

PH0281948

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 22 1976
DATE ENTERED	MAR 26 1976

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**

U.S. Post Office Building

AND/OR COMMON

Federal Building Building - United States Courthouse

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

908 Alabama Avenue

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Selma

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Seventh

STATE

Alabama

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

COUNTY
Dallas

CODE

047

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 AGENCY General Services Administration - Public Buildings Service

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Region 4

STREET & NUMBER

1776 Peachtree Street

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta 30309

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dallas County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

105 Lauderdale Street

CITY, TOWN

Selma

STATE

Alabama

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The United States Federal Building, originally the U.S. Post Office, was completed in 1909 from plans by James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury 1897-1912. The building is located at the southwest corner of Alabama Avenue and Lauderdale Street. Three storeys above grade, the original building rests on a full basement and measures 97 feet 10 inches by 61 feet 9 inches. In 1928 a one storey addition without a cellar was constructed to the south of the building. It measures 40 feet by approximately 68 feet. The original building has five bays on the north and south facades and four on the east and west facades. The building is articulated by a three bay pavilion on the north (principal) facade and two one bay end pavilions on the rear facade. A free-standing memorial arch, constructed in 1909, stands on the sidewalk in front of the entrance to the building.

The original building was constructed of brick bearing walls in Flemish bond and steel interior columns and beams. The building's basement and first storey are sheathed in stone up to the first storey sill course. The remainder of the first storey is sheathed in terra cotta with deep banded rustication. The central pavilion, entablature, and ornamentation are of terra cotta. The remainder of the building is sheathed in cream color brick.

The building is divided into three zones -- the stone basement and first storey which function as the visual basement, the second and third storeys which serve as the piano nobile, and the parapet. The offset, with a torus molding around the building, serves as the sill course for the first storey, which has banded rustication. A molding and belt course which imply an entablature separate the first storey from the second. The base of the piers and pilasters defining each bay are articulated in terra cotta and join a broad band of terra cotta, which is the base for the brickwork on all four facades. The building's cornice is Ionic. The balustrated parapet is composed of alternating balusters and paneled piers which reverberate the projections and recesses below.

Each first storey window in the two outermost bays consists of two one over one double-hung sash units surmounted by a one light transom and a paneled keystone. In the outermost bays of the building, the window area of the second and third storeys is doubly recessed; the transition between the first and second recess is corbeled at the top. The second storey windows have wrought iron balcony railings flanked by plinth blocks. A segmentally arched architrave with a paneled keystone enframes two one over one double-hung sash windows and a curved transom light. Enframed by a molded architrave with a faceted keystone, each twin one over one double-hung sash window on the third storey surmounts a shaped apron.

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The outer two bays of the pavilion have first storey windows identical to those of the outermost bays. A segmentally arched entrance with double doors and an arched transom light is approached by a curvilinear staircase flanked by plinths supporting cast metal post lamps. The doorway is surmounted by a paneled keystone. On the second and third storeys, the three bays of the pavilion are defined by four two storey pilasters whose bases are the height of the balconies. They are freely adapted Corinthian pilasters with capitals formed by acanthus leaves and cabled fluting, and surmounted by a rosette on the abacus. The shafts are paneled. Between the pilasters are three apertures, each flanked by recessed piers from which spring a molded arch with a console-like keystone. The flanking second storey windows have a balustraded balcony railing. Over the central entrance is a balustraded audience balcony flanked by paneled piers and supported by two consoles connected by a rinceau molding. The glazing of each bay consists of twin double-hung sash units surmounted by a single transom light set within a shouldered architrave. The frieze is embellished by a guilloche molding and terminated by consoles which support a cornice with a dentil molding. Surmounting the cornice is a louvred oculus set within a surround decorated with reed and ribbon banding.

The east and west facades of the building are almost identical. Each of the four bays on each facade is identical to the outermost bays of the principal facade. A fire escape is in front of the two southernmost windows of the west facade, and the second first storey window from the south on the east facade is filled in to accommodate a small window. The rear (south) facade contains five bays, the outermost two of which function as pavilions. The pavilion bays are identical to the outer bays of the principal facade, except the third storey windows with altered sash. The lower unit is replaced by a horizontally hung one light casement and the upper unit is replaced by twin vertically hung one light casements. The first storey of the central three bays is blocked by the 1928 addition. The second and third storey windows are also identical to those of the pavilion, but without any ornamentation. The lower unit of the third storey windows has been replaced by a horizontally hung one light casement. The upper half of the windows is filled by twin one light casements. To the east of the third storey windows of the central recess is a deeply recessed small window. Although the building's terra cotta architrave continues on the central bays, the frieze is of brick, there are no modillions, the cornice is shallower, and the parapet is no longer balustraded, the

Selma, Alabama

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recessed areas being filled in with brick.

The addition is of stone; its cornice continues the cornice of the first storey of the original building. The parapet is of solid stone, the height of the base of the piers of the original building. The three windows on the southern facade of the addition and the two windows of each side are composed of twenty-four fixed lights arranged in three vertical groups of eight.

The original character of the interior of the first storey has been lost by alterations made in converting it to office space. The original stairway with its cast and wrought iron railing has been enclosed by fire walls and doors, thereby losing its significance to the space. Although the ceilings have been furred with acoustical tile, the lobby and courtroom on the second storey retain most of their original plaster cornices, wood doors, and trim.

Selma, Alabama

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Federal Building reflects James Knox Taylor's mannered use of the classical vocabulary to create a building at once undulating and in repose.

Its massing, material, and wealth of ornamentation mark the building as an imposing statement of the Federal presence in Selma. The monumental arch was erected at the time of the original construction as a memorial to two Alabama Senators, John Tyler Morgan (1824-1907) and Edmund Winston Pettus (1821-1907), both of whom were active in securing federal appropriations for Alabama. Senator Morgan is buried in Selma.

The Federal Building gained local significance as the Post Office ~~gained local significance as the Post Office~~ for Selma for over fifty years. It still serves as the Federal Courthouse. Occupying a prominent site across from the county courthouse, the Federal Building reflects the importance, respect, and craftsmanship accorded Federal Buildings in the early twentieth century.

