NPS Form 10-900-b
(Jan. 1987)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 17 1990

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. 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. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic U.S. Post Offices in New Mexico 1900-1941

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Appropriations for and construction of U.S. post offices/federal buildings by the federal government in New Mexico from 1900 to World War II (1941).

C. Geographical Data

State of New Mexico

☐ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Signature of certifying official — Date: 1-23-89

U.S. Postal Service.
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register — Date: 2/23/90

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

The theme of this nomination concerns the federal building programs in New Mexico as manifested in the construction of post offices in the first four decades of the 20th Century. The buildings constructed during this period record the evolution of both the political/economic philosophies and the design philosophies of the federal government through its building programs. The three buildings included in this nomination, however, are from the final years of this era of federal construction. (They are the only buildings from the period of significance that remain in U.S. Postal Service ownership.) They demonstrate rather clearly the succession of federal design philosophy in the efforts to achieve economy and standardization. (Except for materials, the front facades are identical and the floor plans vary only sightly.) In the temporal and physical contexts of federal building construction in New Mexico, these buildings represent a specific period and style in the progression of federal architecture from the first two decades of the century through the transition of style which ended with the onset of World War II. As such, their nomination adds the final band to the spectrum of federal architecture in New Mexico already listed in the National Register.

With the War's end the federal government turned again to its construction programs, but modernization and efficiency became the new symbols of America's post-war philosophy. The use of design to provide a symbol of the monumental presence of the federal government in its post offices had ended with the beginning of the War.

While the buildings specifically included in this nomination are limited to the final years of the Depression, they, along with other federally-constructed post offices in New Mexico currently listed in the National Register, represent the two major eras of federal construction between 1900 and the on-set of World War II. Imbedded in these construction periods are transitions in federal design philosophy, changes in funding programs, and changing economic conditions of the state and nation. The purpose of this nomination is to provide an overview of these various factors within the thematic period with which to establish a context for the evaluation of the individually nominated buildings.

[X] See continuation sheet

The buildings included in this nomination were constructed from standardized plans developed from guidelines provided by the Office of the Supervising Architect in the Treasury Department. Variations in design styles reflect both the transition in the design philosophies of the Supervising Architect and the requirements developed in response to the Depression. These variations in design, as well as functions, are also somewhat related to the communities in which they were placed and reflect the economic/political/-governmental context of those communities. In the case of the buildings in this nomination, only a narrow period of federal design is included. Further, the same elevation plan and essentially the same floor plan was used for all three. It is only taken with the other federally-constructed post offices in the state that a progression of design philosophy and variation in design style is demonstrated. It just happens, however, that the three buildings under Postal Service ownership from the period of significance are of the same design.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS NOMINATION

This nomination consists of two parts: the theme (or cover) document and three individual nomination forms, one for each of the buildings included in the theme.

The cover document lists the properties to be nominated as well as federally-constructed post offices listed in the National Register, defines the theme, discusses the criteria used in determining the significance of the nominated buildings, and examines the historical context in which the buildings were constructed. The purpose of this discussion is to establish a broad overview to which the significance of the individual properties can be related. The nominated properties were selected by consultation between the USPS and New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office.

The individual nomination forms are included to provide more complete information on each of the properties. The information provided in these forms includes: physical descriptions of the properties, discussions of their significance and relationship within the theme, a brief historical overview of their home community, and a summary of local newspaper coverage during the construction period.

The following tables list the three USPS properties included in this nomination and the federally-constructed post offices already listed in the National Register.

PROPERTIES NOMINATED AND OWNED BY THE USPS

Office	Date Occupied	Architect
Portales MPO[1]	1937	Louis A. Simon[2]/OSA[3]
Deming MPO	1937	Louis A. Simon/OSA
Truth or Consequences MPO (Hot Springs)	1940	Louis A. Simon/OSA

POST OFFICE BUILDINGS CURRENTLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Office	Date Occupied	Administered By
Albuquerque PO, FB, & CH[4]	1911	GSA[5]
Raton PO (HD)[6]	1919	City Library
Santa Fe PO & FB	1922	GSA
East Las Vegas PO, FB, & CH (HD)	1928	Public Schools
Clovis PO & FB	1931	Public Library
Gallup PO (HD)	1933	Privately Owned

Notes:

[1]MPO: Main Post Office

[2]Louis A. Simon: Supervising Architect

[3]OSA: Office of Supervising Architect

[4]PO: Post Office; FB - Federal Building; CH - Courthouse

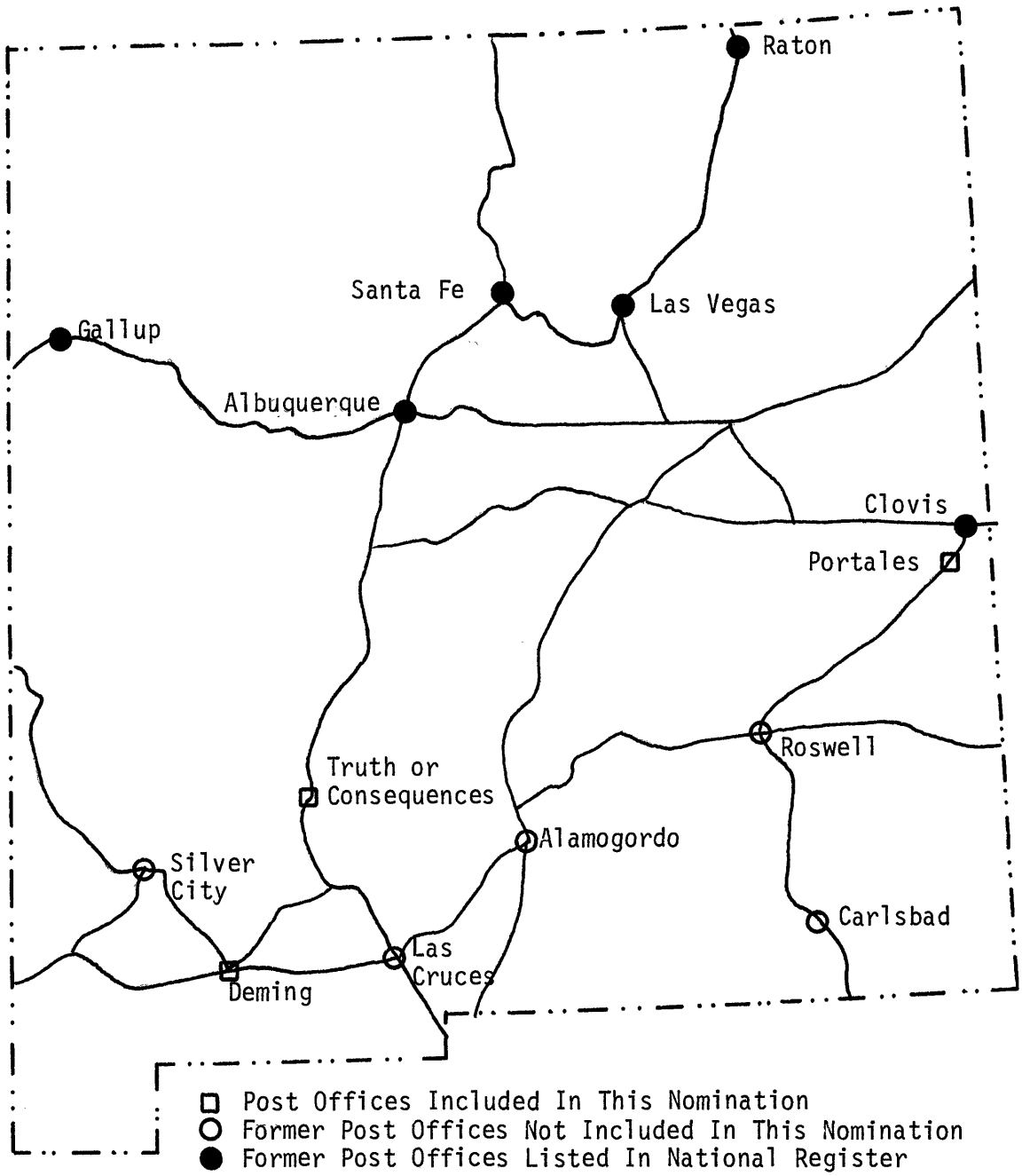
[5]GSA: General Services Administration

[6]HD: Historic District

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E **Page** 3 USPS - NEW MEXICO



FEDERALLY-CONSTRUCTED POST OFFICES IN NEW MEXICO

According to Postal Service records, public building appropriations, and local newspapers, New Mexico received fourteen federally-constructed post offices between 1900 and 1941. One has been razed--the 1913 Roswell Federal Building. Ten are no longer used as post offices. Of these, the following are under federal ownership and administered by GSA: Albuquerque (1911), Santa Fe (1922), Carlsbad (1935), and Alamogordo (1938). The buildings in Raton (1919), Las Cruces (1919), East Las Vegas (1928), and Clovis (1931) are owned by local public entities such as libraries, school districts, and county courts. Gallup (1933) and Silver City (1934) are privately-owned and used for offices. Only the triplets--Deming, Portales, and Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences)--are owned and operated by the U.S. Postal Service.

FEDERAL PUBLIC BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

This section will provide a discussion of national building programs. A following section will be devoted to the relationship of these programs in the context of the buildings constructed in New Mexico.

The history of post office construction before WWII can be divided into three distinct phases. From 1893 to 1914, under the provisions of the Tarsney Act, buildings could be designed within the Treasury Department or submitted to competitive bids among private architects. From 1915 to 1930, the Secretary of the Treasury implemented policies that standardized the design of public buildings, in contrast to the previous practice of preparing an individual design for each structure. From the onset of the Depression (1929 to 1930) a new era of government buildings was initiated with the development of public works programs designed to stimulate local economies.

Prior to 1902, when the first "Public Buildings Omnibus Act" was passed, federal buildings were funded on an ad hoc basis. Appropriations bills rarely contained allocations for more than three buildings at one time. Acquisition of sites and construction occurred only with Congressional authorization.

The Public Buildings Omnibus Act of 1902 authorized 150 new projects. Since it provided for a large body of projects rather than requiring individual authorization, it saved a considerable amount of time in Congress. However, the omnibus bills created the opportunity for political abuse in that Congressmen were eager to please their constituents by distributing "federal presents." Political influence, rather than operational requirements, seemed to dictate size, ornamentation, and location. The omnibus legislation provoked allegations of waste and cries of "pork barrel" from the press.

The utilization of the omnibus buildings approach greatly increased the number of buildings under the control of the Treasury Department. In 1899 there were 391 federal buildings under the Department of the Treasury; this number increased to 1,126 by 1912 [Craig, 1979, p. 213]. Many of the new buildings went to smaller cities and developing towns, which received their first federal buildings.

After experimenting in 1903-04 with submitting smaller projects (less than $500,000) to competing architects in the project vicinity, it was decided that these projects would be designed "in-house" by the Supervising Architect's office. A return to the "classical style of architecture" for government buildings was also announced during this period. Stylistic elements were drawn from the French Beaux-Arts and Neo-Classical traditions. In addition, America's architectural heritage was reflected in Colonial Revival design.

During the tenure of Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor (1898-1912), buildings were individually designed. Toward the end of his tenure (1912), concern was expressed that the costs of federal construction in comparison to privately-constructed commercial buildings was too high. It was felt that designs should be standardized. Taylor felt, however, that government buildings could not be designed and constructed as standardized units.

After Taylor resigned as Supervising Architect, James Wetmore served as Acting Supervising Architect from 1912 to 1913. Oscar Wenderoth followed Wetmore from 1913 to 1915. During Wenderoth's tenure, legislative changes took place that profoundly affected government architecture, particularly small-scale projects. The designs of 1913 and 1914, however, differed little from Taylor's. Post offices designed during Wenderoth's administration, through the use of ornamentation, symmetry, and fine materials (using Renaissance Revival details), brought the idea of the Beaux-Arts movement to small cities and towns. "They [small town post offices] are generally the most important of local buildings, and taken together, are seen daily by thousands, who have little opportunity to feel the influence of the great architectural works in the large cities" (The Architect, Vol. XV, No. 23, March 1918, p. 188).

The Omnibus Public Buildings Act of 1913 set the stage for a change in federal construction policy. Although the Act authorized a large number of construction projects, it also stipulated that no new post office buildings would be authorized for communities with postal receipts totaling less than $10,000. Pressure to control "wasteful spending" on unneeded public buildings also led to the establishment of the Public Buildings Commission in the 1913 Act.

In his annual report for fiscal year 1913, the Supervising Architect seemed somewhat skeptical of the commission's ability to render assistance. He hoped, however, that the commission would discuss thoroughly:

> "... the two mooted questions of the so-called 'standardization of buildings' and the claim that the public buildings erected under the direction of the Supervising Architect cost appreciably more than similar buildings erected by municipalities, by county and state governments, and by private individuals. The reports of the debates in the House and Senate show that there is great diversity of opinion among members of Congress on these two subjects, and that they are matters of frequent discussion. It is believed that it is due this office that

Congress be authoritatively informed of the limitations of the scheme of 'standardization' and, also, whether the Supervising Architect is actually to be charged with fostering extravagant methods of building construction" ["Annual Report of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, for Fiscal Year Ending 30 June 1913," Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914].

The Public Buildings Commission, chaired by Secretary of the Treasury William McAdoo, presented its report to Congress in 1914. The report strongly recommended that buildings be standardized in order to reduce cost. This was followed by the establishment of four building classes and building criteria in McAdoo's annual report of 1915. The purpose of the classification scheme was "to provide a rational system of uniformity and business economy in designing and constructing public buildings, so that buildings suitable to the public needs may be built without waste of government money" [Ibid., p. 9]. The result of this report was the complete reshaping of post office construction policies after 1915. Buildings were to be less costly but durable, simple, and architecturally desirable. The policies of standardizing plans and constructing cost-efficient public buildings continued throughout the 1920s. An effort was made to use the same design as frequently as possible, with variation in floor plans only if an unusual, specific need arose.

The classification scheme developed by the committee is as follows:

* CLASS A:
Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the first class with annual receipts of $800,000 or over; the site forming part of a city development plan or situated on an important thoroughfare of a great city; improvement on an adjoining property reaching the higher valuation of metropolitan real estate.

Character of Building: Marble or granite facing; fireproof throughout; metal frames, sashes, and doors, interior finish to include the finer grade of marble, ornamental bronze work, mahogany, etc. Public spaces to have monumental treatment, mural decorations; special interior lighting fixtures.

* CLASS B:
Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the first class with receipts from $60,000 to $800,000; valuation of adjoining property somewhat below the higher valuation of metropolitan real estate.

Character of Building: Limestone or sandstone facing; exterior frames and sash metal; interior frames, sash and doors wood; interior finish to exclude the more expensive woods and marbles; ornamental metal to be used only where iron is suitable. Restricted ornament in public spaces.

* CLASS C:
Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the second class with receipts of $15,000 or over, and of the first class to $60,000 receipts; valuation of surrounding property that of a second class city.

Character of Building: Brick facing with stone or terra cotta trimmings; fireproof floors; non-fireproof roof; frames, sashes and doors wood; interior finish to exclude the more expensive woods and marbles; the latter used only where sanitary conditions demand; public spaces restricted to very simple forms of ornament.

* CLASS D:
Definition: Buildings that include a post office having annual receipts of less than $15,000; real estate values justifying only a limited investment for improvements.

Character of Building: Brick facing, little stone or terra cotta used; only first floor fireproof; stock sash frames, doors, etc., where advisable; ordinary class of building, such as any business man would consider a reasonable investment in a small town.

James A. Wetmore resumed the reins of the Supervising Architect in 1915 and retained the title of Acting Supervising Architect. Wetmore was a lawyer by training and was concerned more with administration than the design of buildings. During his administration the Superintendent of the Architectural Division, Louis A. Simon, exercised considerable influence on the design of federal buildings. After 1914, designs became standardized and ornament less lavish.

Construction of public buildings had tapered off with the onset of WWI and came to a halt during the war. After the war ended, construction of previously authorized buildings resumed slowly. For example, 20 buildings were constructed in 1919, 10 in 1920, 3 each in 1921 and 1922, 9 in 1923, and 13 in 1924. No new construction laws were enacted until the Public Buildings Act of 1926. This Act contrasted with previous omnibus acts which had authorized appropriations for specific buildings. Two public buildings commissions--one for the District of Columbia and the other for the rest of the country--recommended a new building program which would base building location and size on a business approach rather than Congressional logrolling. The 1926 Act ordered the Treasury Department to implement a "business considerations" policy in response to protests over unneeded projects that were merely a means for a Congressman to win local favor. The standardization of plans for small post offices was also carried forward from the policies of the Public Buildings Commission's report of 1914. A survey report completed under the direction of the 1926 Act identified over 2,300 towns and cities with postal receipts over $10,000 that were without federal buildings. The estimated cost of constructing these buildings was $170,420,000 [Ibid., p. 13].

The policies of standardizing plans and constructing cost-efficient buildings continued throughout the 1920s. Post offices, particularly those in small communities, were constructed in so far as possible according to plans established in conformance with conditions and community needs. Stylistically, the majority retained the basic elements of Beaux-Arts massing and plan. Classical details were minimized (to reduce costs) and floor plans did not vary unless a specific need arose.

The crash of 1929 and the subsequent Depression delayed the full implementation of the building program outlined in the 1926 Act. In 1930, Congress authorized increased funding for public building by amending the 1926 Act. This legislation established a trend in public works projects that arose in direct response to the Depression. It served as a precedent for subsequent policies and acts that would attempt to reduce unemployment and stabilize the economy.

The Federal Employment Stabilization Act of 1931 was a major step in the government's efforts to aid the national

economy through building programs. The Act established the Federal Employment Stabilization Board, which was charged with advising the President as to the trend of the economic and employment situation [46 Stat 1086]. The President would then transmit to Congress "such supplemental estimates as he deems advisable for emergency appropriations to be expended during such period upon authorized construction in order to aid in preventing unemployment and permit the Government to avail itself of the opportunity for speedy, efficient, and economical construction during any such period." Emergency appropriations were to be used, among other things, for carrying into effect the provision of the Public Buildings Act of 1926. The Act also provided for acceleration of emergency construction, advanced planning, and increased appropriations by $100,000,000.

Design policies also continued to stress standardization. A set of "Cabinet Sketches" was produced by the Treasury Department which provided standard floor plans for post offices of different sizes. Where practicable, individual treatment was given to exterior details. In order to achieve rapid construction, emphasis was placed on minimizing the number of individual drawings.

In 1933 the Treasury Department was reorganized and the Supervising Architect's office was placed within the Procurement Branch in the Division of Public Works. Also in 1933 the Public Works Administration (PWA) was created under the National Industrial Recovery Act and additional legislation was passed for funding new projects through emergency construction programs. The funds appropriated under the 1926 Act became unavailable, except for those projects under contract. In 1934 Louis A. Simon became the Supervising Architect, a position he held until 1941. He became responsible, therefore, for carrying out the bulk of federal construction through the balance of the Depression era.

The proliferation of federal building programs increased the bureaucratic complexity of federal construction. The Treasury Department's annual report of 1935, for example, listed construction projects under the following programs: the original Public Buildings Program under the 1926 Act; Public Works Administration projects; the Emergency Relief Construction Program; and the Building Program for the District of Columbia under the 1926 Act [Ibid., p. 17].

The number of post offices constructed under these programs grew rapidly. There was a push to provide post offices in those communities that had been identified in the survey report resulting from the 1926 Act, as well as in towns that had not been included in the report or subsequent amendments. As indicated below, the emphasis on economic revival was reflected in the distribution expansion of the building programs.

> ...[W]ith a view to relieving countrywide unemployment the Secretary of the Treasury and Postmaster General, in the selection of towns or cities in which buildings are to be constructed, shall endeavor to distribute the projects equitably throughout the country so far as may be consistent with the needs of the public service; and the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General may also select for the prosecution under this appropriation such projects not included in such report as in their judgment are economically sound and advantageous to the public service [48 Stat 1Ø62].

Emphasis on standardization and the allocation of economic benefits of federal construction programs to the various producing industries was indicated in the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury (Fiscal Year ended 3Ø June 1935). An advisory committee on engineering was formed and was charged with the task of developing a Manual of Design to serve as a guide in the development of plans and specifications for new structures. A directive board was established to study the requirements of each project in its preliminary stage, taking into consideration the best utilization of the site selected, the general character of the design in its broad sense, the selection of the most appropriate materials for the construction and finish, the availability of local materials, the relationship of the proposed building to its surroundings, and the development of an equitable balance in the use of materials that would spread the benefits of the public building program as much as possible among all the producing industries.

The "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury" for 1937 reported that standardization had been successful in achieving its goals of efficiency and stimulating employment. It is also interesting to note the reference to 11 standard designs to meet the sectional architectural traditions:

A large portion of the program has consisted of small post office buildings spread over the entire United States. Type designs were developed and, in order to meet the varying requirements of the Post Office Department and the sectional architectural traditions, eleven designs were required. By thus standardizing the designs, there resulted a great saving in time and cost of production of the drawings and specifications and the placing of these projects on the market was greatly expedited. The buildings which have been constructed from these type designs have proved economical and satisfactory.

The policy of preparing drawings and specifications permitting to the greatest practicable extent the use of materials and products native to the localities has resulted in stimulating employment and spreading the benefits of the building program.

In 1935, 185 post offices were constructed by the federal government. This number was followed by 260 in 1936, 303 in 1937, and 259 in 1938.

Under Government Reorganization in 1939, the Public Buildings Branch of the Procurement Division was placed under the administration of the Federal Works Agency. The Supervising Architect was also consolidated under the FWA. The Public Buildings Administration, headed by a commissioner of public buildings, was charged with the responsibility of administering these functions. It appears that the post office construction policies remained substantially the same as under the previous organization.

The architectural styles of the Depression Era, particularly after 1933, tended toward modernized, simplified buildings. The buildings retained the symmetry and proportions of their predecessors but were stripped of the architectural ornamentation that characterized the pre-1920 buildings and even those of the first three years of the 1930's. The design was a basic rectangular box with flat facade; and detailing suggested Classical elements, but in rudimentary form. In addition to the various Revival influences, Art Deco was used but even this motif worked with stylized Classical elements. However, these buildings were still of quality construction, using brick, stone, and terra cotta,

and they continued to symbolize the stability of the federal government.

The quest for efficiency of plan preparation and rapid construction, and the influence of the international or modern design movement created a building that is termed "starved classical". The end of the Depression Era also brought the end to this building type. Construction essentially stopped during World War II and the post offices which followed were designed to meet the changing operational functions of modern postal facilities.

FEDERAL ARTS PROJECTS

Like the accelerated post office construction of the Depression Era, the New Deal Federal Art Projects were developed to alleviate unemployment in the arts and to decorate federal architecture. Three programs were administered through the Treasury Department and one through the Works Progress Administration [The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology of Memoirs, O'Connor, 1972, p. 12]. These programs were as follows:

Treasury Department Programs

1. The Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), which lasted from December of 1933 to June of 1934. This was an emergency relief program applied without a strict relief test. It employed roughly 3,700 artists and cost $1,313,000.

2. The Section of Painting and Sculpture, later the Section of Fine Arts. This was the program primarily responsible for murals and sculpture found in post office buildings throughout the country. Commissions were awarded based on anonymous competitions without reference to the artists' economic need, i.e., it was not, strictly speaking, a relief program. The program began in October of 1934, the final commission was completed in 1943. There were 1,400 contracts awarded at a total cost of about $2,571,000.

3. Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) was created in July of 1935 by a funding allocation from the WPA to the Treasury Department. TRAP was administered by the Section of Fine Arts, applying the same relief rules that governed WPA employment. The project employed 446 persons at a cost of $833,784; it was discontinued in 1939. The project's primary output was painting and sculpture used to decorate federal buildings.

Work Progress Administration

4. Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP) was a large relief project devoted to the plastic arts. The WPA/FAP was part of a larger program called Federal Project No. 1, which included the WPA drama, music, and writing projects. The over-all project began in August of 1935, employed over 4,000 persons, cost $35 million, and was terminated in 1943.

In decorating its new public buildings, the Treasury Department supported the arts in the manner of the traditional patron. The Department selected both artists and subject matter in the process of conveying the ideals of the New Deal to the public users of its facilities. In accomplishing that task, the Section of Fine Arts made it clear what was considered as appropriate style and subject matter for its programs. Literal interpretation of the American scene, particularly events that were representative of the communities in which they occurred, was the essence of that appropriate style. Though some artists felt that this standard was repressive, many critics praised the Section for bringing art out of studios and museums into public buildings, some in towns where people had never seen original works of art.

The themes portrayed in the local buildings expressed the experiences, history, and ideals of the local communities, so their artistic significance varied with the local context. The style was conservative and realistic, one that was identifiable and did not require an art critic's interpretation to be appreciated by the local populace; it was a style that could be related to. The mural art and the public buildings in which it was located provided the link between the federal government in its New Deal programs, and the local citizen.

ESTABLISHMENT OF EARLY POSTAL SERVICE IN NEW MEXICO

New Mexico is a blending and contrast of three cultures: Indian, Spanish, and Anglo-American. Indians of the region include the sedentary Pueblos and several nomadic tribes, including the Comanches, Apaches, and Navahos. The Spanish arrived early in the 16th Century as part of their colonization of the New World, seeking "Glory, God, and Gold." One of the first expeditions into the area that is now New Mexico was headed by a Spanish nobleman named Francisco Vasquez Coronado, who in 1540 led 336 men into New Mexico seeking gold and other precious metals. Like other early explorers, Coronado was drawn to the area by fantastic stories of cities paved with gold and of natives with tremendous wealth. But Coronado found nothing like those stories promised. Later expeditions, including one in 1581 led by Francisco Chamuscado which ended in the deaths of several priests by hostile natives, also proved futile in their search for great wealth in the region.

Once it was established that New Mexico promised neither great mineral wealth or agricultural potential, Spain's interest in the area languished. By 1680 the Spanish population in New Mexico was estimated to be only 2,000. Santa Fe, one of the earliest Spanish settlements (founded in 1610), was the largest town. The native Indians were also slowly becoming bolder in their challenge to Spanish rule. In 1680 an Indian revolt forced the Spanish settlers in the province to flee and gather together near the site of present day El Paso. The revolt of 1680 was a major setback to the Spanish; it would take them 13 years to retake the Rio Grande area.

The 1700s were less eventful for New Mexico, as it settled into a pattern of slow development of an agrarian society and Spanish missions. The Spanish settlements, however, continued to be threatened by Indian raids, as well as new encroachments by the French. By 1783, when it was still under Spanish control, New Mexico had scheduled mail delivery and an organized postal route system. At that time the system was limited to just one post office, in the capital city of Santa Fe. By 1821, when Mexico gained its independence from Spain, mail delivery from El Paso north to Santa Fe was only once-a-month. Service remained rudimentary during the time of Mexican control.

Accompanying Mexican independence was a newly opened door to New Mexican trade. The door had remained closed under the Spanish, who feared that American traders were merely agents of an expansionist United States. Thus, traders from the "states" were poorly received in Santa Fe. Indeed, they were often imprisoned. But with Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, conditions changed. A serendipitous encounter by the trading expedition of William Becknell with Mexican soldiers led to Becknell's invitation to Santa Fe. The invitation proved to be quite profitable. Naturally, the promise of riches drew more traders to Santa Fe and the establishment of a trade route between the Missouri and Santa Fe--the Santa Fe Trail--which would prove to be pivotal in the development of the region. During his second expedition a year later Becknell pioneered the Cimarron Cutoff, which made the difficult journey 100 miles shorter, and instituted the use of wagons (previously only pack animals had been used).

The Santa Fe Trail, traversed by giant freight wagons, military supply wagons, stage coaches, and migrant trains, became an important force in developing the vanishing frontier of America. The Trail extended from Independence, Missouri southwest to Santa Fe and established Santa Fe's position as an important trading center, though many goods were shipped directly on to Mexico. The Trail also became a conduit for American influence in New Mexico. Friction between the Americans and New Mexicans, the Texas situation, and Manifest Destiny led to war which made that influence permanent. General Stephen Kearny marched his troops, without resistance, into Santa Fe in August of 1846. Almost immediately, construction commenced on Fort Marcy, the first structure constructed by the federal government in New Mexico. Initially, U.S. Army troops were garrisoned in the major towns and administrative centers such as Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and Albuquerque.

Even before the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo on February 2, 1848, which ended the war with Mexico and formalized American control, U.S. Mail service to New Mexico was authorized. On March 3, 1847, Congress authorized the transportation of the U.S. Mail by two routes, both originating in Independence, Missouri [9 Stat. 194]. One would follow the Santa Fe Trail via Bent's Fort (on the Arkansas in eastern Colorado) then southward through the

Raton Pass to Fort Union, then to Santa Fe. The other would follow the Oregon Trail route (via Fort Laramie) to Astoria, Oregon. But it was not until 1850, however, that government subsidized mail service began.

In that year, New Mexico became a territory of the United States and had its first U.S. census. New Mexico Territory had a population of 61,547 which would increase over 50% during the next decade to 93,516. Mining, farming, cattle raising, and sheep raising formed the cornerstones of the Territory's fledgling economy. It was the early presence of the U.S. Army beginning in the 1850s, however, that was largely responsible for introducing a cash economy into New Mexico. Also in 1850 the "Act to establish certain post routes" of 1848 was extended to the Territories of Utah and New Mexico.

The official U.S. Mail link between Santa Fe and the "states" was contracted to start on July 1, 1850. The Territory had only two U.S. post offices in that year. Santa Fe had been authorized on October 1, 1849 with William S. McKnight as postmaster. The other was in Las Vegas. Waldo, Hall and Company had won the contract to carry the mail to these towns from Independence, Missouri. Thus in 1850 the oldest road west of the Mississippi, the Santa Fe Trail, became the route for the U.S. Mail. It may also have been the most hazardous, for the Indians and mother nature took strong exception to the crossing of their territory.

Meanwhile, the transcontinental mail route was also being established. Samuel Woodson and James Brown were awarded the contract, also to begin on July 1, 1850, between Independence and Salt Lake City, Utah along the Central Overland Route. A year later, George Chorpenning and Absalom Woodward were awarded the contract for a monthly express between Sacramento City, California and Salt Lake City. Although not under a single contract, U.S. Mail was now carried overland between the "states" and the West Coast. As with the Santa Fe Trail, the carrying of the U.S. Mail along the Central Route was fraught with difficulty. In this case, however, weather had a much stronger influence than the marauding Indians. John M. Hockaday was finally able to establish a successful and reliable mail service along the Central Route by 1858, but sectionalist rivalries in Washington, D.C. and the favor of the southern overland route by successive

Postmasters General Aron Brown and Joseph Hold and the Buchanan Administration led to a reduction in funding and service along the route. The battle over the best route on which to carry the U.S. Mail across the vast wastelands to the California goldfields boiled down to the route of a future transcontinental railroad. It was felt that the attention given to such a route would enhance its position to later be the route over which the rails would be extended. The Southerners wanted it in the south.

The first transcontinental mail route through New Mexico was authorized on August 18, 1856 [12 Stat. 136]. The route was to connect San Antonio, Texas and San Diego, California (one writer described the line as going "from no place through nothing to nowhere). In July of 1857 James Birch's San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line, also referred to as the "Jackass Mail" since passengers had to disembark the coaches and ride mules over a 100-mile section of the route, began its mail service through New Mexico.

Two weeks after service started on the San Antonio-San Diego line, the development of the second major transcontinental route began. On September 16, 1857, the Postmaster General awarded the California mail contract to John Butterfield, a friend of President Buchanan. The 1857 contract called for service to begin in one year. To construct and operate the first transcontinental stage line from the Mississippi (a route of over 2,700 miles), Butterfield and his Overland Mail Company created nearly 200 way stations, from Tipton, Missouri to San Francisco, California and purchased over 1,000 horses, 700 mules, 800 sets of harness, and about 250 coaches and Celerity wagons. Drivers were assigned 60-mile stretches of the route (which essentially absorbed the route of the "Jackass Mail") and coaches ran both day and night to ensure fulfillment of the 25-day contract time. (The route from El Paso, actually Franklin at the time, followed the Rio Grande to Ft. Fillmore and to Dona Ana near present-day Las Cruces, before turning west to Tuscon, Arizona.) As an indication of the conditions along the route at the time, passengers, in addition to paying for their passage and food, were expected to help fight Indians and push the stage if it became stuck in mud or at river crossings. In addition, while west-bound passengers paid $200, east-bound passengers paid only half that (since in 1858 relatively few people were leaving California).

Two other cross-country routes that would involve the traversing of New Mexico were introduced in 1857-58 by Postmaster General Brown. Both were intended to offset the service on the central route and both were wasteful and short-lived. One route provided mail service between Kansas City and Stockton, California, via Albuquerque. The other linked Neosho, Missouri and Albuquerque. Neither route amounted to much nor seriously threatened the contractor along the central route or Butterfield along the southern route.

Despite many obstacles and hardships, Butterfield's Overland Mail Company provided dependable mail and passenger service for three years, until Apache attacks, interfering Confederate sympathizers, and the loss of John Butterfield's supervision due to poor health resulted in disruptions. Because of the disruptions and troubles on the Butterfield Overland Trail, on March 12, 1861 Congress ordered the Butterfield Route discontinued and its services transferred to the Central Route.

Despite its brief existence, the Butterfield Overland Trail proved to be crucial in the development of the region it traversed. Besides providing the first regular transcontinental mail service, for over a quarter of a century after its abandonment it continued to be used as the southern route to California, used by emigrants, the military, and others. Other mail contractors also continued to use the route and its deteriorating stations, up until the completion of the transcontinental railroad.

By the mid-1860s the importance of the Santa Fe Trail, which had thrived for over 40 years, was being challenged by development of the railroad. The eastern terminus of the trail was continually moving westward. In 1875, for example, when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad reached Las Animas, Colorado, it became the eastern terminus. It then pushed the rails to La Junta in 1876, then to Trinidad and over the Raton Pass to New Mexico. The line passed through Las Vegas and the final link to Santa Fe, a branch line from Lamy, was completed in February of 1880. Meanwhile, the Southern Pacific Railroad was extending its rails eastward from San Francisco. Yuma, Arizona was reached in September of 1877 and by March of 1880 the first train service was extended to Tuscon. On December 15, 1880 the rails reached Deming. When Deming was linked by an Atchison, Topeka and

Santa Fe line to Albuquerque in March of 1881, the transcontinental route was completed.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad ended the role of stagecoaches as the major mode, though they operated in New Mexico until the early 1900s. The arrival of the railroads in the 1880s also led to greatly increased settlement and a corresponding expansion of the Territory's postal service. By 1889 over 400 post offices had been authorized in New Mexico. The Annual Report of the Postmaster-General for 1875 listed 2,111 total mail route miles in New Mexico.

The 1880 Annual Report, the first that included a rail route in New Mexico, listed 2,518 total mail route miles in New Mexico; of these, 19 were by railroad--the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe's route from Galisto to Santa Fe. In addition, there were 357 rail route miles listed under Colorado--from La Junta to Albuquerque, New Mexico. By 1900, of the total 5,149.83 mail route miles in New Mexico, 1,616.21 were by rail. In addition, the seventeen different railroad routes, as listed in the 1900 Annual Report, were covered by eight different railroads: the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway; Denver and Rio Grande Railroad; Santa Fe Pacific Railroad; Colorado and Southern Railway; Pecos Valley and Northeastern Railway; Arizona and New Mexico Railway; El Paso and Northeastern Railway; and the Tierra Amarilla Southern Railroad. And by 1911, virtually all of New Mexico's mail routes were by railroad: of its total 3,018.49 mail route miles, 2,988.64 were by rail. (It is also noteworthy that from 1909 to 1911 New Mexico's total mail route mileage dropped from 7,948.92 to 3,018.49.)

In the closing decades of the 19th century, railroad centers, mining camps, and cattle towns developed in New Mexico, joining the old Hispanic villages and Indian pueblos. By 1900 the number of post offices that had been authorized for New Mexico had grown to 645. The early years of the 20th century brought a new, though short-lived, rush of settlers to New Mexico. This time the settlers came seeking farm land, and thousands of farm families moved onto the arid plains of the Territory. For a few years dry-farming was successful, as the climate cycle provided years of greater than normal rainfall. New post offices were established at record rates during the 1906-1910 period as new towns were created to service the expanding farming area. This growing

population had important political impacts. Almost one-third of New Mexico's counties were created after 1900 and, after more than 60 years of territorial status, New Mexico was finally admitted to the Union in 1912.

FEDERAL POST OFFICE CONSTRUCTION IN NEW MEXICO

In the year 1900, New Mexico had two federal buildings, an adobe "palace" acquired from Mexico at the signing of the peace treaty of 1848 and a stone courthouse constructed by the federal government in 1889. Both buildings were in Santa Fe, the Territorial capital. The adobe "palace," constructed in the 1600s, had been an executive mansion under the Mexican regime and now housed the U.S. Post Office. The building (still standing at the north side of the Santa Fe plaza) was transferred, by a Congressional Act of April 9, 1900, to the city of Santa Fe.

The Courthouse, intended as the capitol building for the new Territory, was granted its initial appropriation of $20,000 on September 30, 1850. Although it was the first federally-appropriated building in the West, it was not, however, the first completed. Almost four decades would pass before the building was occupied. Construction commenced in 1853, but the walls reached only the first floor line when work was discontinued. An Act of May 31, 1854 appropriated $50,000 for completion of the building, but the building was not completed. Years passed. Appeals were made to complete the building. A $60,000 appropriation was made on June 25, 1860, but the appropriation was given up in 1862 in return for New Mexico's exemption from direct civil war taxes. A quarter of a century passed. Finally, on February 9, 1887 Congress authorized $52,148 for the building's completion; on March 3rd the appropriation was made. The two-story Greek Revival building of locally-quarried stone was completed in 1889. Upon completion, the building housed the Federal courts and various offices.

The U.S. census of 1900 indicated a population of 195,310 for the Territory, an increase of 22% over the 1890 population of 160,282. Only Albuquerque and Santa Fe had more than 5,000 residents, with populations of 6,238 and 5,603 respectively. Including these cities, there were only seven towns with more than 2,500 people (urban places); over

85% of New Mexico's population resided in rural areas. Although in the 1910 census New Mexico's population remained over 85% rural, the population of the Territory increased by almost 67% to 327,301 and the number of urban places increased to ten. In 1912, when New Mexico was finally admitted to the Union (after some fifty statehood acts had been introduced and failed), cattle and sheep raising, farming, and mining formed its economic base; manufacturing was virtually non-existent. Although New Mexico achieved the goal of statehood, its growth rate slowed dramatically and by 1920 its population reached only 360,350.

New Mexico's first federally-constructed post office was received by Albuquerque, which by 1900 had surpassed Santa Fe as the Territory's largest city. Founded in 1705 by Mexican settlers, Albuquerque came to prominence in 1880 when the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad passed a mile-and-one-half from the town. A new town of Albuquerque was formed on the railroad and grew rapidly as a major railroad center. It was on June 6, 1902 that Congress authorized and appropriated $10,000 for a post office site in Albuquerque. This was followed four years later (June 30, 1906) by the authorization and appropriation of $100,000 for a building. On May 30, 1908, Congress authorized a $30,000 increase in the building limit and on March 4, 1909 it made the appropriation. The limit was again increased, this time by $20,000, by an Act of June 25, 1910. The appropriation was granted on March 4, 1911 and the $150,000 building was completed in that year. The three-story red brick building covered by a mission-tile hipped roof is in the Renaissance Revival style. (The building is no longer used as a post office, but continues to house federal offices.)

Roswell, which had grown from a cattle watering hole of 343 souls in 1890, was on its way to becoming the Territory's second largest city when it received an authorization of $125,000 for a site and building in the Omnibus Public Buildings Act of May 30, 1908. The tapping of the abundant artesian water supply for irrigation led to a strong influx of settlers and Roswell's population surged to 2,049 in 1900 and then trippled to 6,172 in 1910. A site for the post office and courthouse was donated in 1909. In the Sundry Civil Expenses bill of June 25, 1910, an appropriation of $25,000 was added to the $20,000 that had been granted in 1908. Another $60,000 was appropriated in the Act of March

4, 1911 and the final appropriation of $20,000 was made in the Sundry Civil Expenses bill of August 24, 1912. The building was completed in 1913 (it was later demolished).

The next cities to gain congressional authorizations for federal buildings were Las Cruces and East Las Vegas. Both received authorizations of $15,000 each for building sites in the Act of June 25, 1910. The $15,000 appropriations followed in the Act of March 4, 1911. It was not until the Public Buildings Omnibus Act of March 4, 1913 that buildings were authorized for the cities. Each was authorized $125,000 for buildings that would house a post office and courthouse. The same Act also repealed the previous site legislation for East Las Vegas. It provided that a site be purchased that would be at a convenient point between the city of East Las Vegas and the town of Las Vegas. In addition, a $75,000 authorization was provided Raton for a site and building, and Santa Fe received a $295,000 authorization for a post office and courthouse.

The Deficiency Appropriations Act of July 29, 1914 granted $18,000 and $7,200 for the East Las Vegas and Raton buildings, respectively. An appropriation of $500 was made for the Las Cruces building in the Deficiency Appropriations Act of February 28, 1916. In the July 1, 1916 Sundry Civil Expenses Act, Las Cruces received another $5,000. The same act provided $500 for East Las Vegas and Raton, while Santa Fe received $30,500. In 1917 another round of appropriations increased the funds available for construction in the four cities. The Sundry Civil Expenses Act of June 12th appropriated $119,500 for the Las Cruces building. Now the site that had been in government title since 1914 would soon receive a building. East Las Vegas was granted $20,000, Raton received $50,000, and Santa Fe got $10,000. In the next year, Raton's grant was finalized with an appropriation of $17,300 in the Sundry Civil Expense Act of July 1st. Now a building could be completed on the site that had been acquired in 1915. East Las Vegas received its final appropriation of $86,500 in the Sundry Civil Expense Act of July 19, 1919. The same act provided $150,000 for the continuation of the Santa Fe building. On November 19th, the original act granting Santa Fe a post office and courthouse was amended: the federal courts were deleted.

Las Cruces, after waiting nearly a decade since its

initial authorization, finally had its new federal building which housed the post office, federal offices, and a federal courthouse. Completed in 1919, the two-story Neo-Classical building was constructed of red brick and covered with a mission tile hipped roof (presently used as the Dona Ana County Courts Building). Las Cruces, which would have a population of 3,369 in 1920, was the thriving seat of Dona Ana County and on the route of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Since its founding in 1849 as a grid of farm tracts to provide land for the influx of American settlers who entered New Mexico after the war with Mexico, the community had become a center of commercial activity.

Raton, the seat of Colfax County in northeastern New Mexico, also saw the completion of its federal building in 1919. Founded in 1880 as a division point on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, Raton was a bustling coal mining and railroad center as well as a commercial center for the surrounding ranches. Its population was steadily growing: from 3,540 in 1900, to 4,539 in 1910, to 5,544 in 1920. Even though Raton was larger and had been growing at a faster rate than Las Cruces, its building was much smaller and simpler. In the Neo-Classical design mode, the two-story building was clad in stucco with the only embellishment provided by a stately stone entry arch. The building housed the post office on the main floor and offices above. (The building is now used as a public library.)

Santa Fe received the final installment for its new federal building in the First Deficiency Appropriation Act of December 15, 1921. The final amount of $61,500 was granted for completion of the post office and federal office building. The building was the first federally-constructed post office in New Mexico to be designed in an indigenous style. Constructed of concrete and brick and faced with stucco to resemble adobe, the two-story building was designed in the Spanish Pueblo Revival style to fit within the context of the surrounding streetscape. (Although the building no longer functions as a post office, it is used for federal offices.)

Upon the completion of the Santa Fe Federal Building in 1922, New Mexico had five federally-constructed post offices/federal buildings. Albuquerque, the state's commercial center and largest city, had the first (in 1911). Roswell, in the state's southeastern region and its third largest

city, received its building in 1913. Raton in the northeast and Las Cruces in the southwest had buildings in 1919. With the exception of Santa Fe's Pueblo Revival building, the post offices constructed in New Mexico relied on the Classically-inspired designs favored by the Office of the Supervising Architect. With the exception of Alamogordo, the same would be true of the next era of public building in New Mexico. Nine more federally-constructed post offices remained to be constructed before World War II redirected federal resources.

No new federal buildings/post offices had been authorized in New Mexico after the Public Buildings Omnibus Act of 1913. This is true of the nation as a whole: between 1921 and 1930 only 122 post offices were constructed by the federal government. Most of the 1920s buildings followed the Public Buildings Act of May 25, 1926 (also known as the Keyes-Elliot Act). This act expanded the scope and consolidated the funding of post office construction. It set the groundwork for the massive federal building programs of the 1930s. Between 1931 and 1939, 1,584 post offices were constructed across the nation--three times as many as had been constructed in the previous fifty years.

In response to the duties imposed by the 1926 Act, the House of Representatives issued House Document 710 (February 14, 1927) to identify potential projects under the $100,000,000 allocation provided by the Act. The report recommended 278 projects, including 118 new buildings in towns which had not previously received federal buildings. In addition, the committee estimated a need for 2,311 public buildings across the nation and recommended another $100,000,000 to expand the program. The report listed five projects in New Mexico. The first was the almost forgotten post office in East Las Vegas, which was listed under Section 3 of the 1926 Act for which $15,000,000 was authorized to render the old appropriations adequate. The other projects listed under the $100,000,000 authorization included an $835,000 federal building in Albuquerque, a $145,000 Customhouse in Santa Fe, a $95,000 post office in Clovis, and a $100,000 post office in Gallup.

"POST OFFICE BUILDING IS DEDICATED" headlined the March 14, 1928 issue of the Las Vegas Daily Optic. The dreams of almost two decades had been realized when the cornerstone of the new federal building was laid earlier in the day. The Optic reported that:

> Las Vegas has passed one of the greatest mile-stones in history with the laying of a cornerstone of the new federal building. With today's dedicatory services one of the community's greatest dreams was realized and high officials of state, town and city joined to pay fitting tribute to those whose efforts have brought about the erection of the structure.
>
> Today's program marked one of the outstanding events in the life of this community. An event which will bring an even closer relationship than is now existing between the Town and City of Las Vegas. The keynote of the entire program was an urge for the two municipalities to live in closer harmony and work as one toward a larger and better Las Vegas.

The two-story Georgian Revival building of brick with stone detailing, as stipulated by the March 1913 legislation, was located at a convenient location between the City of East Las Vegas and Town of Las Vegas (for all practical purposes the two towns were physically a single entity, but they were not joined politically until 1970 under the name Las Vegas).

The "twin" cities of Las Vegas portrayed two separate eras as well as two separate town planning traditions. The Town of Las Vegas (also known as West or Old Las Vegas) was founded in 1835 as an agricultural community under a Mexican land grant. Its location on the Santa Fe Trail and the entry of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in 1879 established the Town and the new City (on the railroad) as a major trading center. By 1890 the City almost equaled the Town in population, each having a population of around 2,300 (also making them the Territory's third and fourth largest cities). At the time of the initial appropriation in 1910, the City with a population of 3,755 had slightly outgrown the Town and its 3,179 residents. Completed in 1928, the post office/ courthouse came at end of the City's prosperity but served a combined population of over 9,000 Town and City residents.

The next report listing proposed public building projects was in House Document 613 (February 26, 1929) which included an additional $60,000 building (location not yet named) to those included in House Document 710. Also, the estimated cost limits were raised for the Albuquerque ($900,-

000), Santa Fe ($270,000), and Clovis ($130,000) buildings and the total allocation to New Mexico was increased from $1,175,000 to $1,460,000. Nationally, the amount allocated to public buildings programs was increased from the original $100,000,000 to $200,000,000 plus an estimated additional $48,000,000 from the sales of existing excess facilities. The number of buildings to be constructed was also increased to 571. Finally, the Document contained, in Statement D, a list of buildings that were not included in the program, but might be considered in the future. In this listing was a post office for Silver City.

The Deficiency Act of May 29, 1928 provided the initial appropriation for the acquisition of additional land, start of extension and remodeling, and construction of an annex for the accommodation of the post office, courts, and other government offices in Albuquerque. The Act allocated $200,000 under an estimated total cost of $1,025,000. The project, which involved the addition to the rear of the original federal building and a new six-story federal courts and office building adjacent to the addition, was constructed in 1930. The magnificent new federal building constructed of terra cotta and glazed brick with a mission tile roof coupled the Mediterranean style with decorative Indian design motifs. (Both buildings are under the administration of GSA.)

House Document 788 of February 27, 1931 again expanded the program. Now $415,000,000 plus $89,000,000 from the sale of existing buildings was to be available for 1,624 projects nationwide, including 1,085 buildings in places which had not previously received a federal building. This Document included, in addition to those buildings previously authorized, a new post office for Silver City with an estimated appropriation of $115,000. Two buildings, a federal building at Carlsbad ($165,000) and a marine hospital in Ft. Stanton ($270,000), were allocated but not yet appropriated. A final building at an unnamed located was allocated for $85,000.

Clovis would receive the first federally-constructed office building of the 1930s. A city of the Twentieth Century, Clovis was founded in 1906 and made a divisional point of the Santa Fe Railroad in 1909. In the heart of the eastern New Mexico agricultural belt, the city grew rapidly. In 1910 its population was 3,255; by 1930 it had surged to 8,027, making Clovis the state's fourth largest city.

Because of the city's rapid growth, Senator Samuel G. Bratton was able to obtain a $130,000 appropriation for a post office/federal building in January of 1929. In May of 1931, construction began on a site that had been purchased from the city. Occupied in April of 1932, the building stood as a stately monument to the city's regional importance. According to the April 30th issue of the Clovis Evening News-Journal, thousands of people attended the formal opening and "many people came from rural districts to see the building." Two stories in height and covered with an overhanging mission tile roof, the brick building alludes to the Spanish Colonial in a formal Neo-Classical mode. (The building is presently used as the Clovis-Carver Public Library.)

The New Mexico post offices constructed between 1933 and 1941 represent those authorized under various emergency appropriations that were enacted "with a view to relieving countrywide unemployment." The Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General were directed to distribute projects equitably throughout the country so far as may be consistent with the needs of the public services. They also had the latitude to select projects not included in the report promulgated by the direction of the 1926 Act. The Federal Employment Stabilization Act (February 10, 1931) had addressed the use of planned and accelerated emergency construction to aid in preventing unemployment. This Act, along with several federal programs designed to provide economic relief, provided a foundation for the next wave of post offices built in New Mexico. Seven more post offices would be constructed in New Mexico under various Depression era relief programs which extended to the beginning of World War II: all in cities that had not yet received a federally-constructed post office.

Gallup, the seat of McKinley County in west central New Mexico, was the next recipient of a federal gift. Founded in the 1860s, fueled by the discovery of coal in 1879, and made accessible by the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad in 1881, Gallup had almost 3,000 residents in 1900. After declining in population in 1910, Gallup regained its early momentum and reached a population of 5,992 in 1930. It was in that year that the matter of a federal building for the city again seemed to be revived. Having had been allocated a $100,000 building in 1927, the citizen's of Gallup were wondering where the money was. According to the Gallup Evening Herald of April 15, 1930, the Gallup Business Men's association had

recently received a wire from Senator Bronson Cutting regarding their building. Cutting advised them that Gallup was to be considered that day by the budget bureau for a federal building. The Herald queried:

> Just what became of the $100,000 provided previously in the budget for a post office here is not stated. Apparently the money was spent elsewhere and Gallup is back where it started from. Maybe we will get another allowance, maybe not.

The article added that the Business Men's association offered to Cutting, in a telegram, "whatever cooperation is in our power." They added: "The Gallup post office is the largest in the state without a federal building and the only city west of the Rio Grande river in New Mexico without a government-owned building." Their effort was rewarded when the building, an eclectic mixture of Mediterranean and Spanish Pueblo styles, was constructed in 1933. The brick-faced structure is topped by a mission tile roof and features a colonnaded entry portico. (The building is now privately-owned and used for offices.)

House Report 1879 of June 2, 1934 listed three projects in New Mexico which included the projects under the Deficiency Appropriations Bill of fiscal year 1934 and the Emergency Appropriation Bill of fiscal year 1935. These included extensions and remodels of the Santa Fe Post Office ($30,000) and the Raton Post Office ($26,000), and the construction of a new post office in Portales ($73,000). They were included as projects not included in House Document 788 that were submitted to the Public Works Admin. for consideration for which funds had not yet been allocated and were still pending.

Silver City, the seat of southwestern New Mexico's Grant County, was next in line for its post office. Founded as a silver mining camp in 1870, Silver City soon grew to a solid and stable community that would serve as a thriving commercial center. The town grew steadily, and although it experienced a slight decline between 1910 and 1920 it rebounded to a population of 3,519 in 1930 and 5,044 in 1940. The citizens of Silver City, as had those of Gallup, must also have wondered what happened to their money. But the slowly turning cogs of the federal government finally appropriated the funds for the new post office. The building, however, did

not have the rich detailing of Gallup. It was relatively plain and indicated the economy of detail that would characterize the majority of the buildings of the mid- to late-Depression era. One-story in height and clad with stucco, it suggests a Spanish Colonial influence with its modified Mission entry arch. (The building is used for private offices.)

Carlsbad, in New Mexico's southeastern quadrant, was on the verge of a boom when the possibility of a $165,000 post office was carried in the House Report of 1931. Founded in the late-1880s as the town of Eddy, Carlsbad grew modestly as a ranching and farming community to a population of 3,708 in 1930. The opening of Carlsbad's potash mines in 1931 (the nations's leading producer) led to tremendous growth; in 1940 Carlsbad's population jumped to 7,116, almost double that of 1930. As a result of Carlsbad's growing importance, the size of the original federal building allocation was increased; the $393,000 building was completed in 1935. Three stories in height, the Pueblo Style building housed the post office, federal offices, and federal courts. (The building is administered by the GSA and no longer contains a post office.)

While citizens of Clovis, Gallup, Silver City, and Carlsbad were watching the construction of their buildings, there was activity in other New Mexican cities to gain a stave of the federal pork barrel. In Portales such efforts had been on-going since 1931. It seemed that every year thereafter a new post office was imminent. The efforts of the local business interests finally bore fruit when the headline of the August 15, 1935 Portales Valley News announced "Post Office Building Approved." The next day, the headline of the Deming Headlight exclaimed to its readers "Deming Will Get Post Office Building." Both cities would receive buildings from the $60,000,000 emergency construction fund.

Portales owes its existence to the extension of the Pecos Valley and Northeastern Railroad from Roswell to Amarillo, Texas. Founded in 1899, Portales, with the railroad and an abundant groundwater supply, attracted a stream of homesteaders in the early-1900s. In 1903, Portales became the seat of newly formed Roosevelt County. After reaching 1,292 in 1910, its population declined to 1,154 in 1920, more than doubled to 2,519 in 1930, and doubled again to 5,104 in 1940.

Deming, in southwestern New Mexico, was also founded as the result of the railroad. Founded at the intersection of the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in 1881, Deming also benefitted from an abundant groundwater supply. Farming, ranching, and shipping contributed to the town's modest growth. Named the Luna County seat in 1902, Deming had a population of 1,865 in 1910. By 1920 the population nearly doubled to 3,212, but then leveled to 3,377 in 1930 and 3,608 in 1940.

The post offices of Deming and Portales were under construction by the fall of 1936 and ready for dedication by the spring of 1937. Deming's building was dedicated on May 29th and Portales' a week later. Congressman John J. Dempsey, Governor Clyde Tingley, and Postmaster General James A. Farley assisted the citizens of Deming in celebrating their new building. The visitation by Farley caused some consternation in town. It seems that the "just plain county boys and girls" were not "well versed in the practice of formality" and did not know quite what to do (according to an editorial in the Headlight at least). It was suggested that the simplest way was to say "Howdy Jim. We're glad to have you with us." The June 5th dedication in Portales was not quite as problematic. Congressman Dempsey, providing the address without the aid of the Governor and Postmaster General, congratulated the citizens on their progressive work and pledged his assistance on two other projects for the city.

One might wonder if Dempsey knew which post office he was dedicating since they were identical. Uncle Sam's efforts toward standardization was exemplified in the two buildings. The front facades and lobbies were identical in plan. And they would be repeated once more, a few years later in Hot Springs (Truth or Consequences). Indeed, the same plan is found in small towns in California, Washington, Colorado, Idaho, Utah and Oregon--a Classical box, symmetrical and flat with nominal ornamentation.

New Mexico would receive one more building in the traditional style of the southwest before returning to the standard design. Alamorgordo, another town owing its founding to the railroad in 1898, received its post office/federal building in 1938. Although having a population of only 3,950 in 1940, the Alamogordo Federal Building was designed not in the standard mode but by Gilbert Stanley Underwood. Underwood,

as a consulting architect, had designed several notable federal buildings in the West. Although his primary works were in the "Starved Classical," PWA Moderne, or Art Deco modes, his execution of the Pueblo Style in Alamogordo is quite successful. Perhaps even more significant are the fine frescos which grace the entry and were executed by Peter Hurd in 1941. (The building is presently occupied by the U. S. Forest Service and is administered by GSA.)

The last post office constructed in New Mexico prior to the outbreak of World War II was in Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences). This project, as well as several that were already complete and many more that would never be funded, was included in House Document 177 of February 2, 1939. Some 23 New Mexican projects were included in this list: all but 4 were new post offices. Authorized projects included the following: Albuquerque Federal Office Building ($925,000), Alamogordo Post Office ($128,000), Antelope Wells Border Station ($20,000), Deming Post Office ($88,400), Fort Stanton Marine Hospital replacement ($265,000), Hot Springs Post Office ($75,000), Portales Post Office ($83,000), Raton Post Office expansion and remodel ($26,000), and the Santa Fe Post Office expansion and remodel ($30,000). Most of these projects had previously been completed. New Post Offices were proposed but not yet authorized for the following cities: Artesia, Belen, Carlsbad (Annex Building), Clayton, Eunice, Farmington, Hobbs, Lordsburg, Lovington, Roswell, Socorro, Taos, and Tucumcari. The outbreak of World War II shifted resources to another front and these buildings were never constructed under this program.

Hot Springs, which received the last Depression-era post office in New Mexico, was enjoying the prosperity of WPA construction projects when the August 20, 1937 issue of the Sierra County Advocate reported that a $75,000 post office appropriation had been granted by Congress. According to the article the news that the "desperately needed" post office would become reality caused "general rejoicing." Just the month before, Hot Springs had cleared another hurdle in gaining the Sierra County seat from Hillsboro, and in the next month the $1,000,000 crippled children's hospital would be dedicated. While post office sites were being discussed and construction bids selected, a new $102,000 WPA high school athletic building was underway, and before the post office was completed, the $85,000 WPA Spanish Colonial Sierra

County Courthouse was dedicated. The citizens of Hot Springs voiced pride in their new post office when it finally opened on January 31, 1940. As stated by the Advocate on February 2nd: "Perhaps the people generally have never been prouder of anything than their new post office." Constructed of poured-in-place reinforced concrete, the building was a duplicate of those in Deming and Portales. If the people of Hot Springs knew that, and it was unlikely, it was probably of no concern for the building was lauded by the onlookers as "beautiful" and "wonderful."

In summary, New Mexico received 14 federally-constructed post offices between 1900 and 1941. One of the buildings has been razed--the original Roswell Federal Building (1913). Ten are no longer used as post offices. Of these, the following are under federal ownership and administered by GSA: Albuquerque (1911), Santa Fe (1922), Carlsbad (1935), and Alamogordo (1938). The buildings in Raton (1919), Las Cruces (1919), East Las Vegas (1928), and Clovis (1931) are owned by either local public entities such as libraries, school districts, and county courts. Gallup (1933) and Silver City (1934) are owned by private individuals and used for offices. Only the triplets--Deming, Portales and Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences)--are owned and operated by the U.S. Postal Service.

F. Associated Property Types

I. **Name of Property Type** Federally-constructed Post Offices/Federal Buildings

II. **Description**

CHARACTERISTICS OF POST OFFICE FUNCTION, DESIGN, AND PLANS

The design characteristics of federally-owned post offices are based on functional considerations, although some politicking entered into site location, building size, and materials. As mentioned, plans were standardized but sometimes consideration was given to local building character so as to provide some degree of individuality to the buildings of different communities. In most all cases, however, the dimensions and building envelope were set with variations limited to minor arrangement of functional areas, use of lobby materials, exterior materials, and facade treatment.

III. **Significance**

The significance of the properties included in this nomination lies in the following areas: architecture, politics/government, and art. Two other areas--community planning and economics--also have some relevance to the properties included in the nomination. The significance within these latter categories, however, are less clearly defined and relate not to the major influences of specific buildings within a community but to general trends. For example, the Depression-era buildings are associated with the broad economic patterns of the nation, rather than with identifiable economic impacts to the community resulting from a building's construction.

IV. **Registration Requirements**

The threshold factor for consideration in this group is that the building had been constructed by the federal government as a post office or federal building in which the post office was a major element. These buildings are significant to a community, particularly a smaller community, as a symbolic link to the federal government. They represent the recognition by the federal government, in the form of a public building, that a community had achieved stability and permanence. Architecturally, through the use of traditional design forms and quality materials, the buildings were intended to convey the appropriate image of the federal government. Thus, only in rare cases did local tastes influence the design that Uncle Sam felt appropriate for a community.

[X] See continuation sheet

[ ] See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

The multiple property listing for U.S. post offices in New Mexico is but one in an overall program being undertaken by the Postal Service to survey and document all USPS-owned, federally-constructed post offices/federal buildings in the Western Region that were constructed prior to World War II. The same basic survey procedures, property analysis, contextual period, and evaluation format have been maintained throughout the program. The contextual period for each state begins with its first federally-constructed post office and ends with WWII when federal construction programs shifted to the war effort and were subsequently revised.

Survey methodology for each property included the following: field surveys; interviews with local post office personnel; consultation with local planning agencies, libraries, and historical societies; review of assessors' records; and review of available federal statutes and reports of the Office of Supervising Architect, Department of the Treasury, and Congress.

[X] See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

[X] See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- [ ] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [X] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: Facilities Service Center, San Bruno CA 94099-0330 (United States Postal Service)

I. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant
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1. Functional Categories

Functional categories cannot always be clearly defined. But generally, post offices/federal buildings can be placed in the following broadly descriptive divisions. The funding appropriated for construction, design, and use of building materials were influenced by these categories. The categories, based upon the size and annual postal receipts of the respective communities, determined the type of post office a town might hope to receive. The broad categories that would apply to New Mexico post offices are discussed below.

a. Small, Single-purpose Post Offices

These buildings were constructed in small towns and, in the case of metropolitan areas, neighborhood areas within the service area of the main post office. The Portales, Deming, and Truth or Consequences MPOs are examples of this functional category. Other buildings not included in this nomination include the former post offices in Silver City and Gallup.

b. Small, Combined Post Office and Federal Building

These facilities were also located primarily in small communities, usually in those somewhat isolated from the larger cities that served as regional centers. These buildings typically covered the same ground area as the single-purpose buildings but carried an additional one or two floors to provide office space for Federal agencies. The primary function of the building was to provide postal service to the community. Examples of this building type include the former post offices in Clovis, Raton, and Alamogordo.

c. Combined Post Office, Federal Offices, and Federal Court

Constructed in major regional centers, the post office, Federal courts, and often various federal agencies were also housed in these structures. Although no buildings in this category are presently USPS-owned, examples include the former federal buildings in Las Cruces, Albuquerque (original), and East Las Vegas.

2. Design

Design styles of the New Mexico post offices during this period vary, although they are all rooted in Classical design principles and, therefore, display common characteristics. The three post offices included in this nomination and the six non-USPS-owned buildings listed in the National Register represent the spectrum of federal design styles used in New Mexico and are thus representative of the state as a whole.

The typical post office is a rectangular box, ranging from one to three stories in height with the first floor set on a raised platform (basement) three to five feet above grade. The facades are flat with nominal articulation, usually less than one to two feet. Articulation is provided by either projecting the central section of the front facade slightly beyond the corners or by recessing the central section relative to the corners. The facades are symmetrical and well-proportioned, with the principal entry centered on the long axis in all but rare cases. The entry is flanked by lamps, either free standing on buttresses flanking the entry platform or affixed to the wall. Windows are also symmetrically arranged. The roof is either flat or hipped and in most cases terminates behind a low parapet.

Variations in facade treatment are provided by the inclusion of historical architectural elements and by use of materials. Brick is the most used facing material. Stone is rarely used for the entire facade and is generally limited, as is terra cotta, for use on detailing (sills, belt courses, cornices, etc.). The evolution of the modern influence can be traced by the change from distinct facade treatment such as columns or pilasters, full capitals, full entablatures, and cornices to piers dividing bays, stylized capitals or none at all, belt courses to suggest entablatures, and coping to replace cornices. Roofs also provided stylistic variation but are limited to flat or hipped.

The stylistic variations of the facade treatment, or design types, are discussed in the following section, titled "Glossary of Stylistic Terms."

3. Plan

The plan is based on functional considerations and displays the same general characteristics for both large and small buildings. The first floor plan is rectangular with the public area oriented to the primary entrance. The main entry provides access to the lobby via an entry vestibule. The approaches from the vestibule to the lobby are, in most cases, lateral, one at each end of the vestibule. The lobby is elongated, running along the front side of the building, with the postmaster's office at one end. Service counters along the lobby face the entry and post office boxes are arrayed to the sides of the counter area. The opposite end often contained the registry/money order office, though this room has been typically replaced by lobby expansion in the demand to provide additional post office boxes. The postmaster's office contains a restroom. The vault is adjacent to the postmaster's office, typically opening to the workroom area. In larger post offices, additional offices are provided for the assistant postmaster and administrative personnel. These offices are also adjacent to the postmaster's office or at the opposite end of the lobby.

The workroom, where the mail sorting takes place, is behind the lobby and counter area and occupies the entire rear of the building. Restrooms and swing rooms for personnel are located immediately off the workroom, on a mezzanine level if provided, or in the basement. The loading vestibule, which provides access to the loading platform, is located to the side or rear of the building. If additional floors are provided, the stairs are located at the end of the lobby. The additional floors, are, in most cases, U-shaped and open to the rear. The central court is open so as to allow the provision of skylights (which in most cases have been covered over). In buildings with a federal court, the courtroom was placed in the open area of the "U", thereby creating a rectangular plan. Offices and activities associated with the court occupied the perimeter of the building in a "U" configuration.

GLOSSARY OF STYLISTIC TERMS

This glossary discusses the terms used to identify architectural styles in this report. The process is complicated by a lack of consensus among architectural historians on what to call various styles, and by some confusion on the part of the buildings' architects themselves. Most of the architects discussed in this report adhered to the decorated shed concept; that is, the shape of a building was predefined as a classical box, and the style was determined by adding the appropriate ornamentation. The dates given for the styles are somewhat later than for their eastern counterparts. As a final note, federal design was often eclectic. In other words, various styles and stylistic periods might be interwoven in the design of a single building. Thus, a building design may not clearly fit into a specific stylistic category, but instead cross into other closely related styles.

Beaux-Arts Classicism (1890-1920)

This term is used rather loosely to describe buildings derivative of the design ideology taught at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the leading architecture and art school in France during the 19th and early 20th centuries. In this nomination, only the American interpretation of this school is relevant.

Beaux-Arts Classicism is characterized by its grandiose compositions with an exuberance of detail and variety of stone finishes. Highlights of the style are projecting facades or pavilions with colossal columns, sometimes grouped in pairs with enriched moldings and statuary. Windows may be enframed by free-standing columns, balustraded sills, and pedimented entablatures. Pronounced cornices and enriched entablatures are topped with a tall parapet, balustrade, or attic story.

The following two classifications (Neo-Classicism and Second Renaissance Revival) can also be categorized under the

heading of Beaux-Arts Classicism since they derived from the Classic Greek and Roman forms.

Neo-Classicism (1900-1920)

Neo-Classical style is based primarily on the Greek and, to a lesser extent, the Roman architectural orders. It can be distinguished by symmetrically arranged buildings of monumental proportions finished with a smooth or polished stone surface. Colossal pedimented porticos may highlight the facade flanked by a series of large pilasters. Windows are predominantly large single-light sashes. Parapets and attic stories are popular but roof lines are devoid of statuary ornamentation. Arches or archways are generally not employed and enriched moldings are rare.

Second Renaissance Revival (1890-1920)

This refers to an academic style not at all incompatible with the Beaux-Arts style. The inspiration for this style is derived from the Northern Italian Renaissance. The term refers not to a Second Renaissance, but to the Revival; the Renaissance enjoyed popularity earlier in the 19th Century (1840-1890).

Scale and size distinguish the later Revival from the earlier Renaissance Revival. Larger buildings (usually three stories high) are organized into distinct horizontal divisions by pronounced belt or string courses. Each floor is articulated differently. For example, if the Doric Order or rustication is used on the first floor, the upper floor will be treated with a different order and finish. The window trim usually changes from floor to floor. Enriched and projecting cornices are supported with large modillions or consoles. The roof often is highlighted with a balustrade.

Pueblo Style, 1905-1940

This style is characterized by battered walls, rounded corners and flat roofs with projecting vigas. Flat-arched windows are generally set deeply within the walls. Second and third floor levels are stepped or terraced.

Mission Style, 1890-1920

This style is characterized by simplicity of form. Walls are stucco or plaster. Round arches supported by piers punctuate the walls. Red tile roofs with broad eaves and exposed rafters provide color and texture. Towers, curvilinear gables and balconies provide detailing.

Spanish Colonial Revival, 1915-1940

This term describes a style that enjoyed enormous popularity in southern California and throughout the Southwest for residential and commercial architecture. Its antecedents were the buildings for Spanish and Mexican California and Spanish Mexico. Though similar in some way to the earlier Mission Style, the Spanish Colonial was more refined, used more applied ornament and had generally lighter proportions.

Mediterranean, 1915-1940

This term is used to describe eclectic buildings that combine Italianate, Spanish Colonial Revival, and other styles. It is also used as a general term to include the Spanish Colonial Revival.

Starved Classicism (1930-1942)

Also referred to as PWA Moderne by some writers, Starved Classicism was the dominant mode of government construction during the 1930s and it is a direct descendant of the Supervising Architect's earlier Beaux-Arts-inspired buildings. The facade and plan of these buildings remain symmetrical; the primary shift is the ornament. Starved Classicism, to reduce costs and speed construction, eliminated or reduced ornament to a minimum. The ornament that was used often owed a stylistic debt to the Art Deco style of the twenties.

The term Starved Classicism was used by Lois Craig, Director of the Federal Architecture Project for the National Endowment of the Arts, in describing the "modern" architectural style that was derived from the Classical but stripped and simplified to provide in her terms: ". . . a gaunt, underfed, "starved" classicism, denoted as much by white masonry and the rhythm of wall and window as by vestigial columns" [The Federal Presence, p. 282].

The architectural significance of these buildings lies in their duplication and standardization rather than in a grand design statement. While the elevation and floor plans may have been traced from a "master sketch" to achieve economy, the buildings, nonetheless, maintain the quality of construction and material characteristic of the federal architecture. They represent the culmination of federal design philosophy and public building programs as influenced by international design movements and federal funding policies. Essentially, the buildings constructed prior to 1926 represent the first of the comprehensive federal building programs (although greatly curtailed between WWI and 1926), while those constructed in the 1930s represent the transition of design and construction programs in response to the national economic emergency. The buildings constructed in the early 1900s typically represent their communities' early period of development, whereas those of the mid-to late-1930s stand as monuments to the massive federal building programs of the Depression.

In all cases, the various construction programs under which these buildings were constructed linked local communities to the federal government. In smaller communities, these properties were the first federally-constructed buildings and the sole representation of the federal presence. Most remain the community's only federal building. As such, the construction of a federal building/post office was a major community event which not only involved local politics (involving economics and community development) but also the interaction with national elected officials. As a result, these buildings in their architectural form exhibit an important symbol of the federal government and its relationship to the local community.

The three post offices included in the nomination are significant in the category of art, as they house murals from the New Deal arts programs. Eight New Mexican post offices received murals, an unusually high number considering that only fourteen federal post offices were constructed in the state. But New Mexico, particularly the Taos and Santa Fe areas, played an important role in the regional art of the American Southwest.

Specific areas of significance are addressed below. The following criteria explain the ways in which National

Register Criteria A, C, and D relate to New Mexico post offices. They are divided by areas of significance, level of significance (national, state, or local), and level of integrity needed to qualify as significant. The headings also indicate which of the three National Register criteria was judged to be most relevant for each area of significance.

A. ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Local Level

a. Criterion C

The post office is of local importance as one of the most monumental, imposing or sophisticated buildings in a town. The post offices included in this nomination are important in all cases as locally unique examples of the same architectural style (Starved Classicism). The design remains unique in each town even though the style was commonly used by the federal government in post offices throughout the West during the final years of the Depression.

None of the post offices affected later designs in the three towns. This is common -- analysis of other buildings in communities receiving post offices indicate that there was little or no influence. The post office is a unique type. Though it plays an essentially commercial role in terms of land use, post office design did not follow design practices for commercial development, nor did subsequent development tend to imitate the style of the post office. There is a reason for this: post offices were designed to look like post offices; that is, certain symbols or signifiers were included as subliminal messages of the building's function.

b. Criterion A

The architectural signifiers and symbols also carry meaning and associative values beyond their mere physical appearance. A post office design is a record of the post office's and the federal government's self image, and of the image which the federal government wished to project to those it governed. A post office in a small town may provide one

of the few, perhaps the only, such record of the demeanor of the federal government -- that of the monumental and the solidity. This is essentially true of the post offices included in this nomination as well as those federal buildings no longer used as post offices. The use of strong classical forms further reinforces the idea of a strong and stable federal government.

2. State Level

a. Criterion C

A post office may be aesthetically important on the state as well as the local levels, as an example of particularly fine craftsmanship, or as a sophisticated, imposing, and well-articulated example of its style or type. The Supervising Architect's office used standard designs for most post offices, but many have been altered in the process of modernization and expansion. As per National Register guidelines, a post office may have statewide significance because it is a first, an excellent example, or a prototype of a standardized design. The nominated buildings are excellent examples of a standard design found in the Western United States. Although none of the post offices in New Mexico are thought to be the earliest or prototype examples of standard design, the Truth or Consequences Post Office is a rare example of the use of poured-in-place concrete in a western post office.

b. Criterion A

A group of post offices from different periods can, by the associative values contained in their architecture, act as a record of the federal government's self and projected images. Post offices in such a group would not have to be individually significant; the significance would lie in the relation of one building to another. In this nomination, the buildings are from the Depression era and represent the Starved Classical style in which the historical architectural elements were substantially reduced and simplified. They represent the culmination of the progression of federal design which in New Mexico began with the Greek Revival Santa Fe Federal Courthouse (excepting the army posts).

B. POLITICS/GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

1. Local Level

a. Criterion A

Research could not quantify the economic impact a post office had on a particular town and this may not be possible. An individual post office is, however, an important local example of national economic trends and the federal government's policies in dealing with those trends. In particular, these post offices built during the 1930s as part of the accelerated public works programs under the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations are concrete examples of the New Deal and the Depression. The employment provided by post office construction was an important local event. Also, the site selection process within a community was an event that brought into play the political and economic forces of the community. The post offices qualify as locally significant as the only, or one of the few, surviving examples of New Deal public works projects. Finally, the federal building/post office represents the presence of the federal government in the community and the recognition of the stability of that community. The efforts of a community to procure a federal gift involved local cooperation and involvement with national elected officials. This would apply to all of the nominated properties.

C. COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Local Level

a. Criterion A

A post office may have been constructed in a significant period in a town's development and, thus, act as a passive record of that development. A post office can be significant as an active participant in a town's evolution if it can be demonstrated that the building's siting played a role in the direction, shape, and nature of a town's growth or in the siting of other public buildings.

A post office may also act as an important document of a town's past, even if it did not have a particularly strong effect on its development. A post office may also be

sited in a distinct district within a community and make a significant contribution when associated with the other buildings within that district. In Portales, the Post Office and City Hall are across from the Courthouse square.

D. ART

1. Local Level

a. Criterion A

Murals in post office lobbies were, in many towns, the only examples of the Treasury Department's fine arts program. More so than even the architecture of the building, these murals represent the only example of trained artist's work easily and publicly accessible. These examples represent the federal commitment to public art in a form understandable to the common citizen. As such they have an historic association with the government's New Deal arts programs which were intended to bring art to small communities and provide relief to artists.

b. Criterion C

The murals, as an integral part of the decor of the post office lobby, represent a significant type, period, and style of artistic expression. The expression of the American Scene or the American Regionalism through public mural art represents a specific period in American art as promoted through the New Deal arts programs of the Depression era. The depiction of events or scenes that were representative of the local area was accomplished in a straight-forward style that could be enjoyed without possessing the interpretative capability of an art critic.

c. Criterion D

The symbolic content of a mural may have local significance in that it reflects a period in the community's history and the social or economic values of the community. As such, they are valuable documents of a region's local history and economy. This fact means that the murals derive much of their meaning from the context, not only of the post office lobby, but also of the town or county in which the post office is located.

2. State Level

These murals, in the case of New Mexico, have statewide as well as local significance for essentially the same reasons discussed above. The murals within the Deming, Portales, and Truth or Consequences MPOs, for example, represent three of only eight public artworks in the entire state that were placed in post offices (the others include Raton, Clovis, Gallup, Alamogordo, and Roswell). Other federal buildings (without post offices) that received artworks included the federal courthouses in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and the Marine Hospital in Fort Stanton. In addition New Deal murals were placed in county courthouses, hospitals, museums, school libraries, university buildings, and other public buildings. These murals, as provided to the communities and the state under the public arts programs, are rare examples and serve as an important legacy to the state as a whole. They symbolize the federal government's efforts to bring public art to New Mexico and to illustrate the local context in the historical development of the state.

To meet the demands of growing communities, many post offices were expanded and others were sold without alteration and replaced by new facilities. While most of these buildings retain their integrity, some have had changes that affect the exterior materials, proportion, symmetry, and scale of the original facades. Of particular importance is the front facade or public face of the building. Expansions which extend the building to the rear or to the sides while not affecting the original front facade are not generally considered to compromise the building's eligibility.

There are some cases, however, when a building that has had an alteration of the front facade by addition may retain its eligibility (unless totally obscured). These include: (1) the building houses a WPA mural that is intact and was unaltered by building expansion; (2) the building is a prototype or a distinctive design type; and (3) the building was pivotal in the development of a community.

Post offices less than fifty years old will not normally be considered eligible for listing unless they meet the following criteria: (1) the building houses a WPA mural which is integral to its interior; (2) the building is a prototype or a distinctive design type; (3) the building was pivotal in the development of the community; or (4) the building was a major project in a small community during the Depression era.

The field survey involved building inspection; review of available plans, specifications, and progress photographs of building construction; photographing the existing building; and survey of surrounding land uses and other significant period buildings within the community.

After completing the field work and review of local historical information, a preliminary evaluation of significance was made. This was later supplemented by additional research at the New Mexico State Library. In addition to the USPS-owned buildings that were included in the initial survey work, the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was consulted to gather survey data on post offices no longer owned by the USPS (including GSA, state or local government, and private ownership). Information on these other surveyed buildings is used in comparative analysis and for supplemental information.

In addition, inquiries were made to individuals or local planning agencies regarding former federally-constructed post offices that were not included on the USPS, GSA, or SHPO inventories, but that were listed in either newspaper accounts or federal appropriations. All of these non-USPS-owned buildings were visited.

It should be noted that the methodology outlined in the document "How To Apply National Register Criteria To Post Offices" (Bulletin 13, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. Fall 1984) was used as a guide in preparing this nomination.

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