

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1325

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 any 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 Wayne United States Post Office

Other names/site number WY05-306

2. Location

Street & number 120 Pearl Street

Not for publication

City or town Wayne

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Wayne

Code 179

Zip code 68787

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Michael J. ...
Signature of certifying official

Nov. 7, 2007
Date

Director, Nebraska 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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): _____

Edson H. Beall

12.27.07

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Wayne United States Post Office

Name of Property

Wayne County, Nebraska

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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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing and 4 rows: Buildings, Sites, Structures, Objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

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.)

Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete

Walls Brick

Roof Asphalt and gravel

Other

Narrative Description

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

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.)

- X 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.
X 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 a 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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1934-1957

Significant Dates

1934

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Louis A Simon, Architect

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 #

Primary location for additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local Government
University
Other
Name of repository:

Wayne United States Post Office

Name of Property

Wayne County, Nebraska

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	663458	4677006	3.			
2.				4.			

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 Melanie Sharpnack, Intern
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date July 9, 2007
street & number 1500 R St, Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4773
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501-2554

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Wayne Post Office/United States Postal Service
street & number 120 North Pearl Street/4301 Wilson Blvd, Ste 300 telephone (402) 375-2485
city or town Wayne/Arlington state NE/VA zip code 68787/22203

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined 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, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Wayne United States Post Office

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The Wayne Post Office is located on a brick street, on the southwest corner of Second and Pearl streets, one block west of Main Street. The Art Deco building was constructed in 1934 in a project funded by the Public Works Administration.

This Art Deco Post Office is a rectangular, one story building with a flat roof. It has a concrete foundation and red brick veneer exterior. The façade contains a central entrance with eight pilasters of patterned brick, with cast concrete capitals. Four pilasters are located on either side of the entrance. Above the pilasters is a belt course of cast concrete, which wraps around the entire building, and in the belt are cast concrete floral rosettes on top of each pilaster. Over the entrance on the front façade reads "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE" and on either side is a cast concrete eagle standing in flowers and water. The main entrance faces east and includes concrete steps to the entryway of two modern glass doors, topped with a 15 light transom and an industrial hopper window on either side of the doors. The back and north windows are also industrial hopper windows while the south and part of the front windows are eight over eight double hung with a four light transom. The industrial hopper windows currently have storm windows over them. The south side of the building contains two window wells with an eight over eight double hung window in each well. Near the top of the building, on the south elevation, are two, side by side, eight over eight double hung windows. The back of the building contains the loading dock and chimney. The north side of the building has a 1997 addition of an ADA wheelchair ramp, which was sympathetically done to maintain the historic integrity of the building. Wrapped around the bottom of the building is a pseudo-stereobate that the pilasters rest on, which is representative of early Greek architecture. In the bottom southwest corner on the front of the building, amid the limestone pseudo-stereobate, is the cornerstone of the building. The cornerstone lists the year the building was constructed, 1934, the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau Jr., the Postmaster General, James A. Farley, the Architect, Louis A. Simon, and the Engineer, George O. Von Nerta.

The interior of the building contains a small, wooden vestibule entryway, with a single door entrance to the immediate left and right. The floor is laid with square, unglazed quarry tile in a combination of warm reds, oranges, and browns. The lobby of the Post Office is wrapped in wainscot of the same floor tile and rises approximately three-and-a-half feet high. The white plaster walls continue to approximately 15 feet in height to the plaster ceiling, which has an elaborate cornice. Entering the main room, to the left is the sales window with an oak counter. To the right of the window is a recessed area, which contains the lock boxes, a stamp machine, and mail slots. The floor in this area is laid with rectangular white tile and the lighting is made up of modern fluorescent light fixtures, which hang above the lock boxes. Across from the sales window is an original oak writing desk. Hanging on the north walls in the lobby are two original oak display cases. The handicap entrance on the north side leads into a room with a white square tile floor. The room is wrapped in a wooden wainscot. Above the wainscot, the room continues in the white theme of the lobby.

The most significant changes to the Post Office include the addition of the ADA wheelchair ramp in 1997. In 1985, the original lock boxes were replaced with the current aluminum ones. In order to accommodate these lock boxes, the lobby was expanded, creating this recessed area for the lock boxes. The lighting in the lobby has also been modernized to incorporate fluorescent lighting, which is covered by square light fixtures. Other changes include the conversion from coal to gas and the addition of window air-conditioning units. The Wayne Post Office retains excellent physical integrity and remains in excellent condition for its intended purpose of serving the public.

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The Wayne Post Office is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. It is eligible under Criterion A for its association with public work projects as means of alleviating widespread poverty during the Great Depression of the 1930s. It is also eligible under Criterion C as an excellent example of the Art Deco style that was popular during the same time period.

Criterion A:

While the stock market crash in October of 1929 created a crisis in America's business and industry, agricultural areas throughout the United States had been in a depression for most of the decade of the 1920s. Farm prices that spiked during and after World War I fell as drastically as they had risen. As prices fell in mid-1920, farmers were faced with debts they were unable to pay. Farmers' incomes did not keep pace with inflation, and a devaluation in land prices contributed to their financial problems. Suffering in the agricultural economy caused economic problems for the rest of Nebraska at large. Black Tuesday was simply another devastating blow to an already depressed economy. As the authors of *Nebraska: A Guide to the Cornhusker State* described the Depression,

"The condition of the farmers affected Nebraska merchants, lumber dealers, realtors, school teachers, laborers, and artisans. Housewives stocked their pantry shelves with the simplest essentials; construction lagged; school administrators curtailed their programs as tax receipts went down; day laborers, formerly sure of a place on Nebraska farms and in Nebraska industries, began the long trek of the unemployed."¹

By December of 1932, farm prices were the lowest in Nebraska history. In addition, Nebraska, and the rest of the Midwest, was suffering from a severe drought that caused valuable topsoil to erode, damaged crops and reduced agricultural production. Nation-wide, there were more than 12 million people unemployed and in need of assistance. Twenty-five percent of the American labor force was jobless.² State governments were incapable of supporting the vast numbers of destitute citizens who required help. The Federal government was forced to intercede, and with the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, the New Deal was instituted. Roosevelt's New Deal policies came in many manifestations, from the Social Security Act that provided monthly pensions to the elderly to direct relief payments from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and perhaps most importantly public work relief projects that provided jobs to America's able-bodied unemployed. Some of these projects took the form of road construction, sewer repair, ditch digging, reforestation projects, and the construction of public buildings, among many other projects.³ Throughout much of the Roosevelt administration, from 1933 to 1940 when public assistance was most required, billions of dollars were spent on projects intended to provide the working man with an opportunity to work. Under the Public Works Administration, programs administered by various administrations including the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, led to the construction of 11,000 public buildings, including courthouses, post offices, firehouses, hospitals, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and schools, as well as over 100 airfields and 800 parks. They made repairs and improvements on more than 30,000 other pre-existing buildings, laid out 40,000 miles of public roads and repaired 150,000 miles of roads. They constructed 1,400 athletic fields and 1,800 swimming pools, and reforested 20,000 acres with trees and bushes.⁴ The Wayne Post Office is one such project.

¹ Works Progress Administration, *Nebraska: A Guide to the Cornhusker State* (1939; rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 67; quoted in James C. Olson and Ronald C. Naugle, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 313.

² Phoebe Cutler, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 5.

³ Page Smith, *Redeeming the Time: A People's History of the 1920s and the New Deal* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987), 598.

⁴ Smith, 814.

⁵ *Wayne Herald*, 16 November 1933.

⁶ *Wayne Herald*, 22 February 1934.

⁷ *Wayne Herald*, 9 August 1934.

⁸ *Wayne Herald*, 24 January 1935.

⁹ *Wayne Herald*, 6 June 1935.

¹⁰ *Wayne Herald*, 13 June 1935.

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In 1933, as a part of President Roosevelt's New Deal, the federal government appropriated \$16,678,675 to build 237 government buildings in the United States. Nebraska received \$233,600 to build five modest post offices in Wayne, Lexington, Superior, David City, and Seward. Because of the Depression, the federal government and the public found it improper for these post offices to be large so, according to the *Wayne Herald*, "the plan... is to erect 'needed post offices of a sensible, utilitarian character instead of monumental edifices."⁵

Bids for the site of Wayne's Post Office were opened on 18 December 1933 and after the visit of Vernon C. Batie, the government site agent, and a city hall meeting which discussed the advantages of each site, the government announced that two lots on Second and Pearl were to be the site of the new Post Office. Mrs. Mabel Savage and Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith owned these lots and sold them to the government for \$5,750.⁶ The government opened bidding for construction on 1 August of 1934 and out of ten bids received, Paul Sothman of Grand Island won the bid with his offer of \$38,523.⁷ After building the Wayne Post Office, Paul Sothman also constructed the Wayne Auditorium, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Construction on the building began 21 September 1934 but by January of 1935, the construction crews were delayed for a couple of weeks because of the extremely cold weather.⁸ Once construction was able to resume, crews worked until the completion of the building in June 1935.

Although the Post Office was not ready to open, the dedication ceremony was held on June 7, 1935. In a proclamation from the mayor, all businesses were asked to close for the hour expected for the ceremony, to allow everyone the opportunity to attend the dedication. Preceding the ceremony was a parade in honor of the new federal building, made of the municipal band, State Legion and Auxiliary, city officials, Boy Scouts, and other civic organizations, which marched toward the new building where the ceremony took place.⁹ Fred W. Winter laid the cornerstone and in his address he stated, "This building is built along artistic lines and of the best materials...it is beautiful because it reflects the civic pride of the people."¹⁰ The anticipated date for the opening of the Post Office was the beginning of July 1935 but the opening was delayed until September of 1935 because of the time it took for the new equipment to be delivered to the Post Office. The Post Office officially started serving the public on September 3, 1935.

Criterion C:

The Art Deco style emerged out of the Paris Exposition Internationale Des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes in 1925. Having emerged from a bitter, modern war just seven years before, the goal of the Paris Exposition was to announce the coming of a new modern age by determining a new, international modern style of architecture and decorative arts. Much like Art Nouveau almost four decades before, proponents of Art Deco rejected decorative vocabularies of the past and chose new geometric and streamlined motifs rather than the classical columns, architraves and pediments of previous styles.

The Wayne United States Post Office was designed in the Art Deco style. While it is not as exuberantly and excessively decorated as many examples of Art Deco architecture found elsewhere in the country, it is a product of its time and its location. The lean years of the Great Depression would not tolerate such excesses. Still, the building exhibits many features that distinguish it as an example of this style. The Art Deco style presents in the patterned brick pilasters, which represent verticality of the building, and in the elegant cast concrete capitals. The cast concrete rosettes that are embedded in the belt course around the entire building and the cast concrete decorative cornice also represent the Art Deco style.

The Wayne United States Post Office is an exceedingly significant building worthy of listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The building is a lovely example of an Art Deco public building, a style that is relatively rare in Nebraska. The Post Office is also significant for its association with Federal relief programs that sought to alleviate the extreme

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poverty of the American public during the Great Depression. In his dedication speech, Fred W. Winter of the Nebraska State Legion stated, "Although the plans, supervision, and funds come from Washington, this is purely a local enterprise—you willed it, and it is here."¹¹ Many jobs were created in a community that sorely needed them, and a lovely facility was constructed that has contributed to the livability of Wayne as a charming mid-sized community for the last seventy-three years.

¹¹ *Wayne Herald*, 5 September 1935.

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Harris, Cyril M., ed. *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1977.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

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Smith, Page. *Redeeming the Time: A People's History of the 1920s and The New Deal*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987

The Wayne Herald 16 November 1933 – 5 September 1935

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Lots 11 and 12, Block 22, Original Town, Wayne, Wayne County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries for the Wayne United States Post Offices include the lots historically associated with the post office.