the walls continue in plaster. The floors are ceramic tile and the doors of the stalls are wood paneled.

Third Floor

- Hallways

The hallways of the third floor are much like those on the second floor. They have largely been modernized with plaster walls and carpet laid over the tile. The marble wainscoting has been retained near the elevators where the walls project slightly; this is the only place wainscoting was found historically on this level. The historic doors and windows have been retained or replicated intermittently, much like those on the second floor. (See the second floor hallway description for more information.)

- Work Spaces

The offices and workspaces on the third floor are all modern. Some have open plans and others have closed office plans. The walls are plaster and the ceilings are dropped to allow for modern mechanicals. The floors are carpeted. The floor plan of the third floor has been substantially altered from the original layout. The hallway layout has been retained; however, office spaces have been significantly changed, and are all modern. This floor was historically used for workspaces and has been altered several times to accommodate various tenants.

Fourth Floor

The fourth floor retains the highest amount of architectural detail with exception to the post

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

office lobby of the first floor; however, the layout of the floor has been significantly changed. The original layout included a courtroom at the end of the southern and middle hallways, and judges' chambers in the remaining spaces; however, Courtroom 3 has been moved to the northwestern corner of the building, and judges' chambers have been added.

- Hallways

The hallways on the fourth floor have red tile floors with a white marble border and green serpentine baseboards. There are intermittent strips of green serpentine and white marble diamonds surrounded by white marble borders. The walls are plaster with cream marble wainscoting. As the ceilings are higher on the fourth floor than the second and third, the light fixtures are half-sphere pendant lamps rather than ceiling lamps. The doorways have been retained or replicated throughout, using frosted glass-and-panel wood doors with frosted glass top lights and windows.

- Judges' Chambers

There are four judge's chambers on the fourth floor, utilizing the space on the outside of the hallways. Each chamber consists of the judge's office, library, conference room, and staff office space. Only the judge's chamber in the south corner of the building retains its original appearance. This chamber has oak paneling on the walls that reaches within a foot of the wood crown molding. The walls include multiple paneled doors leading to the staff offices and the former conference room and library; however, the office layout was altered when the building was rehabilitated in the 1990s, and the oak panel doors have been retained in place but are no longer operable. The staff offices and library also reinstalled compatible finishes, and have retained their open floor plan for the most part. The rooms are carpeted and have plaster walls with wood crown moldings and baseboards. The conference room across the hall and the new hallway outside of the chambers have wood-panel wainscot. The ceilings have been covered with acoustic tiles and fluorescent lights.

The judges' chambers along the northeast and southeast walls do not retain the original finishes, architectural details, or floor plans, as the building originally had chambers for only two judges. The walls are plaster and the wood baseboards and crown moldings are the same as those in the staff rooms of the chambers described above. The floors are carpeted and the ceilings have been covered with dropped acoustical tile. There is also a wood chair rail around the walls of the judges' chambers. In the staff rooms, there are no decorative moldings. The library has full-height wood bookcases, the same in all of the judge's libraries.

The judge's chamber in the northwest corner of the building, near Courtroom 3, uses a darker wood than in the other offices. This was changed during the rehabilitation in the 1990s. The judge's chambers have the same moldings and chair rails as the other higher offices and the staff rooms have wood baseboards and crown moldings.

- Courtrooms

Courtrooms 3 and 4 are located on the fourth floor. Courtroom 3 is found at the end of the

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

north hallway. While the layout and furniture has been altered, the original finishes and architectural details of the room have been retained. The floor is carpeted and the walls are plaster with decorative oak paneling that reaches about halfway up the sixteen-foot walls. The paneling has two vertical panels about one-foot wide topped by a small carved panel with alternating cartouche and star motifs and topped with a molded cornice line. The wood doors have two rows of eight square panels. The door surround above the main entrance on the east wall extends approximately one foot above the wall paneling. Above the doorway are square insets with alternating star and flower motifs. There is a decorative cornice at the top, crowned with scrolls flanking a cartouche. The secondary entrance, with two doors flanking an American Paranzzo Marble arch, is located on the eastern wall. The marble arch stretches approximately three feet higher than the wood paneling and is set atop a pier. The marble arch is decorated with brass arabesque openwork and dentils around the perimeter. Above the arch is a brass eagle.

The large square windows sit atop brass heating grates with a diamond pattern. The coffered ceiling has recessed panels separated by decorative moldings. The light fixtures are the same style of pendant lamp as those found in the post office lobby. The furniture has been replaced, and the layout has been altered, relocating the configuration of the courtroom about ninety-degrees west so that the judge's bench is now situated in front of the main entrance rather than in front of the marble arch. The original benches for the public remain.

Courtroom 4 is similar to Courtroom 3 in many features. The original entrance to the courtroom leads from the central hallway of the fourth floor. The entrance is surrounded by decorative marble work, including a cornice and a cartouche. The gilded lettering uses the original courtroom number, stating "COURTROOM No. 1" above the paneled doorway. This entrance, and the secondary entrance across the room, both have double doors with the same wood-paneled doors described above for Courtroom 3. The secondary entrance opens into the modern atrium. It has simpler wood molded surrounds, matching the windows, and a tripartite transom.

There are two "hidden" entrances to the room as well, disguised by the wood paneling. These two entrances lead from security corridors not accessible to the public. The security corridors are steel external structures running through the light courts between the outer corridors and Courtroom 4. They have tile floors bordered by white marble, green serpentine baseboards, and windows running the length of the walls above a plaster knee wall. From the exterior, they are encased in painted steel panels matching the material of the window surrounds. The roof is of standing seam copper.

Behind the judge's bench are a decorative panel and a mural entitled "Justice with Peace and Prosperity." The decorative panel is carved wood around a plaster arch. The wood is carved into fluted pilasters with a cornice. The entablature is detailed with carved triglyphs and smooth circles in the metopes. In the middle is the United States District Court Seal executed in stained glass. Filling the space around the cornice is the mural, depicting the working man

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

of Pennsylvania. This oil painting was completed by an unknown artist soon after the building was completed in 1931. The Department of Justice seal is found in the center, as they were at the agency overseeing the district courts at that time.

Setting/Landscape

The U.S. Post Office and Court House is situated close to its surrounding streets. A sidewalk parallels the building on the street sides of the building, with two recently added planters holding trees flanking the Linden Street entrance and four planters interspersed along Washington Avenue. The U.S. Post Office and Court House is part of the center city Scranton government complex and is surrounded by civic and commercial mid- to high-rise buildings. Many of these buildings date from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, constructed during the height of Scranton's most active period of development. The U.S. Post Office and Court House forms part of a cluster of civic and commercial landmarks centered on the Lackawanna Courthouse (1881-84).³ This public square forms the center of the downtown, and includes the Board of Trade Building, the Scranton Life Insurance offices, the Mears Building, the Peoples National Bank, and the Nealon Federal Building.

Forest Court is a one-way alley running perpendicular to Linden Street at the northwest side of the building. There are six parking spots and a covered loading dock along this side of the building. At the southwest corner of the building, there are parking spaces for a few more automobiles and rear entrances to the building. A sidewalk runs alongside the southwest side of the annex, leading to ten parking spaces behind the planter and William McKinley Memorial. The William McKinley Memorial was originally erected at the corner of Washington Avenue and Linden Street in 1904, when the residents of Scranton funded the project after President McKinley's assassination. The bust was sculpted by New York artist William Cooper, and a granite base was provided by the Carlucci Brothers. The monument was moved to the middle of Washington Avenue when the federal building was constructed in 1930, and a small park was designed in the current location when the annex was constructed in 1999. The monument, now located in McKinley Plaza to the southwest of the annex, was rededicated on May 4, 2001, in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the United States Middle District Court of Pennsylvania.⁴

Alterations

The U.S. Post Office and Court House and U.S. Courthouse has undergone several alterations and restorations. Although many alterations were made to the building during the mid-twentieth century, a historic structures report was completed in the mid-1980s and much of the original detail has been restored.⁵ Additional restoration efforts and modern updates have

³ Clio Group, Inc., Vol. I.

⁴ SOS! Save Outdoor Sculpture, "Re-Dedication of the President William McKinley Monument" (Washington D.C.: SOS! Save Outdoor Sculpture, 2001).

⁵ Ibid.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

been made to the building in the early twenty-first century.⁶ The light fixtures in the post office lobby were replaced with fluorescent lamps in the 1950s,⁷ but the original hanging bronze lamps were reinstalled in the 1990s.⁸ Additionally, the brass doors were replaced with lighter aluminum doors in the 1970s⁹, however, the original doors were placed in storage and later cleaned and returned to their original location.¹⁰ The building has since regained much of its original appearance, and possesses a high level of integrity, most notably in the significant public spaces. The floor plan has been retained overall, although the interior office and workspaces have been updated and altered.

An addition was constructed to the southwest side of the building in 1999; this addition is comprised of an annex (Annex) building and an atrium (Atrium). The 1931 building is connected to the Annex by the Atrium. (Figure 3). The Atrium is an open structure that minimally affects the appearance of the historic building, while also allowing access to the interior and views of the exterior features. The Atrium entrance is set-back from the plane of the historic façade, and the Atrium now serves as the primary entrance and circulation core for the entire complex. The atrium core solved many security and air circulation problems by centralizing access and providing space for mechanical equipment. The stairs and bridges that delicately cross it at many levels help orient visitors to the building (Photo 11). The Annex/Atrium has won several awards for its design and for its integration into the historic fabric of its surroundings. The addition complements the historic structure, and succeeds in enhancing the appearance and character of the original building. It combined rehabilitation and expansion efforts into a single design and construction project. This project serves as a prototype for future construction efforts by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).¹¹

⁶ Ray Foote, Correspondence with Shauna Haas, January through April, 2007. Notes on file at A.D. Marble & Co., Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

⁷ Clio Group, Inc., Vol. I.

⁸ Ray Foote, interview.

⁹ Anonymous, "Easier Going," Scranton Times (April 5, 1992).

¹⁰ Tom Kahriger, "Resurrected Solid Bronze Doors Add Glow to Recently 'Scrubbed' Federal Building," Scranton Times (February 9, 1992).

¹¹ United States General Services Administration (GSA), "William J. Nealon Federal Building and United States Courthouse, Scranton, Pennsylvania" (Philadelphia: U.S. General Services Administration, Mid-Atlantic Region, Public Buildings Service, no date).

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1931

Significant Dates

1931 (construction)
1999 (addition)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

unknown

Architect/Builder

Wetmore, James A., Acting Supervisor Architect
Simon, Louis A., Architect

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The U.S. Post Office and Court House, located in Scranton, Pennsylvania, is significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government at the statewide and local levels and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level, both with a period of significance of 1931, the date of construction. The building is significant for its association with New Deal-area federal building construction campaigns, as well as for its notable representation of the Neo-Classical architectural style. The addition southwest of the historic 1931 building (the Annex and the Atrium), constructed in 1999, is not considered significant at this time.

With respect to Criterion A, the U.S. Post Office and Court House possesses statewide significance as the headquarters of the United States District Court of the Middle District of Pennsylvania. With respect to Criterion C, it possesses local significance as the only building in the Scranton downtown civic center constructed in the Neo-Classical architectural style popularized through federal building projects of the 1890s through the 1940s.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Areas of Significance

Politics/Government

The U.S. Post Office and Court House in Scranton, Pennsylvania, is significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government at the statewide and local levels. It occupies a prominent location in a “parade of public buildings” along Washington Avenue, the civic axis of Scranton. Most of the city and county buildings, as well as buildings in downtown Scranton, are designed in Victorian-era styles, making the Neo-Classical federal building unique yet complementary. The building’s location, at Washington Avenue and Linden Street, has been a symbol of the federal presence in Scranton since 1883, when the site was purchased for the construction of a post office (no longer extant).

The U.S. Post Office and Court House represents an important period for local and statewide politics and government. While the building was originally constructed by the postal service, the significance lies mainly in its use as a courthouse. The location of the Federal courts in Scranton, as well as their rapid expansion, provided the impetus for both the construction of the building in 1931 and the addition in 1999. The original post office at this site was constructed in 1894; however, once the Middle District of Pennsylvania was formed in 1901, the courts established offices within the post office building, and the 1894 structure was soon too small for the number of employees. An addition was completed in 1904; however the rapid growth of Scranton and the industrial towns of Western and Central Pennsylvania led to the need for more

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

space for both uses. As early as 1914, the Postmaster General requested an expansion and Representative John R. Farr put several requests before the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds for enlargement of the building. After several more requests, money was allocated for the construction of a new federal building in Scranton under the Public Buildings Act of May 25, 1926.

The U.S. Post Office and Court House is significant as a representation of the federal building campaign during the early twentieth century. The building exhibits the characteristics outlined in "Class B" of the McAdoo Classification System, a methodology for providing for construction expenditures to be made in proportion to the revenue the Federal government derived from its investment. The details of Class B in the McAdoo system are as follows:

- Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the first class with annual receipts from \$60,000 to \$800,000; valuation of adjoining property somewhat below the higher valuation of metropolitan real estate.
- Character of the Building: Limestone or sandstone facing; fireproof throughout; exterior frames and sash metal; interior frames, sash and doors wood; interior finish to exclude the more expensive woods and marbles; ornamental metal to be used only where iron is suitable; restricted ornament in public spaces.

Scranton post office receipts were reported at over \$600,000 in 1918, when the expansion was initially presented to the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds; therefore the federal building in Scranton was likely at the higher end of Class B when the project was approved.

Neo-Classical Architecture

The U.S. Post Office and Court House is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture at the local level as a good example of the Neo-Classical architectural style. The building exemplifies the Neo-Classical style through its columns, symmetry, proportions, and ornamental details, while retaining both the modest detailing and monumental massing of a government building. The color schemes and bronze ornament utilized in the exterior detail are also notable, as characteristic of the decorative designs of Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Louis A. Simon. Studies in the early twentieth century of ancient Greek culture revealed that the ornament on Greek temples was brightly painted (rather than the existing unpainted/white) and Simon's incorporation of brightly colored ornament was innovative for that time. The use of Greek motifs in exterior ornament and interior details was common in the Neo-Classical and Revival styles popular at this time.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Historical Narrative

History of Scranton, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Scranton, Pennsylvania, is the county seat of Lackawanna County, located in the northeast corner of the state. It is currently the sixth largest city in Pennsylvania, with a population of 76,415 in 2000. Scranton is the geographic and cultural center of the Lackawanna River Valley, which is located between the Pocono Mountains to the east and the Endless Mountains to the west. It is the largest city in an area of former anthracite coal mining communities. The area now known as Scranton was sparsely inhabited before the development of the coal industry in the Lackawanna Valley. The Lenape tribe initially inhabited the area before settlers from New England began to descend upon the region. The first settlers in the area were Ebenezer and Benjamin Slocum, who acquired property in an area of what was then Luzerne County around the turn of the nineteenth century, and called it Unionville. They constructed a forge and distillery, and in 1811, the first post office of Unionville was established. The name was changed to Slocum Hollow in 1816. As the anthracite and iron industries began mining in the area, two more brothers were attracted to the area: George and Selden Scranton. Around 1840, they established a forge and a firm that produced iron T-rails for the Erie Railroad in New York State. This firm was the forerunner of the Lackawanna Iron and Steel Company. The settlement once again changed its name to honor the Scrantons, and was renamed Scranton in 1850. It was shortened to Scranton the following year.¹²

Scranton remained a small town until the Delaware and Lackawanna Railroad was chartered in 1851 for the transportation of iron and coal products from the Lackawanna Valley. This dramatically transformed Scranton into a major industrial town in the region. The iron industry boomed with the newfound transportation network and attracted thousands of immigrants to the area to work in the local mines and forges. The borough of Scranton was incorporated in 1856, with the population skyrocketing to 9,000 by 1860. Several other railroads, such as the Erie Railroad, the Central Railroad of New Jersey, and the New York, Ontario, and Western Railroad, also located lines through Scranton, contributing to the success of the industrial city.¹³

The Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company (LI&CC) owned most of the downtown area of Scranton in the second half of the nineteenth century. Several mines were located beneath the downtown and the LI&CC maintained their mineral rights while selling the land above for development. Much of the land was swamp and had to be filled and graded significantly to support construction efforts. The grading of Washington Avenue between Spruce and Linden took three years due to the continual subsidence of the surface. The land across the street from the U.S. Post Office and Court House, now containing Courthouse Square, was donated by the LI&CC soon after Lackawanna County was established in 1878, but had to be filled several times before construction could begin on the County Courthouse in 1881.¹⁴

¹² Clio Group, Inc. Scranton Post Office and Courthouse Historical Structure Report (Philadelphia: Prepared for General Services Administration by the Clio Group, Inc., 1986) Vol. I.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

As the last county created in Pennsylvania, Lackawanna County was formed out of portions of Luzerne County in 1878, with Scranton designated as the county seat. The City of Scranton continued to boom in the late 1800s. The population doubled between 1880 and 1890, rising from 45,000 to 90,000 in a short amount of time. By 1888, a commercial, institutional and civic center had grown between Lackawanna Avenue and Mulberry Street, and Jefferson Street and the Lackawanna River. The People's Street Railway was established in 1886 as the first electrified system east of the Mississippi River. The railway traveled a downtown loop through Scranton when first established.¹⁵

The turn of the twentieth century brought with it continued prosperity and high-style homes were constructed in the Hill and Green Ridge sections of the city. The success of Scranton was threatened first in 1901, when the Lackawanna Steel company moved to Lackawanna, New York, where iron ore from Minnesota was easily shipped over the Great Lakes. While the city had lost the industry upon which it was founded, it managed to transition from the iron industry to the coal industry in order to maintain the local prosperity. Immigrants continued to pour into the area, and the electric passenger rail expanded even further to include sister-city Wilkes-Barre in 1905.¹⁶

By the mid-1930s, the city population continued to rise, reaching 150,000 due to the success of mining as well as the new silk textile industry. World War II was a boon for the area, increasing the demand for energy and giving one last boost to the coal industry. After World War II, alternative energy sources gained favor, causing a decrease in coal production and consequently a downturn in the local economy of Scranton and many of the other coal regions. Rail traffic decreased as well, with the Scranton passenger lines closing in 1952 and the freight traffic falling off in the 1950s. Even the trolleys of the Scranton Transit System, which gave the city its nickname of "Electric City," stopped running in 1954 in favor of buses. The effect of the industrial decline on the city was compounded when the city was severely flooded by Hurricane Diane in 1955.¹⁷

By the 1960s and 70s, most of the local industries, including the railroads, coalmines, and silk and other mills were closed. Many industries were bankrupt or moved out of the region or even the country. The area was scarred by abandoned mines, mills, and culm dumps, and the population was in a steep decline. Many of the downtown storefronts were vacated by the 1980s, and suburban shopping malls began to dominate the edges of the city.¹⁸

Today, local residents are seeing a renewed pride in their town through the efforts of the public and government to renew the city. Multiple museums, such as the Electric City Trolley Museum and the Houdini Museum have opened in the area, as has the Mall at Steamtown, in an effort to bring people back to the downtown area for shopping and culture. There has been a renewed

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

interest in the downtown buildings for use as offices, and restaurants and shops are opening. The expansion of the U.S. Post Office and Court House with the addition of the 1999 Annex and Atrium contributes to this renaissance; their location across from Courthouse Square is another sign of progress and support by public agencies.¹⁹

History of the United States Postal Service in the United States and Scranton

▪ Postal Service in the United States

The establishment of the postal service began as a means to provide communication to the colonies during the Revolutionary War. On July 26, 1775, the Second Continental Congress developed the Post Office under its first Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin. The post office was the only agency to remain intact through the Revolutionary War, the Confederacy period, and the years after the Constitution was adopted. Subsequently, the newly established federal government viewed the post office as the means for conveying knowledge of its laws and proceedings to all parts of the country.²⁰

During the postal service's early growth period, the number of post offices expanded from 75 in 1789 to 16,749 in 1849.²¹ Throughout the nineteenth century, the postal system served as the principal means of long distance communication. Postal service provided both a physical and intellectual link between great distances as the nation expanded across the continent.²² By 1820, the number of post offices and miles of post roads approximately quadrupled that of 1800.²³ Local taverns, grocery stores, coffeehouses, and inns, all focal points of community life, housed the first post offices.²⁴

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Congress established or improved postal services and facilities throughout the nation. Efforts to increase the speed and efficiency of mail delivery encouraged the growth of roads, railroads, shipping lines, and eventually airlines. The postal presence, through its sheer number, distribution, and types of services, provided tangible reminders to otherwise isolated communities of the role and ideals of the central government. Consequently, the buildings constructed for use as post offices have reflected various governmental and architectural philosophies throughout the nation.²⁵

The postal service built structures for receiving, processing, and distributing mail to provide services for the expanding population during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Rita L. Maroney, *History of the U.S. Postal Service: 1775-1982* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 3.

²¹ Ellis L. Armstrong, *History of Public Works of the United States, 1776-1945* (Chicago: American Public Works Association, 1976), 327.

²² Beth Boland, National Register of Historic Places, Bulletin 13, "How to Apply National Register Criteria to Post Offices" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1984), Section II, 1.

²³ Boland, Section II, 1.

²⁴ Maroney, 1.

²⁵ Boland, Section II, 2.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

smaller communities, a special counter in a local store served as the post office. In larger villages or towns, a separate post office building was constructed with a public service counter, workroom for mail processing, and a loading dock. Urban post offices handling large volumes of mail required larger buildings with extensive workrooms, offices, employee facilities, loading platforms, and windows or counters to serve the public. Urban post offices often shared space in federal buildings with courts and branch offices of federal agencies. The Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department oversaw the design and development of these early postal facilities.²⁶

Criteria used to determine the placement of postal offices reflected the uses of the facilities and the manner in which they were designed to function. Post offices that included other federal offices or courts were often located near other government buildings in the community. Single-function post offices built prior to the 1930s were often located on or near main transportation corridors and commercial centers, and near the railroad station to facilitate movement of mail to and from trains. Facilities constructed during the 1930s and later became more truck and auto-oriented and were located near the downtown, but perhaps a block or two from the town's main street. This made the post office easy to find, but also allowed better access to truck activity.

The modern-day United States Postal Service (USPS) was officially established as an independent federal agency on July 1, 1971, when Congress implemented the Postal Reorganization Act.²⁷

- Postal Service History in Scranton, Pennsylvania

The Scranton Post Office relocated several times during the development of the settlement in an effort to maintain a convenient location. It was first located near the iron works in 1850; moved to Amsden's block three years later; to Throops' Building in 1854; and then to Fuller's Drug Store near Lackawanna and Penn streets in 1855. In 1864, the post office moved to 310 Lackawanna Avenue, and in 1865, to Center and Penn streets. When the City of Scranton was chartered in 1866, the Scranton Post Office annexed the Hyde Park and Providence post offices. This expansion warranted another relocation, to Wyoming Avenue, and then to Penn and Spruce streets, and finally to the current location at Washington Avenue and Linden Street in 1894.²⁸

The site at Washington Avenue and Linden Street was selected based on a variety of factors. Although it did not provide convenient access to the railroads, it was chosen for its vicinity to the business, government, and passenger transportation centers, as well as the availability of the land for purchase. The site at Washington Avenue and Linden Street was purchased by the federal government in 1883 from Charles P. Cogswell for \$35,000, and the coal and mineral rights were acquired from the LI&CC. The building, however, was not completed until 1894.²⁹

²⁶ Maroney, 5.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Clio Group, Inc., Vol. I.

²⁹ Ibid.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

The first post office at the site of the current U.S. Post Office and Court House was a Second-Empire-style building, designed by Philadelphia architect James H. Windrim; however, it was almost immediately determined to be too small for the federal government's needs. The growth of the post office was compounded by the establishment of the United States Middle District Federal Court in Pennsylvania, and officials desired a location in Scranton for the court's headquarters. The building was expanded in 1904 to provide additional space for the courts and post office; however, the expansion proved inadequate within a decade, sparking discussions of the construction of a new building to house both the post office and the federal courts. The Second-Empire building was demolished and a new federal building (the current U.S. Post Office and Court House) was constructed between 1930 and 1931 on its site at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Linden Street.³⁰

History of the United States District Court and the Middle District of Pennsylvania

- The Federal Judiciary

The federal judiciary was organized in 1789 with the formation of thirteen judicial districts that served as the basic organizational unit of the federal courts. These thirteen districts coincided with the thirteen original states of the Union. The federal court system is made up of the district, appeals, and supreme courts. The United States District Court was created to serve primarily as the federal trial court for admiralty and maritime cases, although they also occasionally tried civil and criminal cases. A district judge was appointed for each district and given the power to appoint a clerk to assist in the administration of the district and circuit courts. The President of the United States was also authorized at this time to appoint a marshal and federal prosecutor (district attorney) for each district. While the court's jurisdiction was limited to cases arising within their district, the judges also served on the United States Circuit Court that met in each judicial district. In the nineteenth century, during the early days of the court system, district judges were likely to devote more of their time to their circuit court duties than to the district courts; however, over the nineteenth century, the jurisdiction of the district courts expanded, especially in the area of non-capital criminal cases.³¹

In 1911, Congress abolished the Circuit Courts, making the United States District Courts the sole trial courts of the federal judiciary. Officials created district courts as new states entered the Union. As areas became more populated, and districts became busier, individual states were divided into multiple districts.³²

Today, there are 91 United States District Courts in the states, District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The United States District Courts are responsible for civil and criminal cases regarding a complaint based on federal law, in which the United States government is either a plaintiff or a

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Federal Judicial Center, "The U.S. District Courts and the Federal Judiciary," Federal Judicial Center website, accessed January 30, 2007, www.fjc.gov/history/hfc/hfc01.html.

³² Ibid.

U.S. Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

Lackawanna PA

County and State

defendant, the jurisdiction is maritime, or the plaintiff and the defendant live in different states or countries and the amount in controversy is more than \$75,000.³³

▪ The Middle District of Pennsylvania

The Eastern and Western Districts of Pennsylvania subdivided in 1901, establishing the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. The courts held their first session in Harrisburg on May 1, 1901, with temporary accommodations. When created, the Middle District had jurisdiction over 32 counties with only one judge. Since then, only one county has been added to the district, but five more positions have been created, with the final judgeship added in 1990. The creation of the Middle District was initiated in 1824, when the Western District of Pennsylvania began holding two sessions a year in Williamsport, in order to accommodate the growing caseload in that part of the state. These sessions were moved to Scranton in 1886. As industry and railroads developed in central Pennsylvania, the need for more sessions closer to the area grew. Thus, the Middle District was created in 1901.³⁴

The permanent location for the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania was placed in Scranton ca. 1904 in the expanded post office building at Linden Street and Washington Avenue (no longer extant). The courts quickly expanded beyond the capacity of that building, and the existing building was constructed to accommodate the growth in 1931.³⁵ There are currently four federal courthouses in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, one each in Scranton, Harrisburg, Williamsport, and Wilkes-Barre.³⁶

The Federal Judiciary recently became one of the most rapidly expanding institutions within the United States Government. Their role is becoming increasingly complex and visible, and caseloads have multiplied in the last forty years. This is largely because of changes in American culture and the laws of the country, which have broadened the role of the courts and placed much demand on the system.³⁷

The Middle District of Pennsylvania is one of the most effective and productive District Courts in the nation. In 2000, the district had the circuit's highest number of weighted filings, cases terminated, and trials completed per judgeship. They also had the second fastest median time from filing to trial in civil cases. Since 1985, the court consistently maintained a median time from filing to deposition in civil cases below the national average. The court has consistently led the circuit for efficient use of jurors, ranking first or second twelve times between 1985 and 2000.³⁸

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, "1901-2001, A Centennial Celebration" (Scranton, Pennsylvania: United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, 2001).

³⁵ Clio Group, Inc., Vol. I.

³⁶ "Centennial Celebration," op cit.

³⁷ Judge William J. Nealon. Personal interview with the Shauna Haas (January 31, 2007. Notes on file at A.D. Marble & Co., Conshohocken, Pennsylvania).

³⁸ United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

The Office of the Supervising Architect and the Public Works Administration (PWA)

The Office of the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department was responsible for the construction of federal buildings throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From 1895 to 1933, the office reported to the Treasury Department. In the 1920s, the office of the Supervising Architect was divided into a Technical Branch and an Administrative Branch. The Technical Branch included a division responsible for project costs and accounting; a drafting division, including a superintendent who greatly influenced design practices; a structural division; a mechanical engineering division; and a repairs division. In 1933, the Treasury Department was reorganized and the Office of the Supervising Architect was shifted to the Procurement Branch of the Division of Public Works of the Treasury. In July 1939, the public buildings program was removed from the Treasury Department and merged into the Federal Works Agency, Public Buildings Administration. In 1949, Congress established the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), and the new agency assumed responsibility for public buildings.³⁹

▪ James A. Wetmore 1912-1913 and 1915-1934

James A. Wetmore served as Acting Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department from 1912 to 1913 and again from 1915 to 1934, the period during which the U.S. Post Office and Court House was designed and constructed. In his first appointment, Wetmore succeeded James Knox Taylor, who served as the supervising architect for the Treasury from 1897 to 1912. Taylor, who was inspired by the Columbian Exposition and the City Beautiful movement, directed a return to Classicism for federal design during his tenure. This federal preference continued well into the 1920s and 1930s. Wetmore temporarily served as acting supervising architect immediately following Taylor's departure, until Oscar Wenderoth, supervising architect from 1912 to 1915, could conclude his private work in New York City and relocate to Washington, D.C. Wetmore then resumed his role in 1915 following Wenderoth's resignation.⁴⁰

James A. Wetmore was educated as a lawyer and served as head of the Treasury's Law and Records Division under both James Knox Taylor and Oscar Wenderoth. Wetmore's administrative background greatly affected his approach to the role of acting supervising architect. He was predominantly concerned with directing architectural policy within the treasury due to his extensive experience in administration and his lack of architectural training. Wetmore reportedly left the architectural design tasks of the position to his staff, but had "an uncanny facility for knowing the intent and purpose of the architectural and engineering actions of his organization." Although Wetmore retained the word "acting" in his title for his entire

³⁹ Lois A. Craig, et al., *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United States Government Building* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1978), 438.

⁴⁰ Louis Melius, *The American Postal Service: History of the Postal Service from the Earliest Time* (Washington, D.C.: Louis Melius, 1917), 32-33; Antoinette J. Lee, *Architects to the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 215-222.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

tenure in respect for practicing department architects, he served the supervising architect's roles for longer than any of his predecessors.⁴¹

- The McAdoo Classification System

During Wetmore's tenure, the U.S. Treasury Department adopted a formal classification system of building types known as the McAdoo Classification System. A significant development, the Public Buildings Act of 1913 authorized the construction of a large number of public buildings and created an economic standard by which to judge which communities could get new post offices and which would not. The act also called for the development of standardized designs and design components and created a Public Buildings Commission chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury, William McAdoo. The commission focused on issues related to the efficient design and construction of federal postal facilities. The commission agreed that monumental architecture should be reserved for larger cities, while smaller communities should get more utilitarian facilities.⁴² The commission submitted a report to Congress on its findings in 1914, and a year later, the recommendations morphed into a new federal building policy known as the McAdoo Classification System, which used the level of annual postal receipts to determine the "character" of the building in terms of the costliness of building materials and ornamentation.⁴³

Wetmore praised the McAdoo Classification System in 1916 as a way to "provide a rational system of uniformity and business economy in designing and constructing federal buildings, suitable in each instance to the public needs, and without calling for waste in Government money." Wetmore acknowledged after six years of implementation, however, that buildings required separate sets of drawings and specifications due to variations in function, location, topography, available materials, and Congressional cost limits. The McAdoo Classification System fell out of formal use by the 1930s, as less stringent guidelines were developed that took into consideration the above-listed factors as well as local architectural traditions.⁴⁴

World War I and the Public Buildings Act of 1926

World War I brought the work of the supervising architect's office to a halt due to the financial, industrial, and transportation resources strain that it placed on the country. The only buildings constructed during this period were those required for wartime use and those already under construction. New building construction commenced by 1922; however, the postponement of many projects authorized by the Public Buildings Act of 1913 and a backlog of new building requests necessitated the development of a major public building program. This resulted in the passage of a new Public Buildings Act on May 25, 1926.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Lee, 222-223, 237.

⁴² Melius, 35-37.

⁴³ Boland, Appendix E.

⁴⁴ Lee, 226, 262-263.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 231-232, 239.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

The Public Buildings Act of 1926 contained three principal provisions. First, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General were directed to conduct a nationwide survey to determine the need for postal facilities with the intent that new facilities would be based upon need rather than political influence. Secondly, the supervising architect's office was permitted to consult private architects in "special cases." The staff of the supervising architect had previously handled all projects, since James Knox Taylor decided in 1904 to effectively bar private architects from federal construction projects. Finally, the act provided for the continuation of building-design standardization.⁴⁶

The building-needs survey resulted in the following:

- Doubling the \$100 million previously allocated through the act of 1926;
- The construction of at least two new buildings per state; and
- No buildings constructed in towns where postal receipts were less than \$10,000.⁴⁷

President Herbert Hoover worked with Congress to increase allocations for the building program in both 1930 and 1931 as the nation suffered the impacts of the Great Depression; however, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Administration substantially expanded the program.⁴⁸

The Great Depression and the Reorganization of the Treasury Department

The building industry began to suffer from the stock market crash of 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression in the early 1930s. Using provisions of the Public Buildings Act of 1926, officials promoted employment within the building trades. Congress passed an amendment to the 1926 act, known as the Keys-Elliott Bill, in 1930 to provide "increased authority to the secretary of the treasury to enter into contracts with private architects for full professional services." Despite this directive, the Office of the Supervising Architect, still under Wetmore's direction, only considered hiring private architects for large projects due to concerns related to efficiency. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) objected to the Treasury Department's implementation of the amendment to the 1926 act and petitioned for the reorganization of the Supervising Architect's Office.

The AIA hoped that the office would serve only a supervisory function, allowing wider employment of private architects and resulting in greater diversity, vitality, and regional appropriateness in federal architecture. The President's Emergency Committee for Employment and members of Congress echoed the AIA's concerns, particularly regarding the need to employ local private architects. H.R. 6197, known as the Green Bill, was introduced in Congress in 1932 in an attempt to place all federal building design in the hands of private architects; however, the legislation did not pass. The AIA continued its campaign following the election of

⁴⁶ Melius, 40-41.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Boland, Section II, 3.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the appointment of new officials to the Treasury Department, including Treasury Secretary William H. Wooden.⁴⁹

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 6166, which reorganized the federal building program and promised unemployment relief, was announced in June 1933. The order resulted in the creation of the Procurement Division within the Treasury Department, the transfer of the Supervising Architect's Office to the Procurement Division, and the change in name of the Supervising Architect's Office to the Public Works Branch. W.E. Reynolds, Assistant Director of the Procurement Division, was put in charge of five units headed by the supervising engineer, the supervising architect, the office manager, the chairman of the board of award, and the chief of the legal section.⁵⁰

New relief funding programs were initiated to allocate and supplement funding for public works simultaneously with the Treasury Department reorganization. Harold L. Ickes, the federal emergency administrator of public works, allocated funds to the Treasury Department for the construction of federal buildings under the provisions of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, including two allotments in August 1933 in the amounts of \$6,971,648 and \$13,799,550, as well as additional funds for emergency construction projects throughout the country.⁵¹

Public Works Administration, 1933-1939

Although public works spending as a means to aiding recovery from the Great Depression began under the Hoover Administration, Roosevelt's New Deal is credited with using the federal building program to achieve relief. These efforts were formalized in 1933, when the Public Works Administration (PWA) was organized to give structure to the recovery effort.

The PWA oversaw the planning and construction of federal and non-federal public works projects. The PWA focused on federal projects such as post offices. To stimulate the economic recovery, the government rapidly expanded its public works program. This provided work for the unemployed, many of whom were in the building trades. The Bureau of Labor Statistics maintained statistics on employment, wages, cost of materials, and other PWA project data. During the 1930s, the number of public buildings constructed increased dramatically.⁵²

Because of the planning already completed under the 1926 legislation, these projects were able to start up quickly. Post office construction increased nearly threefold during this period compared to the previous fifty years; the PWA built 406 post offices in the years from 1933 to 1939. This number represents more than one-eighth of the total 3,174 PWA construction projects built. Congress authorized a number of New Deal programs that were used to fund the construction of post offices. In addition, funds for post office construction came from the relief program authorized by the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of July 21, 1932; the

⁴⁹ Lee, 248-252.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 253.

⁵¹ Ibid., 254.

⁵² Armstrong, 254.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Emergency Construction Program under the Appropriation Act of June 1934; and the Building Program for the District of Columbia, authorized by the Act of 1926. The Treasury Department retained responsibility for post office construction funding until 1939, utilizing a number of different programs and authorizations to fund the program.⁵³

These post offices were among the most familiar government buildings to the general public. Despite the desire to complete projects rapidly, the PWA also stressed the importance of high quality in order to ensure “public works of an enduring character and lasting benefits.”⁵⁴ The program’s goals were to construct buildings as quickly as possible and to employ as many people as possible at efficient costs. The standardized design practice of the 1915 McAdoo Classification System was well suited to this high-speed, efficient process. Any drawing that did not have to be produced moved a project faster. Avoiding construction problems caused by design changes or incorrect plans also helped. Simplified ornamentation meant less drawing time. While facade variations were allowed, standardized interior plans were well established and utilized. A publication entitled “Instructions to Private Architects Engaged on Public Building Work under the Jurisdiction of the Treasury Department” listed these standards. The most commonly used styles were the Colonial-Revival style or Stripped Classical, a simplified classical style mixing modern and classical elements. All of the styles can be characterized by symmetrical massing and plain surfaces.⁵⁵

▪ Louis A. Simon, 1935-1941

In 1935, Louis A. Simon, at the age of sixty-six, succeeded James A. Wetmore as the Supervising Architect.⁵⁶ At the time of his appointment, Simon had worked for the Office of the Supervising Architect for almost four decades and was well known to the architectural community. During his tenure in the office during the late 1920s, he designed the U.S. Post Office and Court House. Furthermore, the 1933 reorganization of the federal architecture program placed the newly named Public Works Branch at a lower level within the U.S. Department of the Treasury than the old Office of the Supervising Architect had previously enjoyed; however, Louis Simon retained control over the architectural design of the federal buildings designed within his office. Simon served as the Supervising Architect from 1935 until 1941.

Louis A. Simon was born in Baltimore in 1867 and received his education from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After an extended tour throughout Europe, he opened an architectural office in Baltimore in 1894. Two years later, Edward A. Crane hired Simon to work in the Office of the Supervising Architect, where Simon spent the rest of his working career.⁵⁷

⁵³ Armstrong, 327.

⁵⁴ Boland, Section II, 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Section II, 4.

⁵⁶ Lee, 258.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon (1935-1941) favored classical styles of architecture, and this was reflected in designs developed in his tenure, although many of the postal buildings were greatly influenced by the new interest in modernism. Simon predominately utilized the Simplified Classical style (also known as the Stripped Classical style) that blended modern and classical elements, characterized by symmetrical massing and relatively plain surfaces.⁵⁸

The influence of Louis Simon is initially noted during James Wetmore's tenure, as Simon was the principal architectural designer during Wetmore's term. Simon designed many buildings during this time, although Wetmore was credited on the cornerstones. Upon Simon's retirement in 1941, the Federal Architect praised Simon for his leadership and insistence on quality designs.

Louis A. Simon will have a thousand or more buildings throughout the land, some bearing his name, some not, which are tokens of his architectural ability. Words concerning that ability are relatively ineffectual. It is the buildings themselves, which are the best commentary of his judgment and his service to the country.⁵⁹

From PWA to GSA, 1939-1954

Post office construction under PWA programs continued until 1942, when the American entry into World War II virtually halted all building activity. The few facilities finished in the years 1942-1943 were completions of old projects. The styles of architecture remained the same, as did the supervising architect's commitment to standardized design.

After World War II, federal architectural activities were well diffused throughout military and civilian agencies. In 1949, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) subsumed the Federal Works Agency, including its public building design function. With the Public Buildings Act of 1949, the Office of the Supervising Architect increasingly relied on private architectural firms to carry out public building designs. The Office continued to provide standard designs and guidelines for post office buildings; however, the nature of the buildings adhered to the new philosophy of modern architecture that "form follows function." Consequently, the federal government sought utilitarian post office designs with no extraneous features, such as exterior entrance steps. Furthermore, new post offices contained clean lines and standardized designs for lobby windows, counters, postal boxes, and letter drops.⁶⁰

In 1954, all exclusively post office projects were removed from the GSA and transferred to the United States Post Office Department. The GSA retained holdings over non-military federal buildings, including those that combined post offices with other federal functions.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Lee, 260.

⁵⁹ As quoted in Lee, 280.

⁶⁰ Boland, Section II.

⁶¹ Ibid.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Neo-Classical Architectural Style

The most popular architectural styles found in federal building design from the late 1890s to the early 1940s included Richardsonian Romanesque, Beaux Arts, Neo-Classical, Renaissance Revival, Art Deco, Stripped Classical, Art Moderne, International, and the sub-groups of the period revival styles popular during the 1920s through the 1940s. These revival styles include design elements and massing associated with or borrowed from the Colonial Revival, Greek Revival, Federal, Georgian, and Spanish Revival styles.⁶²

There has been no study of the distribution of major federal building styles in the United States. Additionally, a review of historic research materials does not reveal a deliberate policy on the part of Supervising Architect to choose designs to match regional tastes of types of construction; however, some designs to reflect local preferences styles and materials. During Louis A. Simon's tenure as Supervising Architect (1935-1941), classical styles generally prevailed as the most common federal building style, although Simon commonly added modern abstractions to the classic elements.

Neo-Classicism is one of the most common styles for public buildings in the early twentieth century. Inspired by the 1893 Columbian Exhibition in Chicago and the 1901 Pan-American Exhibition in San Francisco, classical elements were revived in the early 1900s. They were especially popular in civic structures due to the monumentality of the design. Neo-Classical public buildings were commonly built of stone, with a symmetrical plan and a reliance on Greek and Roman inspired Classical forms, such as porticos, pilasters, pediments and Classical-order columns.

U.S. Post Office and Court House, 1931-present

Despite the expansion of the former post office and courthouse in Scranton in 1904, within ten years, officials determined that a larger facility would be required to meet citizen's needs. The request was first made in 1918 by Representative John R. Farr for another expansion project on the site of the post office. By this time, the federal building in Scranton was ranked eighth on the Secretary of the Treasury's emergency list of forty-five buildings in need of funding; however, no action was taken, and the request was renewed in 1923 by Congressman Lawrence H. Watres. At this time, the preference was to construct on a new site and sell the old post office. Again, the request was denied. However, the Public Buildings Act of May 25, 1926 gave a potential new method to fund the construction of a new or enlarged building described previously.

Only two weeks passed between the passage of the act and the appropriation of \$2.5 million for a new federal building in Scranton. A Scranton Times article on October 25, 1929, announced the designs for the new post office as "Italian Renaissance Architecture," including pink granite up to the first-floor windows, and limestone above the granite reaching to the cornice. The article described other potential features of the proposed design. The cornice was to be of terra cotta

⁶² Boland: Section III, 3-5.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

with colored ornamentation and the roof was to be covered with green tile. A most “novel feature,” there were to be two-story engaged columns of Mankato Stone with variously colored capitals. The entrances were to be constructed of stone and terra cotta with bronze and aluminum ornamental panels in the doors “representing various endeavors of people of Pennsylvania.” The first and second floors were to be designed with tile and marble floors, marble and plaster walls, and ornamental plaster ceilings with stenciled decoration. All door openings would be of marble with bronze decoration. The fourth floor courtrooms were to have stencil work, ornamental plaster ceilings, and wood paneled walls. The building would be constructed of steel and concrete, with walls of terra cotta clad in brick and stone.

While multiple sites were considered, the U.S. Treasury Department settled on purchasing the site adjacent to the existing post office, which at that time contained the Scranton Railway Company’s car barn. The post office relocated temporarily to the First National Bank Building and the old post office was demolished in 1930.

Groundbreaking ceremonies took place on May 20, 1930. The dedication ceremonies for the current U.S. Post Office and Courthouse building in Scranton were held on October 19, 1931. The tenants were not only the post office and the Middle District Courts, but also the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Army and Navy recruiters.

Minor maintenance work, repairs, and the alteration of the loading zones on the Forest Court elevations were conducted over the years. The first substantial alterations to the federal building took place in 1958 and 1959, when fluorescent lights were installed throughout the building. In 1965, the elevators were converted to automatic and acoustical ceilings were added to the building. Air conditioning was installed in 1971, which included alterations to the roof as well as multiple interior spaces for the associated ductwork and mechanicals.⁶³

In 1981, after many years of trying to adjust to the growing postal service demands, the Scranton Post Office decided to move out of the building. The same year, the USPS sold the building to GSA. However, the USPS maintains their presence in the building with a small branch, moving the main offices to Stafford Avenue. The IRS and Social Security Administration took over the postal space a few years later, necessitating the alteration of the workspace floor plans. At the same time, a historic structures report was completed for the building, initiating the restoration of the building’s historically significant features. This resulted in the removal of paint from the brass fixtures, railings and flagpoles, the re-hanging of the chandeliers, the restoration of the original doors, and the overall rehabilitation and restoration of damaged or worn materials within the building.⁶⁴

The building was named after Judge William J. Nealon after the construction of the modern atrium (Atrium) and annex (Annex), completed in 1999. Nealon was appointed as a district judge in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy, and remains in practice as a senior judge. William

⁶³ Ibid, Vol. I

⁶⁴ Ibid.; Judge Richard P. Conaboy, Personal interview with Shauna Haas (Notes on file at A.D. Marble & Co., Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.)

U.S. Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

Lackawanna PA

County and State

Nealon received his B.S. in economics from Villanova University, and his J.D. from the Catholic University of America in 1950. He was admitted to the Pennsylvania bar in 1951, beginning his law career in Scranton with the firm of Kennedy, O'Brien and O'Brien. He was first appointed to the Lackawanna County Court of Common Pleas in 1960, before receiving his federal appointment. He was Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania between 1976 and 1989. In addition to his duties as a judge, Nealon also lectured on business and labor law at the University of Scranton between 1951 and 1959, and received an honorary Doctor of Laws (L.L.D.) degree from the university in 1975.⁶⁵

The non-contributing Annex and Atrium (1999) were sympathetically built and abut the original building. The Annex, with its Atrium, was designed to form an integrated facility that allows for contiguous circulation and enhances the functionality of the space needs of the Courts and other federal agencies. In designing the exterior of the new Annex, careful attention was paid to the existing building's façade both in proportions and materials.

Honors awarded for the design of the addition include:

- GSA Design Awards, On the boards Citation, 1999
- GSA Design Awards, Architecture Citation, 2000
- Building Stone Institute Tucker Award for excellence in the use of exterior stone, 1999
- Pennsylvania AIA Merit Award for excellence in design, 2000
- Scranton Chamber of Commerce Pride in Progress Award.⁶⁶

Significance and Integrity

The U.S. Post Office and Court House is significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government at the statewide and local levels and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level, both with a period of significance of 1931, the date of construction. The building is significant for its association with New Deal-area federal building construction campaigns, as well as for its notable representation of the Neo-Classical architectural style. The Annex and the Atrium, constructed in 1999, is not considered significant at this time.

With respect to Criterion A, the U.S. Post Office and Court House possesses statewide significance as the headquarters of the United States District Court of the Middle District of Pennsylvania. With respect to Criterion C, it possesses local significance as the only building in the Scranton downtown civic center constructed in the Neo-Classical architectural style popularized through federal building projects of the 1890s through the 1940s.

The U.S. Post Office and Court House retains sufficient historical integrity necessary to deem it eligible for listing in the National Register. The 1931 building retains integrity with respect design, materials, and workmanship despite the construction of a loading dock area

⁶⁵ William J. Nealon, telephone interview.

⁶⁶ Ray Foote, correspondence.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

and the Annex/Atrium. Interior alterations have been limited to new interior finishes such as carpeting, acoustic-tile drop ceilings, and inset fluorescent lighting primarily in the non-public work areas, and/or have been executed in character with the historic appearance of the building.

The building retains its original location and setting; and while the adjacent properties have changed somewhat over the years, they have generally maintained consistent massing, scale, and use. The commercial and office building formerly to the west of the 1931 building has been demolished and the Annex has been constructed, and a parking garage has replaced what is assumed to have been another office/commercial building to the east; however, the significant components of the setting, such as Courthouse Square and other civic buildings, remain largely intact.

Integrity of association and feeling has been retained through the continued use of the building for a post office and courthouse. While the lobby on the first floor is no longer used for post office services, the windows, mailboxes and other related details remain, portraying the use of the building historically for those purposes.

The building's retention of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, and association culminates in the building's retention of feeling as a 1931 post office and courthouse erected in the Neo- Classical architectural style.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

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U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

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Conaboy, Richard P. Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Personal interview with Shauna Haas, 24 January 2007. Notes on file at A.D. Marble & Company, Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

Foote, Ray. U.S. General Services Administration, Building Manager for the William J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse. Correspondence and personal interviews with Shauna Haas, January through April 2007. Notes on file at A.D. Marble & Company, Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

Nealon, William J. Judge, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Telephone interview with Shauna Haas, 31 January 2007. Notes on file at A.D. Marble & Company, Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

Maps

United States Geological Survey. "Scranton Quadrangle, Pennsylvania-Lackawanna Co., 7.5-Minute Series." 2016.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: General Services Administration

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.0

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 41.4083874 Longitude: -75.6632611
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 18 | Easting: 3444550 | Northing: 4584154 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The U.S. Post Office and Court House is bounded by Forrest Court at the northwest; Linden Street at the northeast; and North Washington at the southeast. It is abutted at the southwest by the 1999 Atrium and Annex.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the U.S. Post Office and Court House includes both the property associated with the historic 1931 building and the non-contributing 1999 addition, as these two buildings now function as one.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

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Additional Documentation

- **Maps:** USGS map (7.5 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** with photograph key for exterior images.
- **Additional items:** "Supplemental Information: Color Photographs" compilation of color images captioned Figures 1 through 8.

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:	U.S. Post Office and Court House
City or Vicinity:	Scranton
County:	Lackawanna County
State:	Pennsylvania
Name of Photographer:	Shauna J. Haas (interior) and Philip Pendleton (exterior)
Date of Photographs:	January 2007
Location of Original Digital Files:	A.D. Marble & Company 375 E. Elm Street, Suite 200 Conshohocken, PA 19428

NOTE: All photographs accurately portray the building as of September 2017.

Photo # 1 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0001)
Southeast (façade) and northeast (side) elevations; view facing west along Linden Street.

Photo # 2 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0002)
Northeast (side) and northwest (rear) elevations; view facing south

Photo # 3 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0003)
Façade of Courthouse Annex (background, left) and Courthouse (right); view facing northwest.

Photo # 4 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0004)
Main entrance to Courthouse from Washington Avenue; view facing northwest.

Photo # 5 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0005)
Linden Street corridor of the post office lobby; view facing southeast.

Photo # 6 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0006)
Post office lobby teller windows on the north wall of the Washington Avenue corridor, showing main elevator in background, left; view facing west.

Photo # 7 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0007)

U.S. Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Lackawanna PA
County and State

Typical example of historic corridor—note tile floors, marble wainscot and baseboards, and side lights and transoms at office entrances; view facing northeast

Photo # 8 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0008)
Courtroom No. 3—note ornamentation around the judge’s entrance; view facing north.

Photo # 9 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0009)
Courtroom No. 4—note mural, “Justice with Peace and Prosperity,” located behind the judge’s bench; view facing south

Photo # 10 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0010)
Typical example of historic judge’s chambers; view facing west

Photo # 11 (PA_Lackawanna County_US Post Office and Court House_0012)
Interior of modern atrium, showing the exterior walls of the Forest Court wing of the historic courthouse building; view facing northwest

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Supplemental Information: Color Photographs

Historic Name: U.S. Post Office and Court House

Other names: William J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse

Location: 235 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA



Figure 1. Exterior, view looking northwest, of southeast façade showing 1931 building, right; 1999 atrium, center; and 1999 annex, left.



Figure 2. Interior, view looking northwest into atrium, with 1931 building on right and 1999 annex on left.

*Photographs by Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc. / GSA, 2008.
All photographs accurately portray the building as of September 2017.*

Supplemental Information: Color Photographs

Historic Name: U.S. Post Office and Court House

Other names: William J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse

Location: 235 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA



Figure 3. Exterior, view looking northwest, of southeast façade showing 1931 building.



Figure 4. Exterior, view looking northwest, at southeast façade, detail of columns.

Supplemental Information: Color Photographs

Historic Name: U.S. Post Office and Court House

Other names: William J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse

Location: 235 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA



Figure 5. Exterior, detail of lamp at southeast façade.

Supplemental Information: Color Photographs

Historic Name: U.S. Post Office and Court House

Other names: William J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse

Location: 235 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA



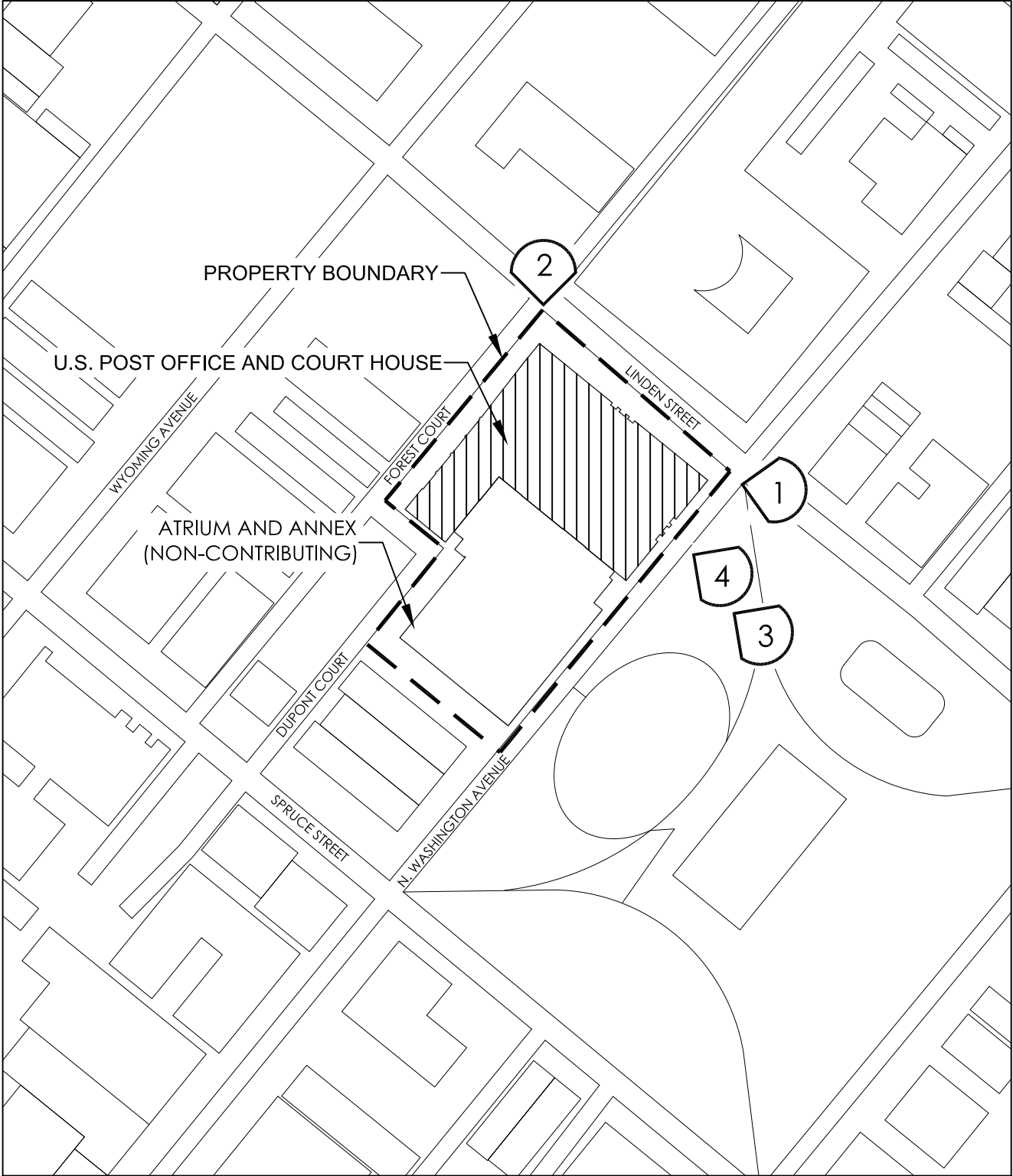
Figure 6. Interior, post office detail.



Figure 7. Interior, representative courtroom door.



Figure 8. Interior, representative interior corridor.

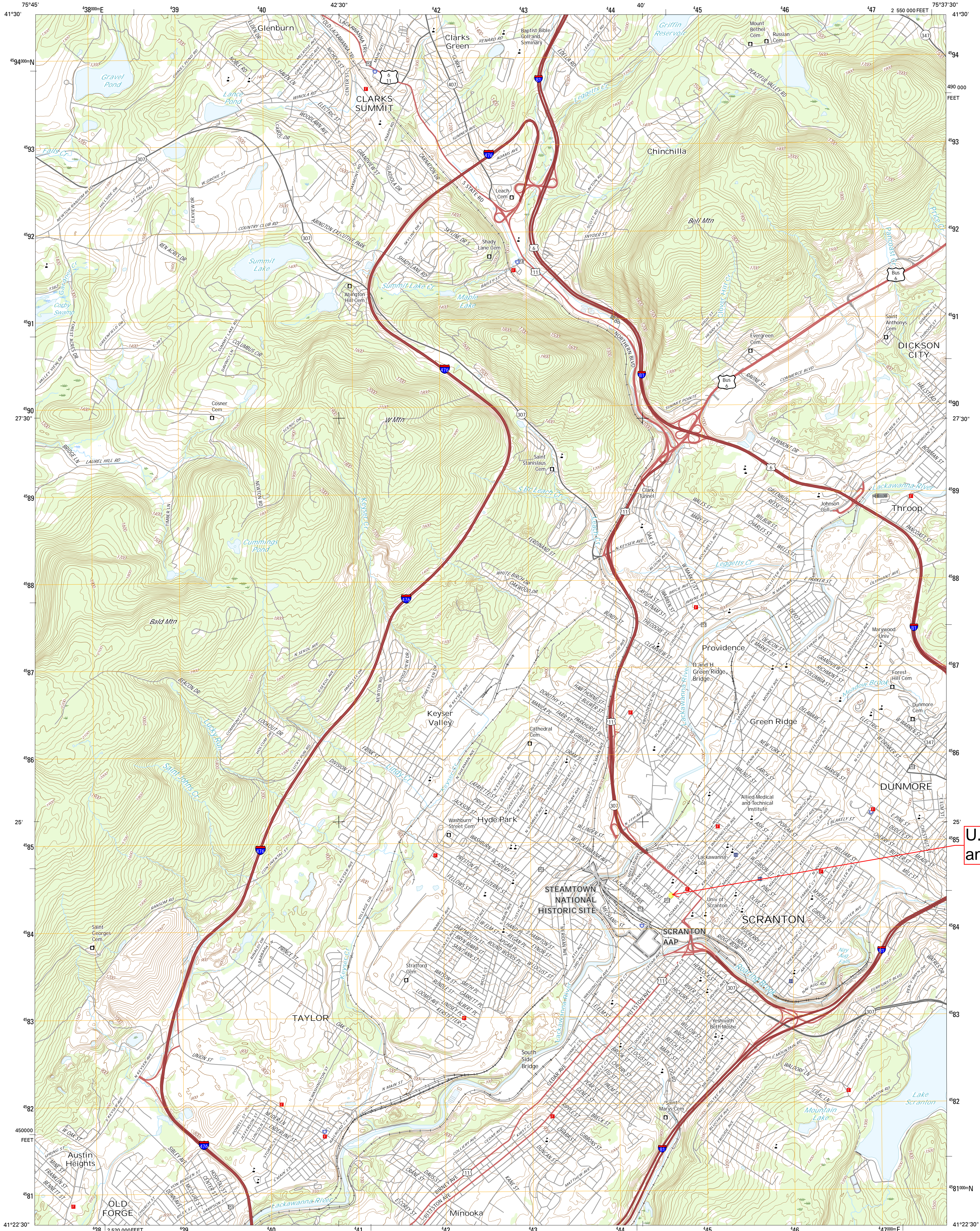


SCALE 1" = 150'
SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS 2017

UTM ZONE 18 EASTING 3444550 NORTHING 4584154
 LATITUDE 41.4083874 LONGITUDE -75.6632611

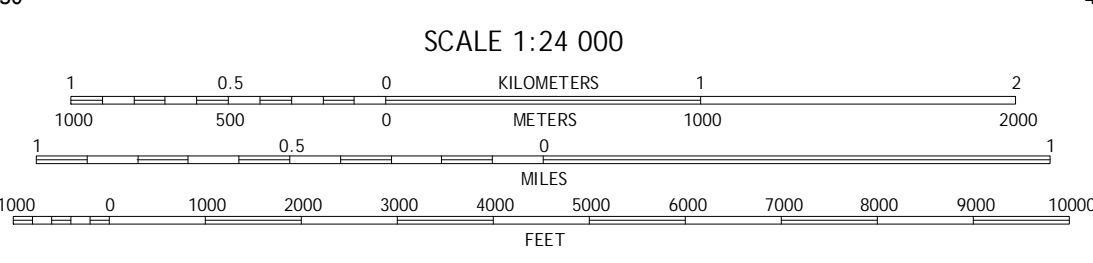
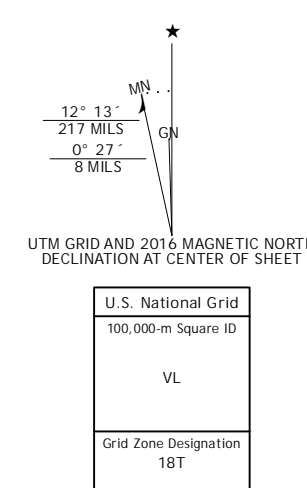
U.S. POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE
 LACKAWANNA COUNTY, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA
 SKETCH MAP and
 PHOTOGRAPH KEY FOR EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Prepared September 26, 2017



U.S. Post Office and Court House

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and
1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 18T
10 000-foot ticks: Pennsylvania Coordinate System of 1983
(north zone)
This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be
generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before
entering private lands.
Imagery: NADIP, June 2013
Roads: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 - 2016
Names: GNSI, 2016
Hydrography: National Hydrography Dataset, 2013
Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 2000
Boundaries: Multiple sources; see metadata file 1972 - 2016
Wetlands: FWS National Wetlands Inventory 1977 - 2014



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Expressway	Local Connector
Secondary Hwy	Local Road
Ramp	4WD
Interstate Route	US Route
	State Route

ADJOINING QUADRANGLES

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

1 Factoryville
2 Dalton
3 Carbondale
4 Ransom
5 Olyphant
6 Pittston
7 Avoca
8 Moscow

SCRANTON, PA
2016









U · S · P O S T O F F I C E A N D C O U R T H O U S E

WILLIAM J. NEALON FEDERAL BUILDING AND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE







1077

NOTICE
DO NOT FORGET
TO PAY A
BOX RENT
IF YOU ARE
USING THE SERVICE
FOR THE FIRST
TIME. SEE THE
POST OFFICE
FOR MORE
DETAILS.

EXIT











UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: U.S. Post Office and Court House

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: PENNSYLVANIA, Lackawanna

Date Received: 11/20/2017 Date of Pending List: 12/15/2017 Date of 16th Day: 1/2/2018 Date of 45th Day: 1/4/2018 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100001953

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 1/4/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: _____

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept, National Register Criteria A and C.

Reviewer Patrick Andrus Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2218 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



November 20, 2017



Mr. Paul Loether
Chief, NRHP & NHL Program
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to nominate the U.S. Post Office and Court House (current name: William J. Nealon Federal Building and United States Courthouse) located at 235 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination is hereby submitted on disk in accordance with the May 6, 2013, guidance and includes the following:

- Signed original first pages of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form;
- Disk 1 - The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the U.S. Post Office and Court House, located in Scranton, PA, to the National Register of Historic Place; and
- Disk 2 – The enclosed disk contains the .tiff image files for the above referenced nomination.

The nomination reflects extensive review by the PA Historic Preservation Office and the PA State Historic Preservation Officer has concurred that the property meets the National Register criteria for listing. In accordance with 36 CFR Part 60.9(c), the appropriate local elected official was notified of GSA's intent to nominate the above referenced property to the National Register of Historic Places.

If for any reason any nomination package that GSA submits needs to be returned, please contact us and we will be pleased to pick it up as items returned to our offices via regular mail are irradiated and the materials severely damaged. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this nomination package, please contact Claire Hosker at claire.hosker@gsa.gov or (202) 501-1578.

Sincerely,

Beth L. Savage
Federal Preservation Officer
Director, Center for Historic Buildings

Enclosures

cc: Donna Andrews, Regional Historic Preservation Officer, GSA, Mid-Atlantic Region