

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	OCT 14 1980
DATE ENTERED	7-6-81

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Four Building Act of 1926 Post Offices and Thirty-Two Public Works  
Administration Post Offices Thematic Resources

Use this *Message Page Part 560 1931 - 1941*  
AND/OR COMMON *Thematic Resources*

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

See individual inventory forms

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

(X) Thematic Group

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE           | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL            | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL           | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT         | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL            | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY              | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:            |

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Owner: United States Postal Service

STREET & NUMBER

Memphis Field Real Estate and Buildings Office

Agency: 1 North Front Street

CITY, TOWN

Memphis

VICINITY OF

STATE

TN 38103

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

See individual inventory forms

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Survey work carried out as an integral part of this thematic nomination

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Note: See individual inventory forms for specific descriptions.

All of the Post Offices included in this thematic nomination are located in Mississippi and were constructed in the late 1930's and early 1940's under the Public Building Act of 1926 or the Public Works Administration of the Federal Government, set up in 1933. The sites and their architects and builders (if known) are as follows:

Constructed under Public Building Act of 1926 — *NO — these are wrong*

Site	Architect	Builder
<u>Crystal Springs</u> <i>1941! This is a '33 Act Bldg. (PWA)</i>	Office of the Supervising Architect (OSA)	Dye-Mullins Const. Co. Columbus, MS
<u>Eupora</u> <i>1941! This is a '33 Act Bldg. (PWA)</i>	OSA	Algernon-Blair Montgomery, AL
<u>Macon</u> <i>1940! This is a PWA Bldg.</i>	OSA	Unknown
<u>Poplarville</u> <i>1941! This is PWA.</i>	OSA	H.D. White & Co. Chicago, IL

Constructed under Public Works Administration → *wrong info & includes 1926 Act Bldgs.*

Site	Architect	Builder
Amory	Unknown	Pittman Brothers New Orleans, LA
Bay St. Louis	Office of the Supervising Architect (OSA)	Dye-Mullins Const. Co. Columbus, MS
Batesville	OSA	H.D. White & Co. Chicago, IL
Belzoni	OSA	James C. Miller Campbellsville, KY
Booneville	Leroy Barton	Murphy Pound
Carthage	Shelby Olvy Yarborough	Unknown
Charleston	OSA	Unknown
Cleveland	OSA	Unknown
<u>Columbia</u> <i>Indiv. form says 1926 PWA Act</i>	Shourds & Bean	Dye-Mullins
Columbus	R. Stanley Brown	Murphy Pound
Durant	OSA	B.L. Knost Pass Christian, MS
Forest	OSA	Algernon-Blair Montgomery, AL
Hattiesburg	Juan G. Landry & Rathbone Depuys	Mathew Rauen Const. Co. Chicago, IL
Hazlehurst	OSA	Algernon-Blair
Houston	OSA	Charles Davis, Inc. Jacksonville, FL
Indianola	OSA	Unknown
<u>Kosciusko</u> <i>Indiv. form says 1926 Bldg. Act</i>	OSA	Algernon-Blair
Leland	OSA	Unknown
Lexington	Unknown	Algernon-Blair
Louisville	OSA	Dye-Mullins

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Lumberton	- indiv. form says 1926 Bldg. Act	OSA	Algernon-Blair
Magnolia		OSA	Pittman Bros.
New Albany		OSA	Unknown
Newton		OSA	Murphy Pound
Okolona		OSA	Unknown
Philadelphia		OSA	Unknown
Picayune		OSA	Henry I. Flynn Const. Co.
Pontotoc		OSA	Unknown
Ripley		OSA	Algernon-Blair
Tylertown		OSA	Dye-Mullins
Waynesboro		OSA	Chandler Const. Co. Springfield, IL
Winona	indiv. form says 1926 Bldg. Act	OSA	Unknown

Four themes are interwoven in this research group: 1) the circumstances of construction involving the Public Building Act of 1926 and the Public Works Administration, 2) commonalities of architectural style, 3) artworks contained within twenty-eight of the thirty-six buildings, 4) small town settings.

Together these structures represent a significant government response to public need at a difficult time in this country's development, following the most severe depression in its history. The first Public Buildings Act of 1913 and the second Public Building Act of 1926 were supplemented in 1933 by Congress, on the urging of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, with the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. Between 1933 and 1941 a tremendous amount of construction resulted in the United States, including four post offices in Mississippi constructed under the 1926 Act and thirty-two post offices in Mississippi constructed under 1933 PWA legislation. See the accompanying document entitled "Federal Construction Work, 1913-1941," for a more complete discussion of such work carried out across the country under various legislative programs.

Stylistic analysis and evaluation of architectural quality may be subdivided as follows. An initial group of six buildings shows outstanding architectural qualities; Columbus, Leland, Winona and Lumberton exemplify the Colonial Revival Style. They share such features as hipped or gabled roofs with cupolas, brickwork articulated by such details as quoins, classically inspired wooden and limestone cornices, and by other limestone elements such as belt courses and water tables, decorative window lintels, and especially entryway elements ranging from frontispieces to retilinear and curvilinear, projecting porticoes. The Columbia structure, on the other hand, is a lone--but excellent--example of Beaux Arts Classicism within the group. Finally the Carthage site combines Colonial Revival and Style Moderne qualities with an exceptional result, and at Hattiesburg a truly extraordinary Style Moderne structure was built including exceptional interior and exterior lighting fixtures and interior furniture and wall finishes as well as the typically massive, prismatic body of the building itself.

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A second group of twenty-five buildings represents less extraordinary but still skillfully conceived Colonial Revival Style structures (Lexington and Eupora also show some Style Moderne qualities). This group may be divided into three sub-groups arranged in order of merit: Amory, Belzoni, Booneville, Crystal Springs, Forest, Hazlehurst, Houston, Magnolia, New Albany, Tylertown; and Cleveland, Durant, Eupora, Kosciusko, Lexington, Louisville, Newton, Pontotoc, Waynesboro; and Batesville, Bay St. Louis, Charleston, Macon, Picayune, Ripley. These buildings share similar, though less developed features with the first group.

A third group shows limited architectural merit but displays occasional Colonial Revival Style features. This group includes Indianola, Okolona, Philadelphia, Poplarville.

These post office buildings were often designed, according to Karel Yasko,<sup>1</sup> in collective studios or ateliers in Washington, D.C., often under the guidance of well-known practitioners; George Howe, for instance, participated in this unique process which grew out of post-depression attempts by the Federal Government to give work to unemployed architects. Although many of these post offices have architects' names associated with them, even to specific designations on cornerstones, they often cannot be precisely attributed to any one hand; Mr. Yasko emphasized this point. The same designs were often repeatedly constructed, both in Mississippi and across the country. Names of architects and builders are shown in the preceding list, but attribution of designer must often simply be made to the Office of the Supervising Architect.

Many of the buildings contain mural paintings and sculpture completed under the Department of the Treasury's Section of the Fine Arts Program. These sites and the artists responsible are as follows:

<u>Town</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Art Work Title</u>
Amory*	John McCrady	Amory, Mississippi--1889
Batesville	Eve Kottgon	Cotton Plantation
Bay St. Louis	Louis Raynaud	Life on the Coast
Biloxi		Bill of Rights
		U.S. Constitution
		Declaration of Independence (documents in a case)

\*Mural painting unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>1</sup>Karel Yasko is the Counselor for Fine Arts and Historic Preservation, Public Buildings Service, Washington, D.C. Mr. Yasko conducted the Fine Arts Inventory for the United States which included post offices and post office mural paintings. Mr. Yasko is the country's leading authority on PWA post offices and their art work. He was interviewed in August of 1979 in Washington, D.C. by Michael Fazio.

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<u>Town</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Art Work Title</u>
Booneville*	Stefan Hirsch	Scenic and Historic Booneville
Carthage (sculpture)	Peter Dalton	Lumbermen Rolling a Log
Columbus	Beulah Bettersworth	Out of the Soil
Crystal Springs	Henry L. Cagnina	Harvest
Durant	Isidore Teberoff	Erosion, Reclamation, and Conservation of the Soil
Eupora	Tom Savage	Cotton Farm
Forest	Julian Binford	Forest Loggers
Hazlehurst	Auriel Bessemer	Life in Mississippi Cotton Belt
Houston	Byron Burford, Jr.	Post Near Houston, Natchez Trace, 1803
Indianola	Beulah Bettersworth	White Gold in the Delta (destroyed)
Leland	Stuart R. Purser	Ginnin' Cotton
Laurel		Bill of Rights
		U.S. Constitution
		Declaration of Independence (documents)
Louisville	Karl Wolfe	Crossroads, Mississippi
Macon	Douglas Crockwell	Signing of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit
Magnolia	John H. Fyfe	Magnolia, 1880
		Cotton Harvest
		July 4th Celebration
New Albany	Robert C. Purdy	Milking Time
Newton	Mary and Franklin Boggs	Economic Life in Newton in Early '40's
Okolona	Harold Egan	The Richness of the Soil (not present) (destroyed?)
Pascagoula	Lorin Thompson	Legend of the Singing River (not present) (destroyed?)
Picayune	Donald H. Robertson	Lumber Region of Mississippi
Pontotoc	Joseph Pollet	Wedding of Ortiz and Sewanea, Christmas, 1540
Ripley (sculpture)	George Aarons	Development of the Postal Service
Tylertown	Lucile Blanch	Rural Mississippi from Early Times

*not part of nomination*

\*Mural painting unless otherwise indicated.

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Waynesboro

Ross E. Braught

Waynesboro Landscape

See individual inventory forms for further descriptions of this artwork. See accompanying document entitled "Biographical Sketches of PWA Artists" for further information about the artists as known. See accompanying document entitled "The Department of the Treasury's Section of the Fine Arts Program" for a broader discussion of this art work program as it was carried out across the country.

The survey was carried out by a four man team:

1. Michael Fazio, Architect, Professor of Architecture (with specialization in architectural history) Mississippi State University
2. William E. Parrish, Ph.D, Head of the Department of History, Mississippi State University
3. Tomas Blackwell, student, School of Architecture, Mississippi State University (also holding a degree from Milsaps College in history)
4. Curtis Franks, Ph. D. candidate, Department of History, Mississippi State University

All thirty-six sites were visited by individual team members. Buildings were photographed. Postal employees were interviewed, including retired employees where possible. Post office files were examined. Local libraries and newspaper files were examined. General library research was carried out on the subjects of Federal building programs and the Department of the Treasury's Section of Fine Arts Program. Archival work in the Department of Archives and History in Jackson was done, including studies of WPA materials still uninventoried and in boxes, and investigation of newspaper files there.

## 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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

See individual inventory forms for specific statements of significance. This significance falls into four areas: 1) politics/government as the buildings relate to the Public Building Act of 1926 and the Public Works Administration of 1933, 2) architecture as most of the structures are stylistically cohesive, 3) art, because twenty-eight sites contain mural paintings or sculpture produced under the Treasury Department's Section of the Fine Arts, and 4) small town settings.

The first Public Buildings Act in the United States was enacted in 1913 but little construction was completed under it. Yet the need for Federal buildings, including post offices, grew increasingly acute during the 1920's. Consequently, in 1926 a second Public Building Act became law. Some buildings were built as a result of this legislation but, subsequently, the Depression all but stopped PBA construction. In 1933 Franklin Delano Roosevelt set out to alleviate the problem of unemployment in the country by moving along two fronts: relief and public works. To stimulate the public works he motivated Congress to set up the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. The PWA acted upon requests by local municipalities, and if these requests were approved building funds were allocated. From 1933 to 1941 a tremendous amount of construction resulted, including projects in Mississippi as discussed following. The post offices within this thematic nomination are significant because four (Crystal Springs, Eupora, Macon, and Poplarville) were constructed under the Building Act of 1926 and the remainder were constructed under the 1933 PWA legislation. See the accompanying document entitled "Federal Construction Work, 1913-1941" for a more complete discussion of such work as carried out across the country under the various legislative programs mentioned above.

In terms of architectural significance these structures present an interesting spectrum of design idioms in active use in the 1930's and 1940's. The numerous Colonial Revival Style examples represent the most cohesive collection of structures in this style in Mississippi. The Style Moderne examples are among only a very few buildings in this style ever constructed in the state. As architecture these post offices represent a significant governmental response to public need at a difficult time in this country's development, following the most severe depression in its history. The design process, primarily that of ateliers working as components of the Office of the Supervising Architect, was unique in this country's history.

Twenty-eight of these buildings contain (or once contained) mural paintings or sculpture completed under the Department of the Treasury's Section of Fine Arts Program. For a complete listing of the sites included, see "Section 7--Description." This program was begun by Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the urging of his friend George Biddle, and was intended to give financial aid to artists as well as to provide art in public buildings. Edward Bruce of the Treasury Department was chosen to head up the project and proposed a Division of Fine Arts in the Treasury to be funded by Public Works Administration funds with revenues to be generated by a decree that one percent of each building's construction

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Statement of Significance--Continued (2)

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cost could be used for building embellishments. The program's first phase, the Public Works of Art Project, was actually funded by the Civil Works Administration and produced some 15,663 pieces of art and employed 3,749 artists. These works were chosen, as were all subsequent submissions, by regional juries (subject to final approval in Washington) from small-scaled competition schemes submitted by artists. Later Bruce set up the Section of Painting and Sculpture under the direction of supervising architect, Louis Simon. Throughout these programs, work was encouraged which concentrated upon themes dealing with local history, industry, landscapes, and the like. Ultimately some 15,426 artists entered into 190 competitions. Murals were the most popular medium; some 1124 being produced in all, along with 289 contracts for sculpture. Work under the "Section" continued until curtailed by World War II.

The twenty-eight sites in this thematic nomination which contain art work, include sculpture at Carthage and Ripley and oil-paint-on-canvas murals at the remaining sites. Their subject matter (as listed in Section 7--Description) was chosen by the respective artists to reflect local circumstances of life in the communities in which the murals were placed. The most popular themes are historic events which occurred nearby, local agriculture and industry, and American patriotic circumstances. The style of the work tends, as it did across the country, to social realism often depicted by means of distorted forms. Critics have argued over the virtues of the New Deal arts programs and the quality of the art itself. However, there can be no doubt that the post office art works in Mississippi represent a special resource in the state and for the country. Many of the murals are in a poor state of repair. National Register status should be sought in order to protect these pieces of art and encourage their restoration and preservation. Many of the artists who created this work have fallen into relative obscurity; their careers demand further study. In many cases their New Deal art work represents their most significant artistic achievements. See accompanying document entitled "Biographical Sketches of PWA Artists" for further information about artists as known.

All of these post offices are located in small towns; only Hattiesburg (pop. 38,000) might be considered an exception. In such communities the triad of Post Office, City Hall, and (often) Courthouse are extraordinary social and image elements. These governmental public buildings lie at the heart of small town civic and governmental life. Also, while an analysis of town growth patterns was not a part of this study, there can be no doubt about the significant impact of these structures on the development (physical and economic) of each community. In a large city a post office may be lost amidst the dense urban fabric, but in a small town a post office is a centerpiece, a source of civic pride, and a link with the world at large.

Although all of the properties nominated here are less than fifty years old, they warrant inclusion on the National Register as a thematic group because of the unique governmental/political circumstances which led to their creation. Furthermore, the cohesive then (1930's and 1940's) topical character of the architectural styles in evidence and the unique atelier method by which most of the structures were designed gives these post offices an architectural significance which, if only moderate in national terms, is paramount in their small town Mississippi settings. Furthermore, at

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no time in our country's history have artists been so mobilized and their work given so broad an audience to so significant a cross section of the American public. The art styles and thematic material found in this artwork represent the results of a unique governmental response to the Fine Arts in a peculiar period in this country's history. Collectively, these murals and sculpture capture an image of Mississippi at a particular time in history, an image which does not exist so completely and with such quality in any other artistic medium. Mississippi shared in this unique period of American history and should be among the first in the Nation to formally recognize the important historic resources created by the special circumstances of the time. Finally, these post office buildings are important local landmarks in each of their small town settings; they are critical to the life, activity, and economy of the thirty-six communities which they serve.

The results of this survey and nomination will be used by the United States Postal Service in coordinating its program of post office building preservation, modification, and expansion. National Register nomination would assure proper supervision of these activities. This survey gives the postal service its most complete physical record of a selected group of its buildings and their artwork in Mississippi.

COMPOSITE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF ARTISTS

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON ARTISTS  
MENTIONED IN NOMINATION FORMS

The following information was taken from the Original Contract Files of the National Archives, Washington, D.C. and represents information as of 1943. All of the art works were done under contract from either the Section of Fine Arts of the U.S. Treasury Department or the Section of Fine Arts of the Federal Works Agency.

AARONS, George Manuel (b. April 6, 1896; St. Petersburg, Russia) is the sculptor of the plaster-of-paris sculp-relief "Development of the Postal Service" in the Ripley, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and at the Beaux Arts Institute of Design.

BESSEMER, Auriel (b. February 27, 1909; Grand Rapids, Michigan) is the artists of the oil on canvass "Life in the Mississippi Cotton Belt" in the Hazelhurst, Mississippi, Post Office. She studied at Columbia University, the Master Institute of Roerich Museum, and the National Academy of Design. She was the director, registrar, and curator of the Gallery of Modern Masters in Washington and painted murals for the American Museum of Natural History in New York. She also did the murals in the post offices at Arlington, Virginia, and Winnsboro, South Carolina.

BETTERSWORTH, Beulah (b. August 22, 1894; St. Louis, Missouri) is the artist of the oil on canvass "Out of the Soil" in the Columbus, Mississippi, Post Office. She studied under George Bellows, Frank V. DuMond, Charles Hawthorne, John Sloan, and John Carroll. She also did the mural in the Indianola, Mississippi, Post Office.

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BINFORD, Julien III (b. December 25, 1908; Richmond, Virginia) is the artist of the oil on canvass "Forest Loggers" in the Forest, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and in Paris, where he also exhibited. He taught at the Richmond School of Art and at the College of William and Mary. He was awarded the Ryerson Fellowship. He also did the mural in the Saunders Postal Station, Richmond, Virginia.

BLANCH, Lucile (b. December 31, 1895; Hawley, Minnesota) is the artist of the tempera on plaster wall "Rural Mississippi: From Early Days to Present" in the Tylertown, Mississippi, Post Office. She studied at the Minneapolis Art Institute and with the Art Students League. She was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. She taught at Sarah Lawrence College and the Ringling School of Art and was a resident artist at Converse College. She also did the murals in the post offices at Flemingsburg, Kentucky, Appalachia, Virginia, Sparta, Georgia, and Fort Pierce, Florida.

BOGGS, Franklin and Mary were the artists of "Economic Life in Newton, 1942" in the Newton, Mississippi, Post Office. They were later divorced. He taught sculpture at Beloit College.

BRAUGHT, Ross E. (b. April 6, 1898; Carlisle, Pennsylvania) is the artist of the oil on canvass "Waynesboro Landscape" in the Waynesboro, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and taught at the Kansas City Art Institute and Cornell University. Others of his murals are in the Kansas City Civic Auditorium.

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BURFORD, Byron, Jr. (b. July 12, 1920; Jackson, Mississippi) is the artist of the oil tempera on canvass "Post Near Houston, Natchez Trace, 1803" in the Houston, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the University of Iowa under Grant Wood, Fletcher Martin, and Emil Ganso.

CROCKWELL, S. Douglas (b. April 29, 1904; Columbus, Ohio) is the artist of the oil on canvass "Signing Treaty of Dancing Rabbit, September 27, 1830" in the Macon, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the St. Louis School of Fine Art and the American Academy of Art in Chicago. He was awarded the Arunden Prize for the Best Figure Painting (1931) by the St. Louis Artists Guild and the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce Prize for Best Industrial Painting (1932). He also did the murals in the post offices at Endicott, New York; Glen Falls, New York; and White River Junction, Vermont.

DALTON, Peter (b. December 26, 1894; Buffalo, New York) is the sculptor of the sculpture relief in wood "Lumbermen Rolling a Log" in the Carthage, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, the Art Students League, and with Robert Aitken at the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York. He taught at the Beaux Arts Institute and the Albright School. His work may also be found in Radio City, New York.

FYFE, John Hamilton (b. August 10, 1896; Gilby, North Dakota) is the artist of the murals "Cotton Harvest", "Magnolia, 1880", and "July 4 Celebration at Sheriff Laban Bacot's" in the Magnolia, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Art Students League, and the Society of Illustrators School. He also did

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the mural in the post office at Camden, Tennessee. He has done magazine covers for The New Yorker and Saturday Evening Post and illustrations for Colliers and Saturday Evening Post.

HIRSCH, Stefan (b. January 2, 1899; Nuremberg, Germany) is the artist of the tempera on canvass "Scenic and Historic Booneville" in the Booneville, Mississippi, Post Office. He was a pupil of Hamilton Easter Field. He served as chairman of the Art Department at Bennington College. He also did the mural in the post office at Aiken, South Carolina.

KOTTGEN, Eve (b. June 18, 1903; London, England) is the artist of the oil on canvass "Cotton Plantation" in the Batesville, Mississippi, Post Office. She studied with the Art Students League and was a pupil of Guy Pene DuBois and Boardman Robinson.

LaCAGNINA, Henry is the artist of the mural "Harvest" in the Crystal Springs, Mississippi, Post Office. Nothing is known of her background.

McCRADY, John (b. 1911) is the artist of the oil on canvass (tempera underlay) "Amory, Mississippi, 1889" in the Amory, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the University of Pennsylvania, the New Orleans Art School, and the Art Students League. He was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. His wife, Mary Basso of New Orleans, was also an artist.

POLLET, Joseph (b. October 17, 1897; Switzerland) is the artist of the mural "Wedding of Ortez and Soawana, Christmas, 1540" in the Pontotoc, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied with John Sloan and probably with the Art Students League.

PURDY, Robert Cleaver is the artist of the oil on canvass "Milking Time" in the New Albany, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis. He also did the mural in the post office at Princeton, Kentucky.

PURSER, Stuart R. (b. February 8, 1907; Stamps, Arkansas) is the artist of the tempera on canvass "Ginnin Cotton" in the Leland, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and at Louisiana College, Pineville. He taught at the Art Institute of Chicago, Washington State College, and served as Head of the Art Department at Louisiana College. He also did the murals in the post offices at Ferriday, Louisiana; Gretna, Louisiana; and Carrolton, Alabama.

RAYNAUD, Louis (b. June 18, 1905; New Orleans, Louisiana) is the artist of the oil on canvass "Life on the Coast" in the Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Grand Central Art School in New York, and in Europe. In 1929 he won the Edgar B. Davis Prize at the exhibition of the San Antonio Art League. In 1933 his work was voted the most popular in the exhibition of the new Orleans Art Association. The following year he won first prize in black and white in the same exhibition.

SAVAGE, Tom (b. October 4, 1908; Fort Dodge, Iowa) is the artist of the oil on canvass "Cotton Farm" in the Eupora, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Layton School of Art, Milwaukee, and the Stone City, Iowa, Art Colony. He was also a pupil of Grant Wood at the University of Iowa. He also did the murals in the post offices at New Hampton, Iowa, and Jefferson, Iowa.

TOBEROFF, Isidore (b. 1920; Brooklyn, New York) is the artist of the alongesso primed canvass "Erosion, Reclamation and Conservation of the Soil" in the Durant, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the National Academy of Design.

WOLFE, Karl (b. January 25, 1904; Brookhaven, Mississippi) is the artist of the oil on canvass "Crossroads, Mississippi" in the Louisville, Mississippi, Post Office. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and in Europe.

No information was found for Simka Simkhovitch, Harold Egan, Lorin Thompson, and Donald H. Robertson.

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The Department of the Treasury's Section  
of the Fine Arts Program

That the economic depression which took a firm grip on America in the 1930's had far-reaching and prolonged ramifications is well documented. Though financial hardship and deprivation are most commonly associated with the era, positive and fruitful strides were made in some areas. The vastly increased programs of federal subsidies to the cultural arts which evolved under the Roosevelt administration is one such area currently the focus of renewed interest and scholarship.

By the time Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated in March, 1933, the economic situation had become most severe, and month by month an already desperate situation grew worse. The catastrophe hit the artistic community in the form of greatly reduced sales and commissions.<sup>1</sup> Prices had also dropped precipitously. A 165 market price index for art in 1929 had withered to 50 by 1933. Art importation was down by over 80 percent and the production of artists' materials was nearly cut in half. With no end in sight to the current economic crisis, a feeling of numbness and despair had descended on the artistic community.<sup>2</sup>

George Biddle, artist, member of a prominent Philadelphia family, and classmate of President Roosevelt at Groton and Harvard, believed in 1933 that the federal government could produce "a real spurt in the arts" and perhaps help out the artists at the same time.<sup>3</sup> American artists traveling in Mexico in the 1920's had been impressed with that government's immensely successful mural program sponsored by Mexican President Alvaro Obregon. Under that program the best artists of the country were employed at workman's wages to cover buildings in Mexico City with murals expressing the ideals of the Mexican revolution. Biddle believed similar results could be obtained in this country, and so he wrote to his old schoolmate Roosevelt with his initial idea to organize a group of muralists and decorate one public building or a test case.<sup>4</sup> Roosevelt was indeed receptive to the idea, and passed the proposal on the Edward Bruce, advisor to the Treasury, lawyer, newspaper editor, and successful artist in his own right. Bruce was particularly well-suited for heading up such a program, bringing into play his own considerable managerial and diplomatic expertise. In addition, he and the advisors he gathered about him had very specific ideas about what such a program might accomplish. Bruce himself remarked, "If we can create the demand for beauty in our lives, our slums will go. The ugliness will be torn down and beauty will take its place."<sup>5</sup> Forbes Watson, technical director of the project which eventually resulted, went even further. He believed the government program could effect a complete change in the economic and social relationship between the artist and his fellow citizens. Emancipated from dependence on the plutocracy, the artist could develop a larger, simpler, and more natural commerce in art and come into closer contact with American life."<sup>6</sup>

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Biddle had explained in his letter to Roosevelt that the money to pay for such a program was already available without any additional appropriations. Under the terms of an act of Congress passed during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, one percent of the cost of all government buildings was set aside for embellishment with painting and sculpture. In practice this fund had hardly been drawn upon at all.

Bruce proposed to create a Division of Fine Arts in the Treasury to be funded by these existing Treasury and Public Works Administration funds. At the time the Treasury held \$144,618,000 to build 233 federal buildings: post offices, federal court and office buildings, marine hospitals, and executive department buildings in Washington's federal triangle. As a further guarantee, Bruce asked that Roosevelt by executive order, set aside one percent of the cost of each building for embellishments. Bruce did not get this guarantee until six years later, in 1939 but he did receive permission to form an organization, which became known as the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP).<sup>8</sup> This first phase was in reality a crash relief program, administered by the Treasury but funded by the Civil Works Administration (CWA). Undoubtedly the sympathetic support of the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, Treasury Secretary Morgenthau and his wife, Harry Hopkins of the CWA, and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins helped to insure the success of the program.

The PWAP lasted six months, from December 1933 to June 1934. It employed 3749 artists who produced 15,663 pieces of art and craft at a cost of \$1,312,000. Because the program had been so carefully thought out and executed by Bruce, producing tangible results with minimal personnel and funding, it was generally judged a great success and thus paved the way for more permanent programs and funding.<sup>12</sup>

The organization which Bruce had devised was decentralized in nature. The country was divided into regions, each with a regional chairman and advisor's committee selected by the central office. The regional groups actually selected and supervised the artists on the local level.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, of all the pieces of art created under the PWAP, none had received as much local or national attention as the murals. Numerically, some 400 completed murals comprised less than three percent of the items produced, but they commanded disproportionate praise. From that point on, government-sponsored art became chiefly mural art in the public mind.<sup>14</sup> The PWAP "brought to light no genius, but many artists gained national recognition through the project and several held their first successful exhibitions."<sup>15</sup>

In October 1934, Bruce set up the Section of Painting and Sculpture, again within the Treasury Department as had been the PWAP. Since the eighteenth century, the Secretary of the Treasury had been responsible for all federal buildings, with the Supervising Architect as executive officer. Thus the "Section", as it came to be known, was placed under the jurisdiction of Louis Simon, Supervising Architect in the 1930's. Simon was in charge of a huge emergency program for building post offices and courthouses all over the United States. In addition to the force of regular civil

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service architects and draftsmen a group of twenty or more prominent architects from all over the country had been engaged by the Procurement Division to help make plans for the new federal buildings. In many cases they brought their staffs with them, setting up designing offices within the larger organization.<sup>16</sup> Since the overall building program was designed to increase employment generally, these architects had to put up with the Section's insistence on placing art in their buildings. Understandably, they were reluctant to create special spaces for murals or sculpture that might not materialize. This was because the one percent allotted for artwork was not guaranteed. If the actual construction of a building exceeded estimated costs, the building contained no art.<sup>17</sup> In practice this money materialized for only about one third of the new buildings. On the larger post offices and courthouses the amount spent for painting and sculpture was usually less than one percent of the building's cost.<sup>18</sup>

At the center of the Section's plan for dispensing art in public buildings was the competition. Before the program was phased out in the spring of 1943, 15,426 artists submitted 40,426 sketches in 190 competitions. Each competition concerned embellishment of a specified building chosen by the Section for its mural and sculpture spaces and the size of its financial reservation for art. In a typical competition the Section requested a "local authority" in the vicinity of the building to chair a competition committee consisting of the architect of the building and one to three people, more often than not suggested by the Section. The amount of the prize varied since it depended on the difference between the appropriation and actual cost. Usually the Section was able to guarantee muralists about \$20 per square foot and sculptors a comparable amount. Artists learned of the competitions from the committee members, local newspapers, and the Section "Bulletin." The competition committee, or juries, sent interested artists their suggestions and blueprints of the building. Most competitions were "invited" (open to artists selected by the Section) or were limited to artists born or residing in a particular locale, state, or region. Competition rules required artists to submit designs, generally at 3-inch to 1 foot scale. About three months after announcing a competition, the jury looked over the offerings, made its recommendation, and shipped all the designs to Washington. There the Section picked a winner, rarely disregarding the local jury recommendation. The winning artist signed a contract, furnished a performance bond, provided his own materials, and paid for whatever help he required. The Treasury paid one installment of the award when the artist signed his contract, a second when the Procurement Division pronounced the work half completed, and the third and largest when the artist installed the work and received Procurement Division approval.<sup>19</sup>

While the Section held 190 competitions it eventually awarded 1,371 commissions. Most of the commissions for which there were no competitions went to artists who the Section felt submitted

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exceptional designs in previous competitions. Thus, it was not so important to win a competition as to enter one and make an impression on the Section staff.<sup>20</sup>

Edward Bruce and his Section staff had definite ideas when it came to subject matter. Whether from desire to please the federal patron, or from aesthetic or philosophic conviction, Bruce insisted that artists interpret the "American Scene". For its local competitions the Section generally suggested subject matter dealing with local history, past and present, local industry, pursuits, or landscapes. The goal of the PWAP and the Section was a permanent record of the aspirations and achievements of the American people.<sup>21</sup>

Never a large program, the Section had produced its first competitions and commissions in the autumn of 1934. It was not set up to engage in wide spread relief and the Roosevelt administration saw this as a weakness when compared to more encompassing relief efforts. The works Progress Administration (WPA, created in 1935) resulted from this decision to provide more help to the artistic community at large. The Federal Arts Project (FAP) was formed within a larger program called Federal Project Number One, which also included drama, music, and writing. It started in August of 1935, was administered according to the relief rules of the WPA, lasted until June 1943, and cost about \$35,000,000. Slightly over 5000 persons were employed at its peak.<sup>22</sup>

It was inevitable that the Section and the WPA/FAP programs would come into conflict because of their similar natures and orientations. Both could be justified on grounds that they kept the skills of artists from deteriorating at a time when private commissions and sales were few. Both units also aspired to make art a larger part of American life and thereby improve the quality of that life. Yet it was suggested that the Treasury was after "quality" work and that exposing the people to consistently good art would achieve the goal, while Holger Cahill, FAP chief, operated under the assumption that large production and mass participation could bring about the desired changes. In the public's mind, there was never any distinction between the two, and though all the murals encountered in this study are actually Section work, it is common to hear them referred to as "those WPA murals".<sup>23</sup>

The achievements of the Section, and presumably its ability to operate on leftovers from building funds, so impressed Roosevelt that he told Mrs. Morgenthau as early as 1936 that plans ought to be made "looking toward making the Art Section a permanent part of the government". Two years later, in 1938, Secretary Morgenthau issued an order which changed the name of the Section of Painting and Sculpture to Section of Fine Arts and made it a permanent section of the Treasury Department, and authorized it to "continue and further extend its activities."<sup>24</sup>

During nine years of activity the Section awarded 1,124 mural contracts for which it had paid \$1,472,191 and 289 contracts for sculpture costing \$563,529. The average price for mural commissions

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was \$1,356, and for sculpture \$1,936. Administration costs were \$393,516.<sup>25</sup> Of the 1,118 Section-decorated buildings in 1,083 cities tallied in the Section's last formal report, the vast majority were post office.<sup>26</sup> The Section was curtailed by President Roosevelt's budget message of January 3, 1941, eliminating all non-defense projects. It ended in July 1943.

Human economic relief was the underlying and principal motive behind all the New Deal's art programs. That is why they were so easily accepted by the public. Obviously the programs allowed a good many artists to remain artists. Individuals who approved of the relief and pump-priming programs frequently cited the arts projects as supreme examples of the New Deal pledge to bring the more abundant life. Those individuals who disagreed with Roosevelt's experiments for recovery often zeroed in on the art projects as blatant examples of frivolous spending.<sup>28</sup>

The Section of Fine Arts was responsible for the inclusion of 26 murals and two sculptural programs in the 36 PWA post offices built in Mississippi during the 1930's and early 1940's. Collectively and individually they comprise a valuable record of a transitional and pivotal period in the history of the state and the nation. Form any Mississippi towns it was the first work of original art in the community, and thus served as a source of pride or raised the art consciousness of many patrons. Ultimately, the Section resulted in new attitudes, important experiments, and the emergence of some original talents, as well as for more commissions than ever before.

SEP 14 1947

Notes

<sup>1</sup> Francis V. O'Conner, The New Deal Art Project: An Anthology of Memoirs (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972), p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Richard D. McKinzie, The New Deal for Artist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> O'Conner, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> McKinzie, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> O'Connor, p. 86.

<sup>8</sup> McKinzie, pp. 36-37.

<sup>9</sup> O'Conner, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> McKinzie, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> O'Conner, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> McKinzie, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>16</sup> O'Conner, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> McKinzie, p. 38.

<sup>18</sup> O'Conner, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> McKinzie, p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> McKinzie, p. 51.

<sup>21</sup> O'Conner, p. 37.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> McKinzie, p. 38-39.

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25 O'Conner, p. 20.

26 McKinzie, p. 66.

27 O'Conner, p. 20.

28 McKinzie, p. 173.

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Includes "The New Deal and the Arts" as  
well as general material on the Public  
Building Service.

Interview with Karel Yasko

August, 1979. Washington, D.C.

Mr. Yasko conducted the Fine Arts Inventory for  
the United States which included post office  
mural paintings. He is the country's authority  
on PWA post offices and their artwork.

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## Federal Construction Work, 1913-1941

The first general public buildings act passed by Congress was on March 4, 1913. In no sense was this act an attempt to solve the acute housing problem for the federal agencies, because there was no comprehensive study made of the federal housing needs as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the act called for what was referred to as an "omnibus" type of construction. What this meant was that the act called for specific work at definite limits of cost and at places that were determined by the committee of Congress that prepared the bill.<sup>2</sup> Due to the blatant deficiencies of the act, there was a growing conviction that the course being pursued was unsound economically as well as politically.<sup>3</sup>

It was due to the inadequacy of the act passed in 1913 that the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General addressed a joint letter to the House of Representatives on December 30, 1922. The letter emphasized the urgent need for larger federal buildings, particularly for the Post Office Department and the Internal Revenue Bureau, who were considered the greatest sufferers from inadequate space.<sup>4</sup>

On February 6, 1923, a second letter was submitted to the House of Representatives by the same two officials. Not only did this letter re-emphasize the urgent need for additional Federal buildings, it also pointed out that the government was paying a great deal of money for the annual rental of commercial space.<sup>5</sup> These officials offered the opinion that more money could be saved over the long run if new Federal buildings were constructed. In addition to the savings that eventually would be realized, the efficiency of government em-

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ployees and officials would be increased tremendously.

The seriousness of the federal housing situation and the way in which members of Congress perceived the problem is evident in the number of public building bills introduced. There still remained, however, a number of Congressmen that clung to the concept of the "omnibus" type of construction. In time these Congressmen abandoned this concept as they realized that it met with little favor in the country as a whole and that getting it enacted was almost impossible. Consequently, a new public buildings act was passed by both houses of Congress and approved by the President on May 25, 1926.<sup>6</sup>

The act provided for an expenditure of \$100 million for construction work outside the District of Columbia and \$50 million for construction in the District of Columbia.<sup>7</sup> The act stipulated further that not more than \$25 million of the entire amount authorized could be spent annually, and not more than \$10 million of that amount could be spent in the District of Columbia.<sup>8</sup> The amount that the various states were to receive from the above monies depended upon need, the basis of its population, the size of its area, and the amount of annual postal receipts collected. States with post offices with annual receipts that exceeded \$10 thousand were to receive at least two buildings per year.<sup>9</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Public Building Act of 1926 was a positive move by the government in its attempt to rectify the federal housing problem for federal agencies. However, the act like its predecessor had its limitations. The act of 1926 denied the Secretary of the Treasury the power to enter contracts for specific projects. However,

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the act was amended several times,<sup>10</sup> each amendment providing for larger expenditures and making the terms under which expenditures could be made more liberal.

Despite the limitations of the act of 1926, funds provided led to the completion of twenty-two buildings, while twenty-one others were under contract during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1929.<sup>11</sup> However, the effects of the depression, which had started in the fall of 1929 were beginning to be keenly felt throughout the country. President Herbert Hoover, in a message to Congress, announced that not only would the Federal government speed up its public works, but he would request states and municipalities to do likewise.<sup>12</sup> The President also urged the appropriation of \$100 million to \$150 million to provide public works employment during the emergency.

With the continuation of the depression during the fiscal year 1931-1932 and the rapid decrease in construction by the private business sector, federal construction became an important factor in the economy. However, by the end of the fiscal year ending in June, 1932, industrial construction had slumped from \$949 million to \$74 million and unemployment rose to thirteen million.<sup>13</sup>

With the depression deepening, President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched his New Deal program in March, 1933. This program attacked unemployment on two fronts: relief and public works. Initially the Federal government made loans to states for public relief, but this method was supplanted by the issuing of grants when the Federal Emergency Relief Administration was created by an act of Congress approved on May 12, 1933. Approximately a month later the National

Hand  
note

Recovery Act was signed on June 16, 1933.<sup>14</sup> Title II of this measure authorized an expenditure of \$3.3 million for a public works program. In accordance with the provisions of the act the President set up a new agency, the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works<sup>15</sup> to administer the program.

Allotments under the PWA were divided into two classes - Federal projects and non-Federal projects. Federal projects were, for the most part, planned and designed by architectural and engineering organizations of various departments of the Federal government. Non-Federal projects were planned and designed by architects and engineers in private practice.<sup>16</sup>

Regardless of the nature of the project, Federal or non-Federal, action was initiated by municipalities or other local governmental units, who filed an application through the PWA. The application was then submitted to the President's Advisory Committee of Allotments. The Committee was composed of representatives of government, business, labor, agriculture, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. If the project was approved the Treasury Department was instructed to issue a warrant, and the Comptroller General notified the agency (PWA) that funds had been allocated and had been placed in the treasury.<sup>17</sup>

During the course of the depression, there were forty departments, bureaus, and agencies of the Federal government that constructed buildings under the PWA. The largest of these were done by the former Public Building Branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury,<sup>18</sup> which is now known as the Public Buildings Administration of the Federal Works Agency. The former Public Building Branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury built post offices, courthouses, federal office buildings, quarantine and immigration stations, Coast Guard

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stations, border inspection stations, marine hospitals, and in addition carried out work for the State Department, Department of Justice, and the Public Health service.<sup>19</sup> Thus the majority of the Federal building during the depression, 1933-1941, was carried out <sup>under</sup> by the PWA. *by the PBE of Treas.*

The state of Mississippi benefited tremendously from the construction of Federal buildings under the Public Building Act of 1926 and the construction of Federal buildings under the PWA. *need* The following forms will attest to the significance of the Federal building program to the state. Thirty-two of the following Federal buildings were constructed under PWA program and the remaining four were built under the Public Building Act of 1926.

Notes

<sup>1</sup> The History of Federal Construction Work Since The (First) World War (unpublished typescript, General Services Administration Office, Washington, D.C.), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> The Public Building Act of 1926 was amended four times. The first amendment to the act was approved January 13, 1928; the second amendment was approved on February 24, 1928; the third amendment, the Keys - Elliott Act, was approved on March 31, 1930; and the fourth amendment was approved on February 26, 1931.

<sup>11</sup> The History of Federal Construction Work Since The (First) World War, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Herbert Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Great Depression, 1929-1941 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), p. 42.

<sup>13</sup> William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt And The New Deal, 1932-1940 (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 52-53; See also Arthur W. MacMahon; John D. Millet; and Gladys Ogden, The Administration of Work Relief (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), p. 17-19.

<sup>15</sup> Hereinafter the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works will be referred to as PWA (Public Works Administration).

<sup>16</sup> R. Stanley Brown and C.W. Short, Public Buildings: Architecture Under the Public Works Administration, 1933-1939. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Emerson Ross, Report On the Progress of the Works Program, March 16, 1936 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> R. Stanley Brown and C.W. Short, Public Buildings: Architecture Under the Public Works Administration, 1933-1939, p. 13.

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# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See bibliography attached to narratives entitled "The Treasury Department's Section of the Fine Arts Program" and "Federal Construction Work, 1913-1941" and Composite Biographical Sketches of PWA Artists".

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**  
**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM REFERENCES See individual inventory forms.

A	B	C	D
ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See individual inventory forms.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael W. Fazio

William E. Parrish

ORGANIZATION

Tomas Blackwell

Curtis Franks

DATE

10/1/79

STREET & NUMBER

40 Eutaw Street

TELEPHONE

601 323-3451

CITY OR TOWN

Starkville

STATE

MS 39759

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

*[Signature]*  
Deputy 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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*[Signature]*  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST: *[Signature]*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/6/81  
Cleveland, Columbus, Lumberton & Winona only

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Mississippi Post Offices 1931-1941 Thematic Resources  
State MS

Nomination	Type of Review	Decision
1. Kosciusko, U. S. Post Office	-	
2. Cleveland, U.S. Post Office	-	<i>Listed</i> APR 7 1981
3. Houston, U.S. Post Office	-	
4. Okolona, U.S. Post Office	-	
5. Crystal Springs, U.S. Post Office	-	
✓ 6. Hazlehurst, U.S. Post Office	-	
* 7. Hattiesburg, U.S. Post Office	-	<i>Beth Grosvenor 4/21/83</i>
8. Bay St. Louis, U.S. Post Office	-	
9. Durant, U.S. Post Office	-	
10. Lexington, U.S. Post Office	-	
11. Belzoni, U.S. Post Office	-	
12. Lumberton, U.S. Post Office	-	<i>Listed</i> APR 7 1981
* 13. Carthage, U.S. Post Office	-	<i>Beth Grosvenor 4/21/83</i>
* 14. Columbus, U.S. Post Office	-	<i>Beth Grosvenor 4/21/83</i>
15. Columbia, U.S. Post Office	-	<i>Listed</i> APR 7 1981
16. Amory, U.S. Post Office	-	
17. Winona, U.S. Post Office	-	<i>Listed</i> APR 7 1981
18. Philadelphia, U.S. Post Office	-	
19. Newton, U.S. Post Office	-	
20. Macon, U.S. Post Office	-	
21. Batesville, U.S. Post Office	-	
22. Picayune, U.S. Post Office	-	
23. Poplarville, U.S. Post Office	-	
✓ 24. Magnolia, U.S. Post Office	-	

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Mississippi Post Offices 1931--1941 Thematic Resources  
State MS

Nomination	Type of Review	Decision
1. Pontotoc, U. S. Post Office	-	
2. Booneville, U. S. Post Office	-	
3. Eupora, U.S. Post Office	-	
4. Forest, U.S. Post Office	-	
5. Indianola, U.S. Post Office	-	
6. Charleston, U.S. Post Office	-	
7. Ripley, U.S. Post Office	-	
8. New Albany, U.S. Post Office	-	
9. Tylertown, U.S. Post Office	-	
* 10. Leland, U.S. Post Office	-	<i>Beth Grosvenor 4/21/83</i>
11. Waynesboro, U.S. Post Office	-	
12. Louisville, U.S. Post Office	-	
13.	-	
14.	-	
15.	-	
16.	-	
17.	-	
18.	-	
19.	-	
20.	-	
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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1931-1941

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AMENDMENT

#1 Name

The name of the nomination has been changed to "Mississippi Post Offices Thematic Resources, 1931-1941."

#7 Narrative Description

The information in the original cover nomination concerning the acts which funded the construction of the post offices is inaccurate. Please see the letter from Carol D. Shull to Dave W. Dogan dated June 11, 1982. Secondly, a study by Susan M. Enzweiler of the annual reports of the Treasury Department and the Postmaster General from 1926 to 1943 did not usually indicate which act funded which specific post office construction except in the case of major projects such as post offices in Jackson, Mississippi; New York City or Chicago.

All post offices included in this nomination have a first class designation.

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## #8 Statement of Significance

The areas of significance cited in the original cover nomination were architecture, art and politics/government. The following additional information strengthens the case for each area of significance.

## ARCHITECTURE

The architecture created by various Federal government programs during the Depression years was a response to the economic hardships of the time which greatly impacted the country's physical development. Under Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration, national government made a commitment to social progress through work relief and construction programs. Therefore, the very existence of New Deal buildings, such as Mississippi post offices, symbolized the Federal government's shift "from neutral arbiter to social welfare activist" (Craig 1979: 342-343).

The customary architectural styles for post offices throughout the 1930s and early 1940s were the Colonial Revival and a "simplified classical style blending modern and classical elements, characterized by symmetrical massing and plain surfaces" (Bulletin 13 1984: 4).

Throughout most of the Great Depression, the design of post offices was the responsibility of the Office of the Supervising Architect located within the Department of the Treasury. By 1937, much of OSA's work concentrated on small post offices. Type designs were developed that met the various specifications of the Postal Service and also satisfied the "sectional architectural traditions" found throughout the country. The Treasury Department, however, did not elaborate on these traditions. Eleven designs were created to meet all these requirements. The following year these post office designs were improved and refined by OSA with input from the Advisory Committees on Architectural Design and Structural Engineering and from the Directive Board of the Public Buildings Branch. The Treasury Department reported that these designs "compare favorably with the highest standards of current practice in architectural and structural features." Additionally, OSA held a competition among American architects in 1938 for the designs of ten small post offices. Unfortunately, no information was given in the treasury reports on which designs were used for which post offices (Treasury Dept. Annual Report 1937: 182 and Treasury Dept. Annual Report 1938: 194).

Interest in the United States' colonial architectural heritage was sparked by the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876. The Colonial Revival style of the late nineteenth century flowed from the architects' free interpretations of the original, colonial details. In the early twentieth century, the

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Colonial Revival style adhered more closely to its colonial precedents with greater attention on correct proportions and architectural details. The style as interpreted by OSA's post office plans was a simplified version of Colonial Revival which utilized the style's design elements in a very successful manner (McAlester 1984: 326).

The second "style" commonly applied to post offices during the 1930s was derived from traditional architectural motifs and the radical evolution in European architecture of the 1920s. American architecture sought a compromise between this progressive building design and traditional architecture. It was an attempt by moderate American architects to create a style that would be completely American and totally modern while also helping to inspire confidence in the future of the country (Sachs 1986: 203).

New Federal buildings were usually well-received in America's small communities. Critics sometimes charged that the designs of government buildings were monotonous but this was not an issue with the citizens of the towns that received new post offices and courthouses. To the people of these small communities, federal buildings represented the latest advances in architectural style and technology and symbolized their association with the United States of America. Their local post office represented the federal presence to many people (Craig 1979: 163, 165).

## ART

The murals found in Mississippi's and other southern post offices offer a unique glimpse into southern culture of the 1930s and the early 1940s. Theoretically, at least, the artists were required to consider local public opinion on the subject matter. Most southern communities, including the small towns of Mississippi, favored historical themes. A large number of the post offices constructed during the Great Depression displayed murals or other art work that had been commissioned by the Federal government. Of the four governmental programs sponsoring the graphic arts during this period, the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture (later known as the Section of Fine Arts) was the primary supporter of art for Federal buildings, especially post offices (Wilson and Ferris, v. 2, 1991: 427 and Bulletin 13 1984: 4).

The Section of Painting and Sculpture, which was simply called the Section, was allocated 1% or less of the total appropriation for a building's construction for original art work. Unlike the other major governmental art program, the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration, the Section's objective was patronage rather than relief and it stressed quality over output. Artists were selected through competitions with criteria that promoted realism as the most appropriate

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style and "the American scene" as the most suitable subject. The Section awarded 1,371 commissions to artists between 1934 and 1943 (Bulletin 13 1984: 4-5 and Craig 1979: 372).

Overall, the goals of the Treasury Department's art program were threefold. The Section wanted to serve as a patron for the arts and encourage public beautification. In achieving this aim, the Section would also be realizing its second goal of making original, quality art available to those Americans who otherwise would have had little chance of seeing it. Edward Bruce, a Treasury official associated with the Section's work, believed the program was transforming rural post offices into "little cultural centers" that would help offset "all the unrest" by bringing beauty into people's lives. Finally, the Treasury Department viewed the art work as a means of conveying the social ideas of the New Deal to large numbers of Americans in a readily understandable form (Bulletin 13 1984: 4-5 and Craig 1979: 372-373).

## POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The collapse of the economy and the social upheaval of the Great Depression stirred the Federal and the state governments to experiment with innovative programs in order to alleviate some of the misery. The Federal government, in particular, was forced to redefine its relationship with the American people, to become a prominent agent for social change. Over thirteen million workers were unemployed by 1933 with approximately one-third of them from the building trades. More than one thousand homes were foreclosed on every day, cities were going bankrupt and farmers were battered by dust storms, floods and drought (Craig 1979: 342-343 and Bulletin 13 1984: 3).

Mississippians, like other Americans, were suffering and ready for change. According to architectural historian David Sachs, Governor Theodore G. Bilbo told reporters in 1931 that "Folks are restless. Communism is gaining a foothold. Right here in Mississippi some people are about ready to lead a mob. In fact, I'm getting a little pink myself" (Sachs 1986: 197).

Several plans were carried out at the state level to help Mississippians. Martin Sennett Connor was elected governor in 1932 and pushed for the establishment of a state sales tax in order to reduce the state government's debt. Mississippi was the first state to adopt such a tax. Hugh L. White, the next governor, promoted a Balance Agriculture With Industry Program which allowed local governments to provide subsidies to private employers who would hire Mississippians. Again, the Magnolia State was leading the way with a new and innovative policy (Sachs 1986: 198).

Mississippians also welcomed assistance from the Federal government. They strongly supported Franklin Delano Roosevelt and eagerly participated in his social welfare programs. Fred Sullens,

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the Jackson Daily News editor, reported in 1936 that Mississippi was "standing squarely behind the New Deal; an overwhelming majority of the people are for it, stronger than horseradish." Mississippi Senator Pat Harrison as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee used his prestige to influence passage of FDR's programs and to ensure that the Magnolia State received its share of the New Deal pie (Sachs 1986: 198-199).

The construction of public buildings seemed to be the keystone to Roosevelt's New Deal program, although there were a variety of work relief plans. For more information on work relief for artists please refer to the Art section. The erection of a variety of buildings and structures was funded by several programs and authorizations with the ultimate responsibility lying with the Treasury Department until 1939. That year public building activities were transferred to the Public Buildings Administration thus ending 103 years of involvement by the Department of the Treasury (Bulletin 13 1984: 3 and Treasury Dept. Annual Report 1939: 44).

Post offices were among the most well-known projects with the general public. Approximately three times the number of post offices were built in the 1930s as in the preceding fifty years. These are amazing statistics considering that the overall number of post offices in the United States (and in Mississippi) was decreasing. In 1926 there were 50,601 post offices in the United States and its territories, including 921 in the Magnolia State. In 1933, the year Roosevelt assumed the presidency and launched his New Deal, Mississippi had 815 post offices and the country had a total of 47,642. By 1941 there were 43,806 post offices in the United States with 766 in Mississippi. The post offices located in Mississippi's small rural communities not only provided employment but were a source of pride for the local residents. Since passage of the Public Buildings Act of 1913, new post offices had been constructed only in cities with annual postal receipts totalling more than \$10,000.00. They were perceived to be part of the urban landscape. Their construction in small towns during the 1930s, when the total number of post offices was shrinking, seemed to signify the community's importance to the country at large, its connection to the rest of America (Bulletin 13 1984: 3-4 and Postmaster General Annual Reports 1926, 1933, 1941).

A number of acts authorized the Federal government to construct public buildings from 1931 to 1941, the period of significance for this nomination. A study of the annual reports of the Postmaster General and the Treasury Department did not reveal, in most cases, which act was responsible for which Mississippi post office. All of the acts, except for the Keyes-Elliott Act (also known as the Public Buildings Act of 1926), were created by the New Deal program. The public building construction authorized by the Keyes-Elliott Act, however, continued until 1937 and was thus identified in the public mind with the New Deal. Because of this identification, the uncertainty over how specific post offices were funded and the fact that all the post offices included in this nomination were built during the Great Depression, the construction of all the post offices

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being nominated is considered to be, in essence if not in actual appropriation, part of the New Deal agenda (Treasury Dept. Annual Report 1937: 46).

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MISSISSIPPI POST OFFICES TR

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO COVER

APPROVED  
Substantive Review

*M. J. M. O'Connell* 3/18/83

- ✓ US Post Office--Crystal Springs *Substantive Review* 3/18/83
- ✓ US Post Office--Hazlehurst *Substantive Review* 3/18/83
- ✓ US Post--Magnolia *Substantive Review* 3/18/83
- ✓ US Post Office--Forest *Substantive Review* 3/18/83