



United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name United States Post Office Coalgate

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 38 North Main Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Coalgate [N/A] vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Coal code 029 zip code 74538

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer 10-20-08
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Oklahoma Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] Federal Preservation Officer 10/27/08
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

United States Postal Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper 4/17/09 Date of Action

United States Post Office Coalgate
Name of Property

Coal County, Oklahoma
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Oklahoma Post Offices with Section Art

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: Post Office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	CONCRETE
walls	BRICK
	CONCRETE
roof	TAR
other	

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Post Office Coalgate
Name of Property

Coal County, Oklahoma
County/State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government
Art

Periods of Significance
1940-1942

Significant Dates
N/A

Significant Person(s)
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
SIMON, LOUIS A., SUPERVISING ARCHITECT
BLUE EAGLE, ACEE, MURAL ARTIST

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:
Oklahoma Historical Society/SHPO

United States Post Office Coalgate
Name of Property

Coal County, Oklahoma
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 14 755348 3825260
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alyson Greiner / Associate Professor

organization Oklahoma State University, Dept. of Geography date Sept. 6, 2007

street & number 225 Scott Hall telephone 405-744-9169

city or town Stillwater state OK zip code 74078

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name United States Postal Service

street & number 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW telephone 800-275-8777

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20260-3100

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**United States Post Office Coalgate
Coal County, OklahomaSection number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

Since its completion in 1940, the United States Post Office in Coalgate, Oklahoma has occupied the lot on the southeast corner of Main Street and Ohio Avenue. The building stands alone on its lot and because of a deeper setback it also stands apart from the other commercial buildings. Between the sidewalk and the building there is a narrow band of grass that fringes the front and sides of the post office. Shrubs have been planted adjacent to the northwest and southwest corners of the building. There is a flagpole in the grass on the northeast corner of the lot. There is a parking lot and loading zone at the back of the building.

The post office is a one-story structure with a basement. The walls are clad with buff bricks but the intermixture of darker, more orange-colored bricks gives the appearance of a polychromatic surface. Architecturally, the building reflects the Moderne or Art Moderne style and has the characteristic flat roof. Much of the attractiveness of the building stems from the fenestration, particularly the way the windows on the front form a band that continues on the north elevation. At the back of the building a chimney stack rises above the roofline. There is some use of buff-colored concrete adjacent to several of the windows on the north and west elevations. The plan of the building is nearly square, though the walls on the north and south elevations are not entirely flush, creating the impression that the front of the building is ever so slightly offset to the north in comparison to the back of the building. Another deviation from the square plan includes a loading dock and small workroom, both at the back of the building.

In characteristic Art Moderne fashion, the front of the building (west elevation) is asymmetrical. Five windows mark the façade and though the main entrance to the post office is centered, the style and placement of the fenestration is irregular. Brick cladding surrounds one tall, slender window to the far right and continues across the front in a narrow band above the windows. Most of the wall surface across the façade is, however, taken up by four large windows. Three of these are in the same style and consist of a metal double-casement window surrounded by eight other panes of glass in a mixture of rectangular and square shapes. The fourth window resembles an oversized transom and fills much of the wall space above the main entrance. This window consists of an irregular 3 x 3 fixed-pane arrangement in which the bottom three panes of glass are much wider and taller than the top three panes of glass. Five concrete columns separate these four windows and effectively frame them. Bricks fill the wall space below these windows. In the band of bricks that stretches above these windows large black letters spell out the words "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE" and in slightly smaller letters below them are the words "COALGATE OKLAHOMA." These words are not centered over the main entrance to the building. Rather, they have been placed to the left of the entrance and centered above the four large windows, adding to the asymmetry of the façade. The original double-door entrance to the post office has been removed and replaced with a single metal door with a glazed slab that is flanked by sidelights. A flight of five steps rises to the entrance. There are slender metal railings on either side of the stairs. A wheelchair ramp with metal railings has been built immediately to the right of the entrance.

The band of windows on the west elevation continues to the north elevation, though strictly speaking the windows do not wrap around. There are two windows in this band and they are in the same style as those on the front of the building with double casement windows flanked by eight other panes of glass. Three concrete columns separate and frame these windows. The wall space below the windows is filled with brick and, as on the front, the windows are topped by a narrow horizontal band of bricks as well. There are four other windows on this elevation. Two of them are smaller versions of the ones just described. The other two windows occur on the west elevation of the workroom at the back of the building. These are irregular 2 x 2 fixed pane windows with metal sashes. They are irregular in the

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**United States Post Office Coalgate
Coal County, OklahomaSection number 7 Page 2

sense that the panes in the top sash of the window are larger than those in the bottom. All four of these windows are distinguished by narrow concrete sills. At the northeast corner of the building a staircase descends to the basement where there is a wood panel door with mutipane glazing. The basement door is flanked by one 6 x 6 double hung window on either side, and there is a metal railing around the stairwell. Just to the left of the stairwell underneath the last of the double casement windows there is a concrete slab with a large ventilation unit positioned perpendicularly to the building itself. To the far left at the back of the building there is another set of stairs down to the basement.

There are five windows on the south elevation. Four of these are on the post office proper; the fifth occurs on the workroom at the back of the building. The two windows to the right, near the back of the post office, are paired and are smaller versions of the double-casement windows on the front and north elevations. The other two windows are nearer the front and are not paired but are tall, slender windows that match the single window on the west elevation which is not part of the continuous band. Below these windows, at basement level, there are three 6 x 6 double-hung windows. Window wells topped with metal railings help identify these. Below the double-casement windows, also at basement level, there are two louvered vents. The window on the south elevation of the workroom is a 6 x 6 double-hung window.

The east elevation is the back of the building and includes the workroom and loading dock. Though it is also one story, the workroom is neither as tall as the rest of the post office building nor as wide. Rather, the workroom fills the space in between the two double-casement windows on this elevation. These windows match the other casement windows that are adjacent to them on the north and south walls. There is an external ladder that leads from the roof of the workroom to the roof of the post office proper, and a satellite dish now perches on top of the workroom. To the right, the junction between the workroom and the east wall of the post office proper is formed by an external chimney. The arrangement of windows and doors on the east elevation of the workroom is asymmetrical. From left to right there is one 6 x 6 double-hung window, then, higher on the wall there is a smaller 6 x 6 double-hung window with a metal grill added for security. Next to this window is a set of swinging double metal doors. A roof overhang with three lights has been attached, is supported by two metal poles, and covers the small window and double-door entry. A concrete ramp with a metal railing leads up to the south side of the loading dock.

The post office lobby has an I-shaped plan, and the entrance to the lobby area is distinguished by a recessed wood and glass vestibule. The vestibule has five sides, two of which are taken up by doors. The bottom third of the vestibule walls are wood panel while the top portion of the vestibule walls consists of eight panes of glass. To the left of the entrance, on the south wall, is the door to the postmaster's office. The door is flanked on either side by a band of wood paneling that includes built-in glass display cases. This wood paneling continues along the east wall where the service bays are and on the west wall by the entrance. There is another built in display case on the west wall. To the left of the service bays is a wood panel Dutch door. Gray marble wainscoting fills the bottom third of the interior walls, and there is a burgundy and beige terrazzo tile floor. Crown molding decorates the ceiling, and there are vents in the wall above the service bays. To the left of the vestibule is a freestanding wood and glass display case. In 1964 there were some renovations to the post office including the removal of interior radiators and the addition of hanging fluorescent lights in the lobby area (Poe 1986, 40).

The Acee Blue Eagle mural, *Women Making Pishafa*, decorates the wall above the postmaster's door. Blue Eagle painted the mural in tempera and acrylic on the plaster of the wall surface rather than on canvas. The mural is a genre scene depicting the preparation of a flint corn beverage, also known as

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**United States Post Office Coalgate
Coal County, OklahomaSection number 7 Page 3

pah sho fah, which is popular among Creeks and other tribes of a Southeastern origin. A woman at right pounds the soft corn into meal while a young boy rides his toy horse nearby. At center, two women separate the husk from pulp. The ramada behind them reveals a table set with multiple bowls and a coffee pot indicating that pishafa may be consumed as a soup or beverage. In order to balance the scene, Blue Eagle included the man at left who prepares to fire an arrow into the flock of birds passing overhead. During the renovations to the post office in 1964 the mural became covered with a layer of dust and dirt. A number of concerned citizens worked to identify an artist who could restore it. In 1965, with assistance from the General Services Administration, Fred Beaver a Creek Indian artist was commissioned to restore the mural.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**United States Post Office Coalgate
Coal County, OklahomaSection number 8 Page 1**SIGNIFICANCE**Significance:

The United States Post Office in Coalgate satisfies Criteria A and C of the National Register guidelines. According to Criterion A, a property should be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The events that have shaped the contours of American history and with which the Coalgate post office is associated include the federally-sponsored New Deal art programs, and specifically the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture, usually referred to as "the Section." Initiated in 1934, this program provided that a fraction of the funds for the construction of federal buildings would be set aside to cover the costs of decorating them. These monies would be used to commission accomplished artists to produce murals, sculptures, and other forms of art for specific buildings. The Coalgate post office was constructed in 1940 and was eligible to receive art through the Section program. The Section made possible the commissioning of the artist Acee Blue Eagle, whose mural, completed in 1942, decorates the interior of the post office today. These events give the post office a strong association with New Deal politics, government, and art. Therefore, the building is significant in those areas in accordance with Criterion A.

The Coalgate post office also fulfills Criterion C in that the property represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. The post office is a modest building whose architecture, while attractive, is unexceptional. Nevertheless, the Coalgate post office is one of just three in the state to have murals painted directly on the plaster of the wall. (The two other murals executed on plaster are in the Marietta and Seminole post offices.) More important, however, is that the post office be recognized as a unit whose distinctiveness stems from and demonstrates the New Deal programs at the local level. Together, the building and its mural art provide a significant and tangible legacy of the New Deal.

The Coalgate post office is a significant property within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Oklahoma Post Offices with Section Art." This post office provides a good example of Art Moderne style and is the only property in the group designed in this style. Moreover, the post office remains in very good condition and the mural in excellent condition.

Historical Significance:

Acee Blue Eagle (1907-1959), a Creek/Pawnee, was born Alex C. McIntosh near Hitchita on the Wichita Reservation, but later changed his name to "Acee," a reference to his initials, and "Blue Eagle" in honor of his maternal grandfather. He began his education at Nuyaka Indian School near Bristow, Oklahoma between 1916 and 1922 and then attended the Chilocco Indian School between 1925 and 1928. In 1931, Blue Eagle began taking courses at the University of Oklahoma. There he studied with Oscar Brousse Jacobson and Edith Mahier. His association with Jacobson likely contributed to Blue Eagle's subsequent employment with the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), another New Deal art program, because Jacobson represented Oklahoma on the regional committee. Blue Eagle's work as a PWAP artist began in 1934 when he painted five major murals in the gymnasium at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

Blue Eagle's reputation gained steadily in the 1930s, particularly with his 1935 tour of the United States and Europe with the lecture "Life and Character of the American Indian." He participated that same year in the International Federation of Education at Oxford and performed several Native American

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**United States Post Office Coalgate
Coal County, OklahomaSection number 8 Page 2

dances for the royal family of England. His growing acclaim earned him an appointment as the first Director of Art at Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma in 1935. He resigned his position in 1938 and left the following year to visit Mexico, where contemporary developments in mural painting had received international notoriety. Not long after his return Blue Eagle won the Section competition to design a mural for the post office in Seminole, Oklahoma. He completed that mural, *Seminole Indian Village Scene*, in 1939. Three years later he completed his second and final Section mural, *Women Making Pishafa*, for the Coalgate post office. Blue Eagle was also commissioned by the Lion's Club to produce a mural for the U.S.S. Oklahoma called *Buffalo Hunt*.

With American entry into World War II, Blue Eagle joined the Army Air Corps, and through his various stations he met the Balinese dancer Devi Dja. They were married briefly, from 1946 to 1952. The conclusion of the war allowed Blue Eagle to return to his vocation, and he taught for a short time at Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas in 1949. Blue Eagle returned to Oklahoma in the early 1950s, however, and became a local celebrity with a children's television show on KTVX in Muskogee. In 1956, he accepted a position as Artist-in-Residence at Oklahoma State Technical School in Okmulgee. He passed away two years later in Muskogee.

For much of the twentieth century, Acee Blue Eagle was one of the most recognizable Native American artists in the United States. His murals generally employ the style first developed by the Kiowa artists—collectively known as the Kiowa Five—at the University of Oklahoma in the late 1920s. Blue Eagle solidified the sharp contours, flat areas of coloration, and absence of background in the Kiowa paintings into a stylistic formula. Through his position at Bacone, Blue Eagle passed this style to other artists and helped to create Traditional Indian Painting. This became the preferred style of painting among most Native American artists in Oklahoma for much of the twentieth century. The style is characterized by a simplification of form but with a concern for naturalistic features. Colors are usually flat and the forms are generally absent of modeling in light and shadow. Forms are typically differentiated from the background by a strong contour, usually in black. Background is sometimes nonexistent but frequently limited to a few spatial elements.

Summary:

The United States Post Office in Coalgate, Oklahoma is one of five contributing resources within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Oklahoma Post Offices with Section Art." The building has been continually used as a post office since its construction in 1940. It also has a strong association with Acee Blue Eagle, an acclaimed Indian artist from Oklahoma whose work contributed to the style known informally as Traditional Indian Painting. The mural that Blue Eagle painted for the Coalgate post office is an excellent example of this style. The stylized contours and rosy cheeks he used in *Women Making Pishafa* had a decisive influence on Native American painting in Oklahoma and continue to appear in the work of some contemporary painters. The Section was the government-sponsored program that enabled the production of this mural. The United States Post Office in Coalgate, then, stands as a reminder of the massive influence that New Deal programs in general had on the American landscape and satisfies Criteria A and C.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**United States Post Office Coalgate
Coal County, OklahomaSection number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blue Eagle, Acee. 1959. *Oklahoma Indian Painting-Poetry*. Tulsa: Acorn Publishing Company.
- Calcagno, Nicholas A. 1976. *New Deal Murals in Oklahoma*. Miami, OK: Pioneer Printing.
- Falk, Peter H., ed. 1985. *Who Was Who in American Art: Compiled from the Original Thirty-four Volumes of American Art Annual—Who's Who in Art, Biographies of American Artists Active from 1898-1947*. Madison, CT: Sound View Press.
- Greiner, Alyson L., and Mark A. White. 2004. *Thematic Survey of New Deal Public Art in Oklahoma 2003-2004*. Oklahoma City: State Historic Preservation Office.
- Poe, Betty, comp. and ed. 1986. *History of Coal County, Oklahoma*. Dallas, TX: Curtis Media.
- Rogers, Kathleen Grisham. 1974. Incidence of New Deal Art in Oklahoma: An Historical Survey. Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma.
- Scott, Barbara Kerr, and Sally Soelle. 1983. *New Deal Art—The Oklahoma Experience, 1933-1943*. Lawton, OK: Cameron University.
- Soelle, Sally. 1984. New Deal Art Projects in Oklahoma, 1933-1943. Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma.
- University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. n.d. *The Acee Blue Eagle Murals in the Little Gym on the Campus of the Former Oklahoma College for Women*. Chickasha, OK.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

United States Post Office Coalgate
Coal County, Oklahoma

Section number 10 Page 1

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This property consists of lots 1 and 2 of Block 66 of the City of Coalgate.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes the property historically associated with the Coalgate Post Office.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

United States Post Office Coalgate
Coal County, Oklahoma

Section number 11 Page 1

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-19 except as noted:

Name of Property: United States Post Office Coalgate
 Photographer: Alyson Greiner
 Date of Photographs: July 31, 2007
 Negatives: N/A; photos are digital TIFFs

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	View of interior mural; camera facing south
2	View of interior mural; camera facing south
3	View of interior mural; camera facing south
4	View of interior, south wall with mural and postmaster's door; camera facing south southwest
5	View of post office lobby, including mural and vestibule; camera facing southwest
6	View of post office lobby, including vestibule, mural, and part of a standing display case; camera facing southeast
7	View of interior mural with lights off; camera facing south
8	View of interior mural with lights off; camera facing south
9	View of exterior, north elevation; camera facing south southeast
10	View of exterior, north and east elevations; camera facing southeast
11	View of exterior, west elevation with flagpole; camera facing east
12	View of exterior, west elevation without flagpole; camera facing east
13	View of exterior, west and south elevations; camera facing northeast
14	View of exterior, south and east elevations; camera facing northwest
15	View of exterior, south and east elevations; camera facing northwest
16	View of exterior, south and east elevations with parking lot; camera facing northwest
17	View of exterior, east elevation from street; camera facing west
18	View of exterior, east elevation; camera facing west
19	View of exterior, north and east elevations; camera facing southwest