



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Albion United States Post Office
other names/site number B002-004

2. Location

street & number 310 West Church Street N/A not for publication
city, town Albion N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Boone code 011 zip code 68620

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>3</u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>4</u>	<u> </u> objects
			<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Nebraska Post Offices Which Contain Section Artwork (1938-1942)
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Bob Paschen DSHPS 4/2/92
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

Entered in the National Register
Shelene Byers 5/11/92
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

SW

Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Albion United States Post Office is located at the northwest corner of Church and 3rd Streets at the north edge of the business district in Albion, the Boone County seat in north-central Nebraska (1990 population: 1,916). The one-story flat roofed, red brick building with simple Colonial Revival details is a typical example of a small Class C or D post office built from standardized plans in the 1930's. The nomination includes three contributing objects: two ornamental lamp posts located on either side of the main entrance, and a flag pole.

The post office, measuring approximately 60 X 58 feet, exhibits a five bay composition and strict symmetry in its design. The building's simple Colonial Revival details include a raised central entry topped with a brick segmental arch with keystone. The entrance is flanked with square pilasters and an entablature with dentil molding and paired swags with rosettes; an elliptical fanlight has been painted over. Two pairs of 8-over-12 paned double-hung windows are located on the main (south) facade; the openings have simple brick arched windowhoods and concrete sills. Similar fenestration is found on the east and west facades. The building exhibits good integrity; modifications include removal of the workroom skylight, replacement of sidewalk and entrance steps and of the entrance doors. Construction of the Albion Post Office began in the fall of 1937. The building was completed and officially dedicated on February 22, 1938; over 1,000 Boone County residents attended the ceremony. (The Albion Argus, February 17, 24, 1938.)

A mural entitled "Winter in Nebraska," by Jenne Magafan, is located on the north wall of the lobby above the postmaster's office door which is flanked by wood framed, glass enclosed bulletin boards. The oil-on-canvas mural, which measures 12 feet by 4 feet, occupies the typical space for murals commissioned by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts program for small Class C or D post offices.

A commission for the mural was awarded to Colorado Springs artist Jenne Magafan in June 1938 and the completed mural was installed by the artist a year later in June, 1939 (The Albion Argus, June 22, 1939). "Winter in Nebraska" depicts a farmer driving a herd of cows to a distant barn on a winter evening; the scene is framed by leafless trees. The gray, blue, and brown muted tones of the mural, swirling wisps of clouds, and patches of snow convey a sense of a winter evening. In the immediate

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foreground a farmer in bib overalls is visible from the back, his cap pulled low over his ears and a long stick clutched in one hand. The cattle descend a hill toward an enormous red barn with patches of snow on its roof. Beyond the barn, snow covered hills blend into the distance and rows of harvested crops are visible beneath the snow. The hills blend into the horizon beneath a dark blue sky with grey and white swirls of clouds. The scene suggests the beauty and desolation of a winter evening.

The original lobby light fixtures apparently obscured a view of the mural; according to Section records, the Albion Post Office was informed that the chain fixtures should be shortened by at least 18 inches. The custodial staff completed the work and the Section notified Miss Magafan of the improvement in August, 1940. Currently the lobby has suspended, enclosed fluorescent lights flush to the ceiling.

The lobby interior is in excellent condition and retains its original ceramic tile floor, tile wainscotting, and woodwork. A varnished wooden vestibule projects into the lobby and partially obscures the mural. The vestibule, however, is an original design feature typical of Class C and D standardized post office designs of the 1930's. In 1981 the Albion mural was cleaned and restored by an art conservator under contract with the United States Postal Service; it is in excellent condition.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1939

Significant Dates

1939

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Magafan, Jenne: Artist

Simon, Louis: Supervising Architect

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

The Albion United States Post Office is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Nebraska Post Offices Which Contain Section Artwork (1938-1942) multiple property nomination at the state level of significance under Criterion A for its association with the United States Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts program (1934-1943) and under Criterion C for the artistic significance of the mural it contains. The mural, "Winter in Nebraska," was painted by Colorado Springs artist Jenne Magafan and installed in June, 1939.

The oil-on-canvas mural, which measures 12 feet by 4 feet, is located on the lobby wall directly above the postmaster's door in the typical location for murals installed in Class C or D post offices such as Albion. The mural is an excellent example of artwork commissioned for new post offices through the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts program from 1934-1943. Painted in grey, blue, and brown tones, the mural illustrates a farmer driving home a herd of cows on a winter evening. With its local agricultural theme executed in a realistic style, it is an excellent example of government sponsored Regionalism.

In June, 1938, Colorado Springs artist Jenne Magafan received a standardized notice from the Section inviting her to submit designs for the Albion, Nebraska, mural on the basis of "competent work executed under Treasury Department Art Projects." In accordance with Section procedures established to monitor mural quality and content, Superintendent Rowan cited the commission amount, \$670, and payment schedule: one-third after receipt and approval of preliminary sketches; one-third when a full-size cartoon of the mural was submitted and approved; and the remainder after the mural was installed and photographed in place.

Although Jenne Magafan immediately notified the Section that she was "extremely happy" to receive the commission, she expressed curiosity regarding the basis for her selection. Miss Magafan had painted murals for

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Falk, Peter Hastings. Who Was Who in American Art. (Madison, CT: Soundview Press, 1985).
Marling, Karal Ann. Wall-to-Wall America. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).
National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Record Group 121: Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Public Building Service. Entry 133: Case Files Concerning embellishments of Federal Buildings 1934-43. Box 61: Nebraska.
Omaha World-Herald, July 7, 1939.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is described as Lots 7, 8, Block 11, Original Town of Albion, Boone County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that parcel of land which has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Ahlgren, Architectural Historian
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date August, 1991
street & number 1500 R Street telephone (402) 471-4773
city or town Lincoln state Nebraska zip code 68501

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the Denver high school under the WPA (Works Progress Administration) Federal Art Project and was a student of Colorado Springs artists and Section muralists Frank Mechau and Boardman Robinson. The Albion mural, however, was Jenne Magafan's first Section commission.

In July or August, 1938, Miss Magafan visited the Albion Post Office and made several pencil sketches of area landscapes which she submitted for Section approval in September. She proposed two themes: pioneers building a sod house and a Nebraska landscape--a "winter snow scene." Section officials selected the "Winter in Nebraska" sketches and informed Miss Magafan that her design "possesses an extremely handsome rhythm." She was told to proceed with the color sketch; the mural to be completed by May, 1939.

When Miss Magafan submitted her color sketch several months later, Section officials critiqued her proposal. Superintendent Rowan congratulated her for the "handsome design" but pointed out that "the left end of the barn does not convincingly take up its place in space." The problem was corrected and the required photograph of a full-size cartoon was submitted in May, 1939. Rowan again approved her work but suggested that she use a "model" to check the "hind quarters of the second cow from the left" since its leg appeared to be "somewhat heavy in the middle." (National Archives: Record Group 121, Entry 133, Box 61). The Albion mural received final approval from the Section in June, 1939, and Jenne installed it during the same month, assisted by her twin sister Ethel Magafan and Edward Chávez who painted murals for the Auburn and Geneva, Nebraska, post offices, respectively. Jenne reported to Rowan that Albion residents were enthusiastic and considered it a "great privilege" to have received a post office mural.

The Albion postmaster also wrote to the Section and enclosed pertinent newspaper articles. He commented that although he had seen several post office murals in other states, "I did not see one that was as well done... as the one in our office." One of the newspaper clippings was from the editorial page of the Omaha World Herald and was signed "Cactus Ike." In a folksy tongue-in-cheek style, the writer praised the effect of the mural and claimed that it was a "right nice bit of art" and the scene appeared "right chilly with the sky full of dark, blusterin' clouds and the wind blowin'." The writer noted, however, that if the farmer turned his back there would be icicles in his whiskers and apparently the artist had overlooked the fact that "out here in Nebraska, when it gets really cold, the farmers keep on bein' farmers by wearin' more than a pair of suspenders over their shoulders." (Omaha World Herald, July 7, 1939). The Section apparently considered the mural to be a great success; Miss Magafan was

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notified that her design would be included in a special exhibit of post office murals at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., November, 1939.

Jenne Magafan, along with her twin sister Ethel and Edward Chávez, had studied under Frank Mechau at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center and assisted him with WPA murals, and had collaborated with Chávez on a mural in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Jenne also received Section commissions for post offices in Texas (1941) and Utah (1941), and for the Social Security Building in Washington, D.C; done in collaboration with her sister. Miss Magafan exhibited in museums and art galleries throughout the country and her work is part of the permanent collections of the Newark Museum, the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, the Grand Rapids Art Gallery, and the White House, Washington, D.C.

For additional information, refer to the Nebraska Post Offices Which Contain Section Artwork (1938-1942) multiple property document.

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Nemaha County Herald, Aug. 19, 26, 1937; Sept. 2, 30, 1937; June 9, 1938.

Park, Marlene and Gerald Markowitz. Democratic Vistas. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

Pikes Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919-1945. Exhibit Catalog. Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1989.

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1969).