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SEP 08 1989

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 determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hutchinson United States Post Office

other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 128 East First Street

not for publication

city, town Hutchinson

vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Reno code 155 zip code 67501

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Name of related multiple property listing:
Kansas Post Offices that Contain Treasury
Department Section Artwork, 1936-1942

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Ramon Powers State Historic Preservation Officer February 21, 1989
Signature of certifying official Date
Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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.
- other, (explain:)

Carol Shull _____ 10-17-89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (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 limestonewalls limestone

roof other: tar and gravelother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Hutchinson United States Post Office (c. 1939-1940) is located at 128 East First Street in Hutchinson, Reno County, Kansas (pop. 40, 284). The two story, flat roofed, limestone building has a southern facade orientation. The building measures approximately two hundred twenty-four feet from east to west and one hundred sixty feet from north to south. A one story, limestone vestibule (c. 1970) projects from the building's center five bays, eliminating the original front steps and doorway. Multi-paned, linearly aligned windows comprise the building's fenestration. A one story, limestone addition (c. 1970) projects from the building's western elevation. These additions have altered the standardized class B design of the Hutchinson Post Office but have not affected the lobby area where the mural is painted. When constructed, the Hutchinson Post Office looked very much like the Salina Post Office.

The mural, "Threshing in Kansas", was painted on the east wall of the Hutchinson Post Office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork. "Threshing in Kansas" is an egg tempera and oil mural that is painted directly onto the plaster wall. "Threshing in Kansas" is a busy, cinematic scene; although an integral unit each panel is a separate scene. Farmers stand on wagons piled high with wheat, forking it to the threshers. Farmers operate the thresher, piling the bundled shafts in other wagons and on the ground. In the foreground a sunbonnetted woman in a long dress and a child talk with a man who leans against the black thresher. In the left foreground a farmer on horseback oversees the operations as a boy bearing water buckets approaches the workers. Sunflowers and a bundle of wheat are symbolically placed in the foreground of the canvas. The threshing machine whirs and steams. A red barn and a wooden windmill stand behind the scene on the left of the canvas. The rolling Reno County countryside fills out the background. A farmer in a buggy pulled by three mules passes in front of a white frame church and a hamlet. Wheat fields stretch out on the right side of the canvas. Winter employs a primary palette of creams, golds, blacks and blues for the mural.

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The mural was completed on July 7, 1942 and measured 18' by 8'5". Winter recommended cleaning the mural with a soft rag, cold water and Ivory soap and varnishing after each cleaning. In 1973 the mural was recorded to have a slight defect and it is likely that the defect has not yet been repaired. In period accounts, the tempera was described as being bright colored, it appears to have faded.

The wall beneath the mural retains its original limestone block treatment. Additionally, the door surround, the door and the bulletin boards are retained. The original hanging light fixtures have been replaced with almost flush mounted fluorescent lights.

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placed in the foreground. The threshing machine whirs and steams. A red barn and a wooden windmill stand behind the scene on the left of the canvas. The rolling Reno County countryside fills out the background. A farmer in a buggy pulled by three mules passes in front of a white frame church and a hamlet. Wheat fields stretch out on the right side of the canvas. Winter employs a primary palette of creams, golds, blacks, and blues for the mural. "Threshing in Kansas" is representative of the illustrative, historically based realism funded through the Section.

Community involvement in the development of the subject material and presentation of the mural was extensive. A local competition was held in Summer, 1941 with a July, 1941 deadline, fifty artists submitted seventy-six designs. The competition committee was comprised of J.P. Harris, the editor and publisher of the Hutchinson News-Herald and chairman of the committee, Mrs. Henry Humphrey, Barbara Busch, an art instructor, Postmaster Ralph Russell, and Otho McCracken. The designs were displayed in the basement of the post office for several days before the committee selected their six recommendations. All of the submissions were then sent to Washington for the Section's final review. Winter received the contract for the mural on August 4, 1941 and the mural was completed on July 7, 1942.

Winter was in the unusual position of interacting extensively with the public during the mural process, since he was actually in the post office painting the mural. Winter began to paint the mural after the United States had entered World War II. Some public resentment was expressed at the cost of the mural as this was a time of austerity. Some criticized the mural for its composition and historical accuracy as well, but Winter pointed to local historic photographs to justify his choices. Reacting to the criticisms Winter said:

There is talent in Kansas . . . and it will be given a chance to develop only when the people of town and country begin to appreciate its value. A native art is in the making and after the war it will be supported by American patrons. When our American patrons awake to the fact that talent is born in American, then our art will far surpass anything yet accomplished in the decadent countries of Europe.

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Committee chairman Harris published Winter's doodles and sketches for the mural in the Hutchinson News-Herald. It was unusual for the public to see the doodling and sketching that preceded the finished product, but this action allowed the public an opportunity to learn more about the artistic process. Winter explained his technique in the July 2, 1942 edition of the Hutchinson News-Herald:

A good, realistic mural design . . . is one which covers the entire wall area in an interesting manner so that almost every square foot has something to tell the observer. A surface pattern must be retained to avoid the feeling that the wall has been punched full of big, uninteresting, empty holes.

"Threshing in Kansas" was painted onto the east wall of the lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. The dimensions of the mural are 18' by 8'5". Winter received \$2800 for the commission. The Hutchinson Post Office is an example of one of the larger class B post offices that received Section artwork in Kansas. Winter is also responsible for the Section artwork in the Fremont, Michigan and Wellston PS, St. Louis post offices.

Winter spent some of his childhood in Belpre and Larned, Kansas. After attending high school in Grand Rapids, Michigan Winter became a cartoonist for a local paper. He graduated from the Cleveland School of Art in 1929 and pursued a career in book illustration. The Hutchinson commission was his first mural. Lumen gained a reputation as a painter and sculptor. He was selected to complete the murals that John Steuart Curry had begun in the 1930s for the Kansas State Capitol in the late 1970s and was working on the centerpiece sculpture for the new Kansas Museum of History when he died.

Please see the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources cover nomination for additional information.

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Park, Marlene and Gerald Markowitz. Democratic Vistas. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

Svedlow, Dr. Anthony V. (Mulvane Gallery, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas). Personal interview with Martha Hagedorn-Krass, January 8, 1988.

Topeka Capital-Journal, 7 April 1982.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Falk, Peter Hastings, Who Was Who in American Art. (Madison, CT: Soundview Press, 1985).

General Services Administration. Treasury Department Section Records - Kansas Post Offices. Hutchinson, Kansas.

Hutchinson News-Herald; 12 July 1942, 16 July 1942, 14 June 1942.

Kansas City Star, 22 March 1941.

Kansas City Times, 23 July 1941.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A

1	4
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5	9	4	1	2	1
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4	2	1	2	1	6	5
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on even lots 20-42 on E. 1st in Hutchinson, Kansas. The property is bounded to the south by E. 1st, to the east by Poplar, and to the north and west by adjacent property lines.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the property and some additional acreage west of the original parcel purchased in 1967 for the post office expansion.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date February 21, 1989

street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612