

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0669741

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DATA SHEET

RECEIVED

MAY 23 1978

DATE ENTERED

JUN 22 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

\*\*

U.S. Post Office and Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Devils Lake Post Office

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

502 4th Street

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Devils Lake

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

North Dakota

CODE

38

COUNTY

Ramsey

CODE

071

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

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

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED - interior
- YES: UNRESTRICTED - exterior
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: Vacant

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

U.S. Postal Service

STREET & NUMBER

475 L'Enfant Plaza West South West

CITY, TOWN

Washington

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C. 20260

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds Office, Ramsey County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Devils Lake

STATE

North Dakota 58301

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

North Dakota Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1977

\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of North Dakota  
Liberty Memorial Building

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

STATE

North Dakota 58505

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In November, 1977, the U.S. Postal Service moved its Devils Lake, North Dakota, postal operation into a newly constructed Post Office building, thus ending the 67 year postal career of the Devils Lake Post Office and Courthouse.

Under terms of a \$120,402 contract signed on April 13, 1908, excavation began May 15, 1908 for the three and one half story, steel frame, granite and limestone building by the principal contractor, General Construction Company, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Following slowdowns caused by a lack of available construction workers, poorly quarried stone or faulty construction materials and at least one recorded blizzard, the building was open for public inspection on April 2, 1910 and started serving postal patrons two days later.

Designed during the tenure of James Knox Taylor as Supervising Architect of the Treasury, 1897-1912, the building reflects Taylor's not infrequent use of mixed Classical elements, but is generally in the Greek-Revival style of the Ionic order. Containing approximately 18,952 square feet spread over three floors, the approximately 84' X 68' building is rectangular in plan with a pavilion and stairway on the principle facade (north elevation) and a rear pavilion at the (south elevation) and occupies the northwest portion of block 32 original plat of the townsite of Devils Lake, North Dakota. An 11' X 13' mailing vestibule and loading dock with marquee, included in the original plans, was not built until the 1950's when it became a 33' X 13' modern wing attached to the center of the original rear facade.

After excavation of the semi-basement in relatively loose soil, approximately 264 yellow pine pilings were driven to provide a footing base, followed by poured concrete footings and construction of a brick foundation faced with ashlar coursed granite blocks to the level of the water table. Except for the granite faced foundation, the building's exterior consists of grey limestone and a copper sheathed hip roof.

The building has three horizontal architectural zones evident on all elevations; the first, from grade to a belt course at the level of the second floor; the second, from the belt course to the base of the classical entablature; and, the third, the entablature which is crowned by a balustrade parapet.

The principle facade (north elevation) is articulated into five bays, the center three of which are defined by double projections creating a pavilion fronted by a forward facing, granite stairway divided by metal tubular hand rails. Granite, solid rails enclose both sides of the stairs, each rail having a cast iron light post with a single spherical globe at the top. Originally the light posts contained a cluster of four spherical globes. Three segmentally arched, embrasured apertures, separated by piers, puncture the pavilion's first zone. The center aperture contains the main doorway closed by single light over panel, double leaf, wood doors. The two flanking apertures contain eight over eight double hung windows. A three light, segmental arch transom surmounts the door. All three aperture surrounds consist of flat arches with radiating voussoirs and keystone at the head and quoins at the sides.

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All three apertures are further filled with cast iron trellises topped by finials. The flanking walls on each side of the pavilion in the first zone are comparatively plain, punctured only by segmental arched, six over six, double hung windows resting atop a projecting sill course. A paneled keystone highlights the arches. Eyebrow windows penetrate the foundation below the windows of the outer bays.

The first and second zones are defined by a stone belt course beneath which runs a frieze decorated by molded consoles and raised panels above the keystones and the piers (respectively) in the first zone of the pavilion.

Above the belt course, the pavilion is dominated by four engaged, ionic columns which articulate the second and third floor fenestration. Within the pavilion three massive, six over six double hung windows at the second floor level are surrounded by labels at the head and plain trim at the sides. Within the pavilion, a seven baluster balustrade supports a simple slip sill under each of the three second floor windows which are also surmounted by an entablature. Within the pavilion, at the third floor level, three, three over six double hung windows are trimmed with label head surrounds (enhanced by keystones with raised panels) and plain side surrounds descending to a sill apron supporting plain lug sills.

The two bays flanking the pavilion repeat the window treatment within the pavilion except that the window surrounds and entablatures are absent. The arrises at both wall ends are quoined.

The building's entablature is consistent on all facades except for the main facade within the pavilion. The entablature consists of a stepped architrave surmounted by a plain frieze (excepting quoins at the arrises) and cornice. At the bottom of the cornice, a dentil band is surmounted by an egg and dart decorated listel surmounted by a corona. A parapet, consisting of balustrades separated by piers with a raised panel, crowns the entire building perimeter.

The entablature of the front facade's center pavilion matches the rest of the entablature with the following exceptions: the frieze is decorated by disks centered over each column; beginning at the corona, a pediment rises to peak at the center of the building. A dentil band surmounted by an egg and dart decorated listel lies beneath the remainder of the cornice. The otherwise plain tympanum contains an acanthus embellished, circular aperture in the center. Recessed into the aperture is a convex polished stone panel. A jack staff once rose above the pediment but has since been removed.

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The four bay wide east elevation portrays the same architectural zones and coursing as the north elevation. Four horizontally rectangular, eyebrow windows with simple lintels penetrate the foundation. Surmounting the sill course in the first floor level, four segmentally arched window openings contain six over six double hung windows except for the second opening from the south which is blocked up due to a storage vault occurring behind it. The voussoired segmental arches are enhanced by protruding and paneled keystones. In each of the three piers separating the windows a vertically rectangular panel is evident. The northern and center panels contain a cut stone slab as filler (plain panel). The southern panel contains a three light vertical sash window. In the second zone, the four second story flat arched window apertures contain six over six double hung windows resting on plain slip sills beneath which rest seven baluster balustrades. Projecting paneled keystones highlight the arches. As in the first zone, the three center piers each contain a vertically rectangular recessed panel. The northernmost and center panels each contain a three light vertical sash window. The southernmost panel contains a vertical slab filler.

The third story window apertures are also flat arched with projecting, paneled keystones and contain three over six light double hung windows resting on plain lug sills. Window surrounds are absent from all windows on this elevation except for the head and sill treatments described.

The west facade is identical to the east except that there are no recessed wall panels in the piers and there are no blocked window apertures except for the northernmost window in the foundation level.

Like the principle facade, the rear facade (south elevation) is five bays wide, three of which are within a rear center pavilion. On the first zone level, within the rear pavilion, a six light sash window headed by a plain lintel penetrates the foundation level on both sides. In the center of the rear pavilion, in the first zone, an addition was built in the 1950's to provide the mailing vestibule and loading dock facilities eliminated at the time of the original building's construction. Of modern brick construction, the addition measures 33' X 13'. On its east side the mailing vestibule has a personnel door on the north end, two double leaf equipment doors to the south (all covered by a continuous marquee). The rear (west elevation) of the addition contains only one opening, a window. Attached to the south end of the addition is a 28' X 17' plywood addition containing two overhead garage doors opening to an extension of loading dock.

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On the rear pavilion in the first zone, flanking the addition, segmentally arched window openings surmount the sill course and are filled with two, four over six light double hung windows separated by mullions. The head surrounds feature alternating radiating voussoirs with a paneled keystone in a flat arch arrangement surmounted immediately by the belt course. Originally, a third window, between and identical to, the flanking windows was evident but has since been obscured (except for the head surround) by the mailing vestibule addition.

Within the rear pavilion, in the second zone, the three bays are defined by a three semicircular arched, two story, recessed panels each of which contains a nine part mullioned sash window surmounting bracketed lug sills. More specifically, three sets of four pane sash windows are stacked vertically and are flanked by three vertically stacked sets of two pane side lights. Above the windows the arch panels are decorated by circular apertures containing convex panels of cut stone. Flanking the pavilion on the left (west) a rectangular window headed by a simple lintel penetrates the foundation. Surmounting the sill course, the first story segmentally arched window recess is evident but blocked up forming a recessed wall panel, probably due to the occurrence of a storage vault inside the building at this location. A paneled keystone adorns the voussoired arch. In the second zone, a six over six rectangular window, headed by a flat voussoired arch with paneled keystone and a simple slip sill penetrates the second floor level and a three over six double hung window with a similar arch and simple lug sill penetrates the third floor level. On the right (east) flank of the rear pavilion, the wall and window treatment is identical to the left except that the first floor window opening is filled with a six over six double hung window. A light colored patch is evident in the corner framed by the east wall of the rear pavilion and the main wall of the south elevation. This patch results from the closing of the original mail dock used from 1910 until completion of the mailing vestibule in the 1950's. As originally constructed, the corner contained a segmentally arched doorway opening into the south wall of the main building. In front of the door a marquee shallow porch created a loading dock. In closing that entrance, the door was replaced by the currently existing window.

Atop the southeast corner of the building stands a limestone copula with louvered openings and decorative course work which houses the external flue for the heating system.

The main entryway opens southward from the principle facade (north elevation) into the main public lobby on the first floor level. The main corridor extends 56 feet

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east-west and is 22 feet deep enclosed by the north exterior wall and an interior wall which separates the corridor from main mail work room. The public lobby is covered by a five cell, vaulted ceiling supported by five sets of engaged pilasters paired across the corridor. The pilasters further separate semi elliptical arched wall openings partially filled with oak surrounded brass postal boxes or service windows. These are surmounted by a bracketed frieze supporting a single pane sash window flanked by central pivot side lights separated by mullions. Surmounting this set of "sub transom" windows is a set of transom windows separated by mullions and including a central sash flanked by quarter round windows. Five ornate, hanging, single globed brass light fixtures are suspended by chain from the apex of the vault cells. Scrolled combination gas and/or electric wall mounted brass light fixtures (double and single) further embellish the public lobby as do an ornately carved and pedimented building directory and matching bulletin board at opposite ends of the hallway. Terrazzo floors are found throughout the public lobby. Walls and pilasters are faced with marble base work while dark stained oak woodwork provides color contrast through the lobby. A rectangular wooden inside vestibule protects the main lobby from inclement weather. Originally, the inside vestibule was semicircular with a turnstile door, since removed. Also since removed was a brass post and rail, floor mounted railing to guide postal patrons to the principle service window. Several light fixture globes are missing, one from a suspended vault cell fixture and all from the several wall mounted fixtures. At the east end of the hallway, the public lobby terminates at a transecting corridor which leads to office and work areas. The lobby termination is defined and enhanced by another semi elliptical arch which echos the bay treatment of the other archways. On the west, the central area of the public lobby is visually terminated by a protruding end wall which creates a gallery and stairway foyer which opens on the south, to the postmasters office and on the west to a stairway leading to upper floors.

The main portion of the first floor area is devoted to the postal workroom, a 2,286 square foot area covered by a pillar supported, paneled ceiling. The walls and pilasters of the workroom are enhanced partway by fir paneling. On the west side of the workroom a windowed and transomed doorway opens into the 292 square foot postmasters office. Both rooms were originally lighted by incandescent fixtures and had hardwood floors which have since been changed to flourescent lighting and tile floors.

North of the postmaster's office and comprising the western end of the public lobby is a stairway foyer opening to the upper floor stairways. From the foyer, two wooden end scroll risers capped with marble treads narrow to seven additional steps to the first landing where a 90° change leads to a second flight of 17 steps leading to a

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second landing where another 90° change rises four steps to a third landing at the second floor level. From the decorated newel post on the second rise, the stairs are enclosed by a cast iron railing consisting of a balustrade, surmounted by a scrolled rail, topped with a shaped oak handrail. The stair pattern repeats to the third floor where the staircase ends in a railed overlook. Plain newel posts occur at each corner and the balustrade is uniformly sequential consisting of two rectangular balusters, one spindle baluster, two rectangular balusters, etc.

On the second floor a corridor separates the two main room areas on an eastwest axis. Four sets of paired engaged pilasters break the evenness of the corridor walls and support closed beams. The terrazzo floor is boarded by marble which matches the marble wall bases which protrude at the door casings to serve as plinth blocks and at the pilasters to form faced bases. A wooden base molding surmounts the basework. A capped apron molding at door knob level further decorates the corridor walls. Standard wood cased doors open on the north wall providing entry to office space and a barred detention cell. On the east, the corridor ends at the entrances to the office spaces on the east side of the building. On the west end, a transecting hallway opens to the staircase and additional office spaces. All wood work on the corridor is oak. Inside the various office spaces, all wood work is fir. The doors are laminated oak/fir to maintain the consistency of this treatment.

On the south corridor wall, two double leaf, three panel doors, surmounted by single light rectangular transoms, are encased in entablatured oak casings and open to the two story, 1,776 square foot courtroom. The west wall of the courtroom is decorated by three broad and two narrow, vertically rectangular, decorated wall panels separated by oak faced, engaged pilasters. Molded entablatures surmount the pilaster capitals to the ceiling, and wall moldings separate the wall's upper panels from oak wainscoat panels below. In the northern panel, a hood cased paneled oak door opens to the judges chambers. The east wall mirrors the west wall with the hooded door opening into a jury room. The south wall resembles the east and west walls except that the spans between the pilasters are broader and the upper panels on the south contain previously described exterior windows. Four boxed and paneled running beams, transected by four boxed and paneled cross beams, create nine coffer panels in the ceiling. Dark stained oak woodwork and light colored, plaster panels provide pleasing color contrasts in the room. A brass rail and post divider separates the observers gallery from the court officers area. From the west wall towards the east, the courtroom is furnished with a platform fronted by a five panel, oak, judge's bench and desk joined to a secondary platform fronted by a three paneled, oak, clerk's desk

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and free standing counsel tables. The gallery contains oak bench public seating. In recent years, the hardwood floor has been carpeted and flourescent lighting fixtures have been suspended from the ceiling coffers.

The third floor is similar in floor plan, flooring, wall and corridor treatment to the second; major exceptions being a long section of paneled and windowed, wood wall on the north corridor, opening to the old U.S. Land Office offices and the absence of doorways in the south corridor wall, the upper part of the two story courtroom.

The 5,335 square feet basement level contains a 2,140 square foot boiler room surrounded on 3 sides by three storage rooms and an office for the building's engineer.



# 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input 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      1908-present      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      James Knox Taylor

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the former Devils Lake Post Office and Courthouse, Devils Lake, North Dakota, is two-fold. Architecturally, it was designed and built under the general supervision of James Knox Taylor, Supervisory Architect of the Treasury 1897-1912. Its Greek Revival flavor was primarily used in this state for major public buildings and consequently is somewhat rare in North Dakota. Even rarer in a small rurally oriented community, the stylistic flavoring added a unique sample of architectural diversity in the town. The quality of materials and workmanship set a nearly unattainable standard among contemporary buildings and, therefore, the "Federal Building" became a cultural and artistic landmark to the community, a source of prestige still felt and honored.

The structure was also a very visible reminder of the federal presence and function in the life of the area's resident's. For 67 years it was the focal point of federal government business, housing in addition to the obvious and vital postal and judicial functions, the equally important Federal Land Office and later various federal offices of greater or lesser regard including the Farm Home Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Army, Air Force and Navy recruiting stations, Postal Inspector's Office, Selective Service Office, U.S. Marshall's Office, District Attorney's Office, et. al. The presence of the U.S. Government was recognized and welcomed as an integral part of daily life and the building is still recognized as the seat of that influence.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Devils Lake Daily Journal, November 22, 1977; June 9, 1949; December 22, 1909.  
 Devils Lake Inter-Ocean, April 4, 1910; March 31, 1910; June 12, 1909; May 22, 1908.  
 Construction diary kept by A.M. Lind and D.B. Appleyard, successive construction  
 superintendents for the U.S. Government.  
 Notes of Doris (Mrs. W.A.) Greenleaf, Devils Lake Daily Journal.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,4	51,0	5,7,0	5328 5,312,914,9,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C					D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Walter L. Bailey - Historic Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of North Dakota

DATE

May 3, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Liberty Memorial Building

TELEPHONE

(701)224-2672

CITY OR TOWN

Bismarck

STATE

North Dakota 58505

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE X

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*James E. Sherry*

TITLE

N.D. State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

May 18, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST:

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NUMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Wm. L. Cole*  
*William L. Cole*

DATE

6-22-78

DATE

6/6/78

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Glen I. Jorde  
Lake Region Heritage Center, Inc.  
P.O. Box 48  
Devils Lake, North Dakota 58301

(701)662-4678 or 662-3117

Arnold Lewis Hanson - Architect  
Kielhack & Hanson Architects, P.C.  
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(701)662-8176