

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 13 1983
DATE ENTERED	

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

RECEIVED
APR 12 1982
OHP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

United States Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Federal Building; U.S. Post Office - Delta Station

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

401 North San Joaquin Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Stockton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

14th

VICINITY OF

STATE

California 95201

CODE

06

COUNTY

San Joaquin

CODE

077

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

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

General Services Administration Region IX

STREET & NUMBER

525 Market Street

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

VICINITY OF

STATE

California 94105

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Joaquin County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

222 East Weber Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Stockton

STATE

California 95202

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Federal Building is situated within a mildly urban setting of the inland port community of Stockton. The building lies in a mixed use neighborhood at the northern fringe of the central business district. North of the Federal Building is a residential neighborhood made up primarily of single family houses from the late 19th and early 20th centuries; south is the central business district, composed of low- and medium-rise commercial buildings of varying ages and styles. Directly across San Joaquin Street is Fremont Square, a one-block city park favored by transients; a block south is the locally prominent Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Building, a four-story terra cotta Art Deco structure. The Federal Building is sited on the northwest corner of San Joaquin and Lindsay streets, facing east toward San Joaquin Street and occupying, with its attendant driveways and parking area, most of the block. Sharing the block with it are the renovated two-story State Savings Bank Building, the two-story brick Lodge Hall Building built in 1923 and Tom Field's Used Car Lot.

The Federal Building is, typical for a federal building of the time, set back slightly from the sidewalks along San Joaquin and Lindsay streets, giving it a more imposing contenance and distinguishing it from its commercial neighbors. Between the sidewalk and the building is a small grass lawn; evergreen shrubs are planted around the foundation at the four main entrances. The main level of the Federal Building is raised several feet above street level, and it is accessed by four granite stairways which ascend from the sidewalks. The stairs enter the building at its northeast and southeast corners - two stairs per corner from each side - and are framed by massive granite bulkheads upon which decorative bronze lampposts are mounted. Handicapped access to the first floor level is via a concrete ramp on the south side of the building. The requisite flagpole stands in front of the northeast corner. The rear of the site is taken up almost entirely by the large paved parking/loading area, and the narrow north side is similarly paved as a driveway and parking area. A row of conifers has been planted in the parkway along the rear of the site, the only trees around the Federal Building.

The building itself is massed as a great two-story (with full basement) block, 174'2" wide by 94'1" deep. The front facade features a central colonnade flanked on both sides by massive end bays in which the entries are centered. This enframed block configuration - central colonnade anchored on both sides by symmetrical corner elements - is an arrangement developed in the 18th century in France and adopted by American government and private architects in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for a variety of public and institutional buildings. The neoclassical arrangement took on several appearances as the architects varied the scale, detailing and proportion, but at its core it represented the type of classicism favored by the Treasury Department as appropriate for federal architecture. The Federal Building also displays the classical vertical hierarchy of base, body and cap -

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the base formed by the raised foundation, the body by the stone walls and colonnades and the cap by the stepped parapet with its stone coping. The building also displays features which are decidedly Moderne: the multiple steps of the stone walls, square columns which do not break the planes of the walls, emphasis on unbroken mass and verticality, slab-sided, smooth finished walls and stylized ornamentation. This synthesis of neoclassical form and pared-back Art Moderne detailing is today termed starved classicism; it was one of the prevailing national styles for public buildings of the twenties and thirties. The refinement of the proportions, details and use of materials and the building's size (it was much larger than most other similar buildings in the region) distinguish the Stockton Federal Building as a regionally important example of the style.

The building was described briefly in a 24 June 1932 article in the Stockton Daily Evening Record:

Working floor space in the new postoffice will be three and one-half times as much as provided in the present building, according to Postmaster E.R. Hawley. There will be 14,000 square feet of working space in the new structure, compared with 4000 square feet at present.

Lobby space will be increased from 1000 square feet in the present postoffice to 2400 feet. Possible window space will be doubled, according to Hawley, as both sides of the lobby can be used.

Floor space for federal offices on the second floor will be about the same as in the present building, Hawley said. However, additional offices will be provided for the two United States commissioners and the referee in bankruptcy. Other offices to be housed in the building are those of the postoffice inspector, department of internal revenue, army recruiting office, United States Civil Service office and United States engineers.

There are no elevators in the present building, but the new postoffice will have two elevators. There will also be pneumatic conveyors for sending money and orders to different departments. Modern safes will be installed and the safe space will be doubled, Hawley states.

Arrangement of the postoffice section will be about the same as at the present office, as handling mail has been standardized. Hand work predominates in a postoffice, says Hawley, and very little mechanical equipment is used.

The postoffice is steel framed with reinforced concrete slab construction. The exterior on San Joaquin street and one-third back on Lindsay and Fremont streets will be faced with granite. From that point the facing will be terra

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cotta and the rear will be faced with Cannon pressed brick.

The building will have steel window frames, trimmed with aluminum. Windows will be plate glass and main doors and frames of bronze. The main lobby will be constructed of bronze and Colorado marble, with floors of blocked terrazzo stone in gray, yellow and black.

The walls will be of plaster and all woodwork in the building of white oak. A concrete mailing platform and driveway will be in the rear of the structure. A fan circulation system will be installed by which the air may be heated or cooled. Heat will be furnished by two oil-burning boilers.

The building is covered with a flat concrete slab roof, with composition roofing over; the roof is bordered by a parapet - granite, terra cotta or block - on all sides. With its structural steel frame and concrete floor and roof slabs, it is classified a fireproof structure. The front facade is faced with granite and, as discussed, is organized as a central colonnade flanked by massive granite end wings. Twelve freestanding and two engaged columns form the colonnade - these are massive granite components, square with fluted surfaces and no base, plinth or capital. Above the colonnade is a massive granite head, decorated with terra cotta emblems and the building title (originally "United States Post Office" inscribed; now "Federal Building" in attached metal letters). Behind the colonnade is a two-story window wall, featuring aluminum framed windows and decorative bronze spandrel panels. The end bays are faced with granite also, with stepped corners and plain stone copings. The public entries into the main lobby are centered in these bays; above the double-leafed doorways are decorative bronze grilles, and above each of these openings is another inset emblem. Two plainly framed windows align over each doorway. Above these, perched atop the facade steps are two stylized cubistic eagles, symbols of the federal government. The north and south facades are identical reversed, featuring the same massive end bays at the front with less grandiose colonnades behind. The elements are essentially the same as those on the front facade, but the granite siding is replaced with terra cotta behind the end bay. The rear of the Post Office is dominated by the loading dock with its cantilevered canopy. Terra cotta blocks face the rear walls, but brick can be seen above the first-floor loading area on the sides of the second floor office section. A variety of smaller windows is placed in the rear face around the loading area.

Typical of almost all public buildings of the time, the Stockton Federal Building has a hollow cornerstone placed in the foundation wall in the southeast corner. Inscribed on the stone is:

Ogden L. Mills Secretary of the Treasury

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Ferry K. Heath Assistant Secretary
James A. Wetmore Acting Supervising Architect
Bliss & Fairweather Architects
Howard G. Bissell Associate Architect
1932

The interior spaces have been altered somewhat, but the main public spaces retain their essential character. The first floor was - and is - organized around a central public lobby which extended the length of the building. The lobby was entered through twin vestibules on both north and south ends; the vestibules and stairways are housed within the massive end bays. Aligned along the front (east) wall of the lobby was a series of offices - for the Postmaster, Assistant Postmaster and money order registry - with a stamp sales counter and such ancillary spaces as a small employees' stair, vault and a small elevator. Behind (to the west of) the lobby was the large open workroom which occupied two thirds of the first floor space. The post office boxes and main service counter were located in the west lobby wall; the counter remains, but the boxes have been moved into a second smaller lobby created by subdividing the workroom. Beyond the main workroom were three smaller rooms - two mailing vestibules and the COD receiving room - and beyond these the loading platform. The upstairs hallway, which aligns over the main level lobby, is accessed by twin three-quarter turn stairs near the entry vestibules. The second floor hall is only singly loaded, however, on the east side by a row of small offices spaces. The basement is basically open, used for storage, custodial and mechanical functions.

The first floor public lobby is the most impressive space in the building, having undergone very little change in finishes and configuration since its construction. The lobby features such components as: the tri-color terrazzo floor laid in a zigzag pattern with brass strip inlay and marble borders, light brown marble wainscots which extend to picture rail height with contrasting black marble bases, ribbed plaster ceiling with moulded and dentiled crown, bronze wainscot cap cast in a zigzag pattern, bronze emblems over that, gilded gold eagles set in fields of gilded stars over the cased openings between the lobby and entry vestibules, bronze tellers' windows and four decorative bronze writing tables. Two oil murals commissioned in 1936 hang above the office doors in the northeast and southeast corners of the lobby (see Addendum, Item 8). The offices on the west side of the lobby have been changed as they were adapted to later uses, and those on the second floor have undergone similar change. Today they display a variety of finishes, ranging from original white oak doors and plaster walls through more recent wall

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paneling, carpeting and suspended ceilings. The main workroom has been reduced considerably in size but still possesses many original features, including its plaster walls and ceilings, Port Oxford cedar block floor and inspector's gallery above.

Summary

The Federal Building is sited facing east on a corner lot at the northern fringe of the central business district of Stockton. Set back from the sidewalks in its own small lawn, the building is massed as a great two-story (with full basement) block. It features elements which are classical - the symmetrical enframed block configuration of the front facade with a central two-story colonnade flanked on both sides by massive end bays and the vertical hierarchy of base, body and cap - and modern - the multiple steps of the stone walls, emphasis on unbroken mass and verticality, slab-sided, smooth finished walls and stylized ornamentation. This synthesis of neoclassical form and pared-back Art Moderne detailing is today termed starved classicism; the Stockton Federal Building is a regionally significant example of this prevailing national style. It has been maintained well, and the exterior appears today virtually original. The interior has undergone changes to accommodate the changing needs since its construction, but the changes have been made with sensitivity, and the original character of the public spaces is retained. As one of the city's major buildings, it is a prominent landmark, the most refined and best preserved of Stockton's Depression-era architecture. As a sophisticated example of the starved classical style, the building is regionally important - one of the best in northern California to emerge from the extensive building project of the thirties.

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

SPECIFIC DATES	Designed: 1931 Built: 1932-33	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Bliss and Fairweather Howard G. Bissell, Assoc. Arch.
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Federal Building in Stockton rests upon its intrinsic and representational values on a local level to the city. These values lie in three areas: architecture, art and politics/government. Architecturally the Federal Building is representative of the synthesis of classical and moderne styles termed "starved classicism," which distinguishes many public buildings designed by private architects during the time. The Federal Building is a classic and well-preserved example of the genre - a medium-scale public building of the early 1930s. Similarly the original oil murals on the lobby walls are locally important examples of the type of federally sponsored decorative artwork produced during the Depression. As art, the murals are less than stellar, although the collage approach by Bergman is unusual compared with its literally rendered contemporaries; as artifacts reflecting the social climate in which they were produced, however, they are significant on a local scale and, if viewed comprehensively, on a national scale as part of the widespread social realist art movement of the thirties and forties. Finally, the Federal Building represents Stockton's part of an extensive federal construction program initiated in the late 1920s by the Hoover administration - the forerunner to Roosevelt's Public Works Administration. As the only remaining post office building erected within the historic period, it was a source of pride for the city and a locally prominent symbol of the federal government.

Addendum

On 11 January 1932 the ground was broken for construction of Stockton's new Federal Building. The Stockton Daily Evening Record reported on the ceremony and the events leading up to that point.

Culminating 10 years of effort to secure a new postoffice and federal office building for Stockton, more than 1000 citizens saw ground broken for a \$500,000 structure this morning at the site at Hunter, Lindsay and San Joaquin streets.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Addendum, Item 9

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.72

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>110</u>	<u>650400</u>	<u>4202280</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Legal description: All of Block 87 except north 50' of Lots 1,3,5,7,9,11 East of Center Addition to City of Stockton

Property is on the northwest corner of San Joaquin and Lindsay Streets, with 250' frontage on San Joaquin Street and 300' frontage on Lindsay Street.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Clayton B. Fraser, Principal

ORGANIZATION

Fraserdesign

DATE

7 March 1982

STREET & NUMBER

1269 Cleveland Avenue Suite Two

TELEPHONE

303-669-7969

CITY OR TOWN

LoveLand

STATE

Colorado 80537

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

4/20/82

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 ___ State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *J. Walter Roth* J. WALTER ROTH

TITLE *DIRECTOR, HISTORIC PRESERVATION*
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

DATE *12 JAN 83*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Shelores Byers*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

2/10/83

Entered in the
National Register

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To the accompaniment of clicking cameras, Mayor Con J. Franke turned the first spadeful of earth as cheers went up from the crowd. It was a moment long awaited and eagerly anticipated as witnessed by the rows of closely packed automobiles parked within a two-block radius in all directions from the site. . . .

In getting the enterprise underway, Stockton has broken all existing records for getting a federal building started so soon after selection of a site. For the benefit of the crowd, Ralph W. Carter, president of the Stockton Chamber of Commerce, briefly reviewed negotiations to obtain the structure.

A decade of promoting the enterprise was capped in 1929 when Congress approved tentative estimates and authorized expenditure of \$695,000. Although William A. Newman, district architect for the United States Treasury Department, came here in September, 1929, to inspect prospective sites, he did not choose the definite location until November 17, 1930, more than a year later.

Failure of citizens and business men generally to agree on a location for the structure occasioned the delay. Finally, sensing the possibility that the city stood to lose the building if the controversy continued, the Chamber of Commerce circulated a petition among business and fraternal organizations, pledging them to abide, without protest, by the government official's selection. A poll of chamber members found the largest number in favor of locating the building in the area where the building ultimately is to rise.

Further speed was made in getting the postoffice when civic officials induced the government to accept title insurance in lieu of abstracts of title for property contained in this site. This procedure was first approved by the government when the city began purchasing rights-of-way for the deep water channel. In accepting title insurance for the postoffice property, the government and Stockton established a precedent hitherto unknown in the annals of Federal construction work.

Curtis M. Robbins, local realtor, was agent for property owners in the block and was largely responsible for promoting the deal for the government to acquire the ground at a total cost of \$223,000 early last year. Howard G. Bissell, Stockton architect, prepared plans for the building in association with Bliss and Fairweather, San Francisco architects. The plans were completed on August 5, last, and approved by the government.

Murch Brothers, St. Louis contracting firm, were low bidders for erecting the building when proposals were opened on December 8 in Washington, D.C. The company was awarded the contract and H. Goldsworthy, vice-president of the firm, is in Stockton to supervise the start of construction.

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The post office then under construction was the second such federally constructed building in Stockton. The first was a two-story classical stone edifice built on the southeast corner of Market and California streets. Before the August 1902 opening of that structure, the post office had been housed in a series of rented spaces around town since its beginning on 8 November 1849. (This early date distinguishes Stockton's post office as one of the first nine designated in the California Territory; the others were: San Francisco and Monterey - the first two, Coloma, Vernon (Sutter City), San Jose, Sacramento, Sonoma and Benecia.) The 1902 building (razed in 1965) was one of hundreds of similar federal post offices and courthouses erected across the country in an early federal building program during the first two decades of this century; it served as the city's post office until completion of this building.

The new Federal Building at Stockton was in reality part of another enormous federal building program, undertaken by Congress and the Hoover administration in the late 1920s and early 1930s. During this period some 1300 new civil federal buildings were erected, nearly doubling the number under the aegis of the Treasury Department. The program was initiated in 1926 - the first such federal initiative for public building construction since 1913 - with a Congressional authorization of \$165 million over a period of eleven years. The authorization was increased by \$125 million in 1928 and, with the Depression worsening, by \$330 million in 1930 and 1931. The total appropriation, including revenues from the sale of so-called obsolete structures which added \$69 million, hovered at \$700 million. According to Lois Craig in The Federal Presence: "In terms of establishing the image of the United States government, this program was the most important undertaken since the first few decades under the Constitution."

The massive construction effort was designed to serve three functions. First, it represented fiscal pragmatism and was calculated to reduce the rising rental costs incurred by the growing number of federal agencies in leased space. The program also afforded Congress an opportunity to distribute political presents in the form of post offices and courthouses, a type of logrolling it historically has found hard to resist. Finally, under the deepening shadow of the Depression, the building project was in the later years also a make-work project, intended to provide jobs for the local unemployed. A predecessor to the myriad New Deal programs (Roosevelt took office the same month that the Stockton Post Office was opened), Hoover's building program was later absorbed within the Public Works Administration.

The federal buildings erected during this period exhibited a variety of styles.

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At one extreme were those designed by the Supervising Architect's (SA) office of the Treasury Department as the office continued to advocate classicism as the appropriate symbolic expression for public buildings. The SA executed hundreds of public buildings of varying scales with classical facades and detailing during the twenties and thirties. James A. Wetmore was the Acting Supervising Architect from 1915 to 1933. A graduate of the Columbia Law School, Wetmore was not himself an architect, the reason for the "Acting" before his title; stylistic direction for the office was given by the Superintendent of the Architectural Division Louis A. Simon, a stylistic traditionalist who later succeeded Wetmore as Supervising Architect - the Treasury's last. At the other end of the spectrum were a number of architects in the avant garde of the private sector. Embracing the tenets of the emerging Art Deco and Moderne styles (and a decade later the International style), these architects executed public buildings relatively unembellished by ornamentation and austere compared with their classical predecessors. Between the two extremes, architects designed with a wide range of stylistic expression, combining new forms with borrowed revivalist or vernacular forms or motifs or somehow compromising between the classical and modern trends to create what is today termed "starved classicism."

The Stockton Federal Building is an excellent example of starved classicism. With its central stripped-down colonnade flanked on either side by massive stone sections and stylized eagle motifs, the building displays many of the elements which distinguish the style; it was featured in the September 1933 Architectural Forum, an issue devoted to public architecture. The style was truly national in its application and was used in similar buildings across the country. The Post Offices at Waterbury, Connecticut and nearby Hartford, for example, resemble the Stockton building in massing and detailing.

Construction on the Federal Building continued through the spring of 1932. Murch Brothers, the St. Louis-based general contractor, was a large national firm which had built Post Offices in Madison, Wisconsin, New London, Connecticut, Asheville, North Carolina and Casper, Wyoming. Additionally, the firm had at that time contracts for the Post Office at Waterbury and similar buildings in Seattle, Portland and nearby Modesto, California. The company had assured the local Chamber of Commerce that local laborers and suppliers would be used for the project whenever possible. It appears that this promise was honored, as subcontractors and suppliers for the project included: Calaveras Cement Company, San Andreas, concrete with A. Sandburg of Stockton handling the pouring; Stockton Ice & Fuel Company, sand and gravel; Richard Williams, Stockton, brick and tile work; Edward L. Gnekow, Stockton, plumbing; Pacific Coast Steel Corporation, San Francisco,

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reinforcing steel; Michel & Pfeffer Iron Works, San Francisco, ornamental iron and bronze; N. Clark & Sons, San Francisco, terra cotta; Hilgartner Marble Company Los Angeles, interior marble and Pacific Manufacturing Company, Oakland, millwork. Problems arose, however, when Murch neglected to pay some of the subcontractors - a problem which was to come up on several of the company's projects.

On 26 June 1932 the cornerstone for the building was laid, a fete sponsored by the Odd Fellows. Report the Daily Evening Record:

When completed next Christmas, Stockton's new postoffice will be something more than an attractive building of steel and stone to house departments of the Federal Government. It will be a monument to the value of co-ordinated community action, a constant reminder of the importance of having a central clearing agency - a chamber of commerce - in which to concentrate the full force of a united business and public ambition.

After the parade, speech-making and deposit of various articles in the stone, construction was resumed. On 31 March 1933 the building was completed and opened to the public; the following day the post office began business. The Federal Building continued service unaltered for the next three years, with the landscaping completed soon after the opening. In 1936 local artists Frank Bergman and Moya Del Pino were each commissioned to paint an 8'x15' oil mural for the public lobby. Part of a New Deal relief program to aid struggling artists and place art into public buildings, the murals were two of 1371 commissions awarded by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts around the country between 1934 and 1943. The paintings, titled "Modern Transportation of the Mails" (Bergman) and "The U.S. Mail Stage Coach" (Del Pino), were similarly styled. Both reflected the Treasury's inclination toward somewhat romanticized versions of American historical or social subjects.

The operational history of the Stockton Federal Building over the past fifty years, not surprisingly, has been rather undistinguished - essentially a chronicle of the daily activities of the occupant agencies. Originally the main floor was occupied by the post office, with the spaces on the second floor housing offices of the Postal Inspector, two United States Commissioners, Army and Navy Recruiting stations, the War Department engineering staff, IRS, Bureau of Animal Industry and the Agricultural Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture. Today the post office continues to occupy most of the main level, although it has been demoted from main office to station status. The original first-floor offices of the Postmaster, Assistant Postmaster and the money order registry now house the IRS, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Veteran's Administration and the recruiting office for the U.S. Coast Guard. On the second

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floor are recruiting stations of the Army and the Marines, offices of the FBI, Immigration and Naturalization, the Small Business Administration, the District U.S. Probation Officer and a Civil Service examination room. The basement, originally and presently, has been used for storage, custodial and mechanical functions. Although the Federal Building in Stockton is not quite fifty years old, its shortfall is so minor as to be almost moot. The building is an important structure for Stockton, both architecturally and historically; a pivotal building in the central business district, it is a local landmark for the city and a regionally significant example of federal architectural design.

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