

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	JUL 2 1960
DATE ENTERED	

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

U.S. Post Office, Eugene Oregon

AND/OR COMMON

U.S. Post Office, Eugene Oregon (Downtown Station)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

520 Willamette Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Eugene

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

NA VICINITY OF

4

STATE

Oregon

CODE

41

COUNTY

Lane

CODE

039

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 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	NA IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
Thematic	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Group		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Postal Service

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

California 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Lane County Department of Assessment and Taxation

STREET & NUMBER

125 E. 8th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Eugene

STATE

Oregon 97401

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State of Oregon Inventory - Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE

May 18, 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Salem

STATE

Oregon 97310

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
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>NA</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Eugene Post Office is two stories in height with a flat roof, and is constructed of reinforced concrete. The facade is flat with a slightly projecting central section that is faced with terra cotta. Seven bays, divided by fluted terra cotta pilasters, are located in the central section. Molded terra cotta spandrels separate the vertically emphasized first floor bays from the second floor window bays. Buff colored brick wings flank the terra cotta central section. Although the building has been altered (the interior work area and rear facade) the alterations do not affect the integrity of this well preserved building.

Physical Appearance

The foundations and basement are constructed of reinforced concrete. Above grade structure (two floors) consists of reinforced concrete post and beams and concrete walls and floors. The exterior is faced with granite, terra cotta and a light cream colored brick. The roof is flat built-up tar composition. The addition (leased) to the rear consists of primarily brick and concrete block.

The front facade is relatively flat, symmetrically balanced, and horizontal in elevational character. Seven bays framed in terra cotta veneer divide the main portion of the facade. This portion projects slightly (accented by terra cotta) from the ends of the building which consist of brick (light cream color). The vertical height of the windows and entry, contrasting with the horizontal orientation of the second floor windows provide emphasis to the first floor. The windows and entry bays are divided by fluted, cream colored terra cotta pilasters which support a simple flat cream colored terra cotta entablature. Flat, floral motif capitals top the pilasters (also cream colored terra cotta). A narrow strip of deep buff colored terra cotta frames the pilasters.

The first floor windows and entry are framed vertically with fluted deep gray blue colored terra cotta between the pilasters. A black terra cotta lintel which projects slightly beyond the pilasters tops the first floor windows and entry. A deep buff colored terra cotta panel is set beneath the windows. The entry consists of double, aluminum framed glass doors. The entry stairs, landing, and flanking buttresses are granite. Free-standing bronze light standards (torch motif) are set on the buttresses. Bronze is also used for the stair railings.

An 8-light transom window is set over the entry doors. The first floor windows are 6-over-6 double hung wood sash (square center lights flanked by narrow vertical side lights). The second floor windows are paired 1-over-1 double hung wood sash. A dark buff colored terra cotta panel set between the pilasters separates the first and second floor windows. The ends of the front facade are flat with two window openings (one on each of the first and second floors). The first floor window is faced by an ornate terra cotta grill and framed by brick header courses. Further emphasis is given to the window by slightly recessing the surrounding brick work. A single 1-over-1 double hung wood sash window aligned over the first floor window is located on the second floor. The wall is capped by a narrow flat course of cream colored terra cotta.

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The side (north and south) facades are nearly identical in design and detailing. The design is patterned similarly to the front facade, but lacks the terra cotta detailing. The same brick used on the ends of the front are used for facing and detailing. The mid-portion consists of four window bays. Vertical emphasis is provided by slightly projecting the brick dividing the bays. The window openings are accentuated by slightly recessing the surrounding brick work on the south facade. The first floor windows of the south facade are 1-over-1 double hung wood sash topped by a single light transom window. The second floor windows of both side facades are paired, 1-over-1 double hung wood sash. The first floor windows of the north facade are vertically paired 1-over-1 double hung wood sash.

Cream colored terra cotta sills are used for all windows of the side facades. The east ends of the side facades have window and door openings framed vertically in fluted blue colored terra cotta, with black terra cotta lintel. The north side has a 6-over-6 double hung wood sash window (identical to the front). A decorative deep buff colored terra cotta panel is located beneath the window. The south side contains an entry door similar to the front (single aluminum framed glass door with single glass side light). Granite is used for the entry stairs and flanking buttresses. Free standing bronze light standards (torch motif) are set atop the buttresses. Hand railings are bronze and wrought iron. The top of the wall is capped by a narrow cream colored terra cotta course.

The rear facade (west) is also symmetrically designed in a U-shape which opens to the rear. The opening is filled with a 1-1/2 story mezzanine and loading area which projects from the ends (annex attached at this point). The ends are divided into three bays, with windows identical to those described on the north and south sides on the first and second floors. Cream colored brick is used for facing.

The interior consists of the following:

- * Basement: concrete floors, walls and ceiling with vinyl asbestos tile on hall floors and carpeting on office floors, plaster walls in hall and fabric and hardwood strips in offices, and acoustical tile ceilings in offices.
- * Lobby: terrazzo floors (2' x 2' squares), plaster walls with 8-foot marble wainscoting, and coved plaster ceilings.
- * Work room and information office: hardwood floors, plaster walls (with some fabric wainscoting), and plaster/concrete ceiling.
- * Swing room on mezzanine level: vinyl asbestos tile floors, plaster walls and acoustical tile ceiling.
- * Restrooms: ceramic tile floors, plaster walls with 5-foot ceramic tile wainscoting, and plaster ceilings.
- * Second floor: terrazzo floors in halls, carpet in offices and conference room, plaster walls in offices (some glass used in partitioning offices), fabric and wood strip walls in conference room and acoustical tile ceilings.
- * Two murals are located in the lobby, one at each end.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES See Below BUILDER/ARCHITECT Gilbert Stanley Underwood

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Site acquired in 1938; building completed in 1939.

Although the Eugene Post Office is not yet 50 years old, it does exhibit exceptional significance on the local and state levels. The building is the only public building in Eugene and Lane County that exhibits the Art Deco design influence. Further, it is the only public building in the state of Oregon that utilizes polychrome terra cotta as its primary facade treatment and thus, makes an integral contribution to the diversity of the state's public buildings. The location of the post office has historically served as a community focal point. The city's first federally constructed post office (1910, no longer standing) occupied a site adjacent to the existing facility and the Lane Hotel (NHR) and Oregon Electric Station (NHR) occupy opposite corners of the intersection.

The lobby also includes two murals completed in 1943 by Portland artist Carl Morris.

Architecture

The Eugene Post Office is an outstanding example of federal architecture completed during the Depression Era. It also represents one of the largest post office construction projects in Oregon during that era. The design is unusual in the state as an example of Stripped Classical flavored by Art Deco, and is the sole example in Eugene and Lane County. The use of multi-colored polychrome terra cotta for the detailing of the front facade is the only example of such material in public building construction in the state. Further, the scale of use of this material is the only example in U.S. post office construction on the West Coast. Thus, with respect to building design and use of material, the Eugene Post Office is a significant and unusual entity in the overall continuum of federal architecture and other public buildings (city, county, and state) in the State of Oregon. The building's historic value is attributable to its period of construction and specific design treatment relative to other public buildings within this continuum of Eugene's, Lane County's, and Oregon's public architecture. It exemplifies an outstanding effort in federal design and the contribution of federal government to the community and state during the Depression. For these reasons, the building does possess exceptional significance in the context of the city's and state's architectural heritage.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) Blueprints and construction documents
- 2) Eugene Register Guard, various articles of 1937-1939
- 3) Southwestern Oregon Chapter, American Institute of Architects, "Style and Vernacular: A Guide to the Architecture of Lane County, Oregon", Portland, The Press of the Oregon Historical Society, 1983
- 4) Ramstead, David A. and Lewis Clarin A., "Lane County Oregon Post Office", (no date or publisher)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.72 acres
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	49,25,8,0	4,817,76,6,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The site is rectangular in shape with 193.76 feet of frontage along Willamette Street and 160.88 feet in depth along Fifth Avenue. The legal description is Lots 5 and 8, Block 3 of Skinners Donation Addition to Eugene.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

H. J. Kolva, Senior Associate
 ORGANIZATION Haworth and Anderson, Inc.
Institute for Urban and Local Studies

DATE
April 30, 1985

STREET & NUMBER
West 705 First Avenue

TELEPHONE
(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN
Spokane

STATE
Washington 99204

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X NO _____ NONE _____

[Signature]
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is _____ National X State X Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *[Signature]*

TITLE Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE 6/20/85

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE _____

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~

[Signature]
 for KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8/14/85

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The finely executed design and its quality and consistency are attributable to the guidance of its architect, Gilbert Stanley Underwood. Of particular note is the consistency of the design motifs in publically visible and accessible areas of the building--specifically, the front facade and lobby. The decorative elements of the lobby are carried from the exterior detailing and maintain the overall design program. Exceptional sensitivity is given to the use of matched marble wainscoting panels which grace the lobby walls.

The Eugene Post Office occupies a location which has historically been a focal point of the community. Eugene's first federally constructed post office (1910) was located adjacent to the site of the existing facility. Upon completion of the existing facility, the original federal building was used by Lane County as an historical museum (later razed). The existing post office is also located in a significant grouping of buildings which are historically significant in the community. These buildings, which include the Lane Hotel and Oregon Electric Depot, occupy opposite corners of the intersection on which the post office is located and are both on the National Historic Register. Although contrasting with these buildings in design and material, the Post Office contributes to the architectural diversity of the area and provides a continuum between the early 1900s (Southern Pacific Railway Depot, Eagles Building, Oregon Electric Depot, and Lane Hotel) and the modern era (as exemplified by the Eugene Center, constructed in 1982). The post office makes a significant contribution to the city's downtown setting.

Gilbert Stanley Underwood, educated at the Yale School of Architecture, acted as consulting architect for numerous federal construction projects. Prior to his move to Washington DC, during the Depression Era, he had worked out of Los Angeles and completed design work for the Union Pacific Railroad (including Sun Valley). As a consulting architect for the Public Buildings Administration, he designed the San Francisco Mint, Seattle Federal Court House, and Los Angeles Federal Building. He was supervising architect for the PBA from 1945 to 1949.

Art

The murals were completed at the end of the WPA Art Program, as the effort shifted to World War II. The murals are significant on both the local and state levels. Local industries, agriculture, and forest products are vividly depicted by the murals. They are good examples of the idealized and representational style typically employed in the Federal Art Project murals of the 1930s.

The murals represent the earliest phase of the work of Carl Morris in Oregon. Morris is a major Oregon artist of national reputation. He was born in California in 1911 and studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and in Vienna and Paris. He has resided in Portland since 1941. His works are represented at the major galleries in the United States including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Guggenheim Museum, Art

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Eugene

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Institute of Chicago, Cochran Gallery in Washington DC, Whitney Museum, Smithsonian, and Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Local Context

Eugene F. Skinner settled in what is now Eugene in June of 1846. On March 3, 1849, Oregon was officially proclaimed a territory. Skinner was then named postmaster of "his" community. The community was platted in 1853 and named Eugene City. Incorporation of the city was approved in 1864 and the name shortened to Eugene in 1889. The Oregon and California Railroad tracks reached Eugene from Portland in 1871 and the University of Oregon was established in 1876. Today Eugene is a major educational, service, and retail area. Agriculture and lumber products also contribute significantly to the economic base. The 1981 population of Eugene was 106,100.

The Eugene Post Office is located at the north end of the downtown area, between Skinner Butte (National Historic Landmark Area) and the central business district. Surrounding land uses are commercial and industrial. The block in which the post office is located is shared by an auto parts distributorship to the south. The block south of Sixth Avenue contains the newly constructed Eugene Center's Hilton Hotel/convention and performing arts complex (modern concrete and glass). Further south is Eugene Mall, the central business district of the city. The block to the west is light industrial in use with Darigold and the Ralston Purina mill. The county jail and various offices and retail shops are located in the block to the north. The Southern Pacific rail corridor and station (on city and state historic landmarks inventories) are located further north.

The corners at the intersection of Willamette Street and 5th Avenue, in addition to containing the post office (southwest corner), contain three significant buildings, two of which are on the National Register. The Lane Hotel, constructed in 1903, lies on the northwest corner of the intersection. The Lane building is a three-story frame structure in Commercial Italianate design and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Oregon Electric Depot, constructed in 1914, is located on the northeast corner of the intersection and is also on the National Register. The building is two-story brick in the Classical and Georgian Revival styles. The Eagles Building, constructed in 1906, lies across the street from the post office (to the east) and is two-story brick with a design based on the Mission style.

Local News Coverage of Eugene Post Office Construction

The construction of the post office was reported in the Eugene Register Guard. Information reported in various articles from December of 1937 through July of 1939 is included in the following discussion. A December 21, 1937 article reported that a deal between the county and federal governments was complete and that the old post office would be sold to Lane County for a pioneer historical museum (subsequently demolished

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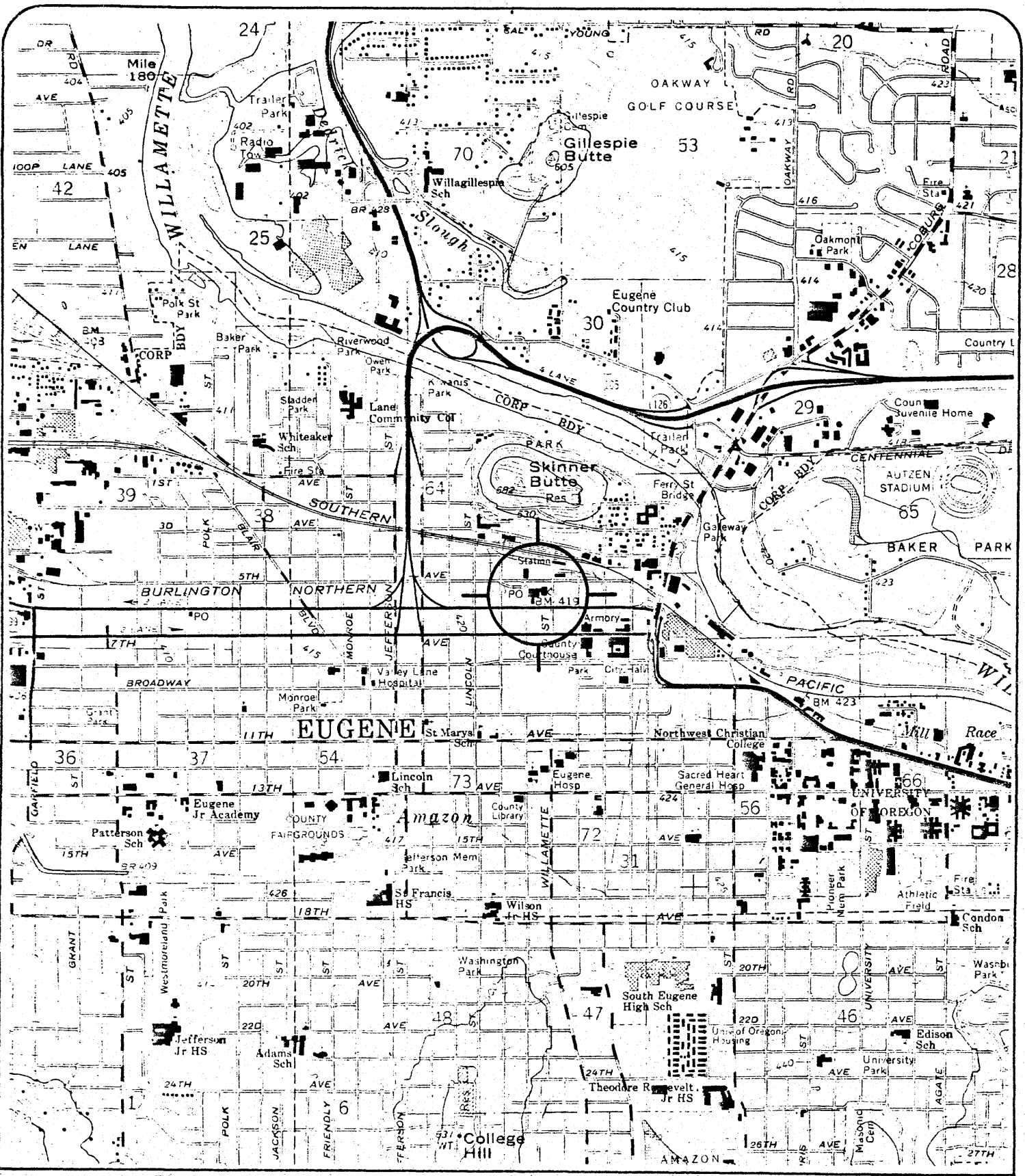
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in the late 1950s). The deal also involved the county's procurement of a site for a new post office for \$26,000. On January 5, 1938 an article reported an announcement by E.G. Boehnke, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce's post office committee, that the post office appropriation was safe. On March 22nd it was reported that the plans would be ready by April 1st and that \$350,000 was slated for construction.

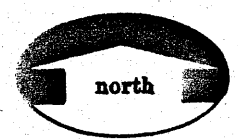
A March 27th article, which included a schematic of the new building, reported that an allotment of \$248,000 under the authority of the Emergency Construction Program Act of June 22, 1936 had been made for the cost of site, building, and administration. The building was designed by the Supervising Architect, Department of the Treasury, with G.S. Underwood as consulting architect. The article stated that it would be a "beauty spot" architecturally. A July 11th article reported that George Isaacson of Portland won the post office construction contract with a low bid of \$194,540. This project would be the largest single construction job in Eugene for the year. An August 5th article reported that construction would begin within the week and workers would be hired from the ranks of the Eugene and Lane County unemployed. Ground was broken on August 7th.

On July 9, 1939 it was reported that the last dispatches were handled in the old post office building the previous day and that local postal employees were working overtime to get the new \$250,000 building in shape for opening on July 10. At that time the building was "all but completed. Over the week-end the last bits of painting were done, the brass was polished, windows were washed, and equipment was installed or transferred. Work on the second story is not quite finished, but will probably be done in the middle of next week" The new building was reported to provide about twice the space available in the old building for both the post office and other federal agencies. The post office was to occupy the entire first floor, and other federal agencies were to occupy the basement and second floor. The structure was constructed such that a third floor could be added in the future in case of the need for additional space.

The July 9 article noted that the new building had one special feature of interest in the form of a "swing room", where employees could rest, read, or enjoy other forms of recreation while waiting to go on duty. Showers were also available. The building was "lighted throughout by special fixtures which give a 'diffused' effect, reported to be easier on the eyes. The foyer and stairways are lined with marble wainscoating." Landscaping was reported to be progressing rapidly. Finally, the article reported that "the outside of the building is brick and terra cotta, the unusual blue and buff coloring giving the facade a striking effect."



U.S. POST OFFICE
 Eugene, Oregon
 UTM Reference:
 10/492580/4877660



1/18/85