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

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Nevada 1891 - 1941

B. Associated Historic Contexts

The appropriations for and construction of U.S. post offices/federal buildings by the federal government in Nevada between 1891 and World War II (1941).

C. Geographical Data

State of Nevada

☐ 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: 2-14-90

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.

Amy Federman
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register — Date: 2/28/90

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

The theme of this nomination concerns the federal building programs in Nevada as manifested in the construction of post offices in the first four decades of the 20th Century. The buildings included also record the evolution of both the political/economic philosophies and the design philosophies of the federal government through its building programs.

As selected through initial field surveys and preliminary significance evaluations, the buildings in this group represent outstanding and well-preserved architectural examples of 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. The buildings completed in this era represent a discrete body of federal architecture.

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.

This thematic nomination includes six post offices owned and administered by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) throughout the State of Nevada. The buildings included in this nomination represent a continuum of federally-constructed post offices allocated to the state between the late 1890s and 1941. The nominated buildings exhibit a variety of styles and sizes but maintain a common demeanor representative of the federal presence. Although two of the nominated buildings have received additions, all maintain high integrity and have been well-preserved.

While the buildings specifically included in this nomination cover only the span of years between 1921 and 1941, they, along with other federally-constructed post offices in Nevada currently listed in the National Register, represent the major eras of federal construction between the late 1890s the onset 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

All of 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.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS NOMINATION

This nomination consists of two parts: the theme (or cover) document and six 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 Nevada 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 the community in which they are located, and a summary of local newspaper coverage during the construction period.

The following tables list the six 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
Winnemucca MPO[1]	1921	James A. Wetmore[2]/OSA[3]
Elko MPO	1933	James A. Wetmore/OSA
Reno Downtown Station	1934	Frederick DeLongchamps[4]
Lovelock MPO	1938	Louis A Simon[5]/OSA
Yerington MPO	1939	Louis A. Simon/OSA
Tonopah MPO	1941	Louis A. Simon/OSA

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

Office	Date Occupied	Administered By
Carson City FB[6] (State Library)	1891	State of Nevada
Las Vegas FB	1933	GSA[7]

Notes:

[1]MPO: Main Post Office

[2]James A. Wetmore: Acting Supervising Architect, was an attorney who administered the office, but was not involved in design work.

[3]OSA: Office of Supervising Architect

[4]Frederick J. DeLongchamps, prominent Nevada architect.

[5]Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect

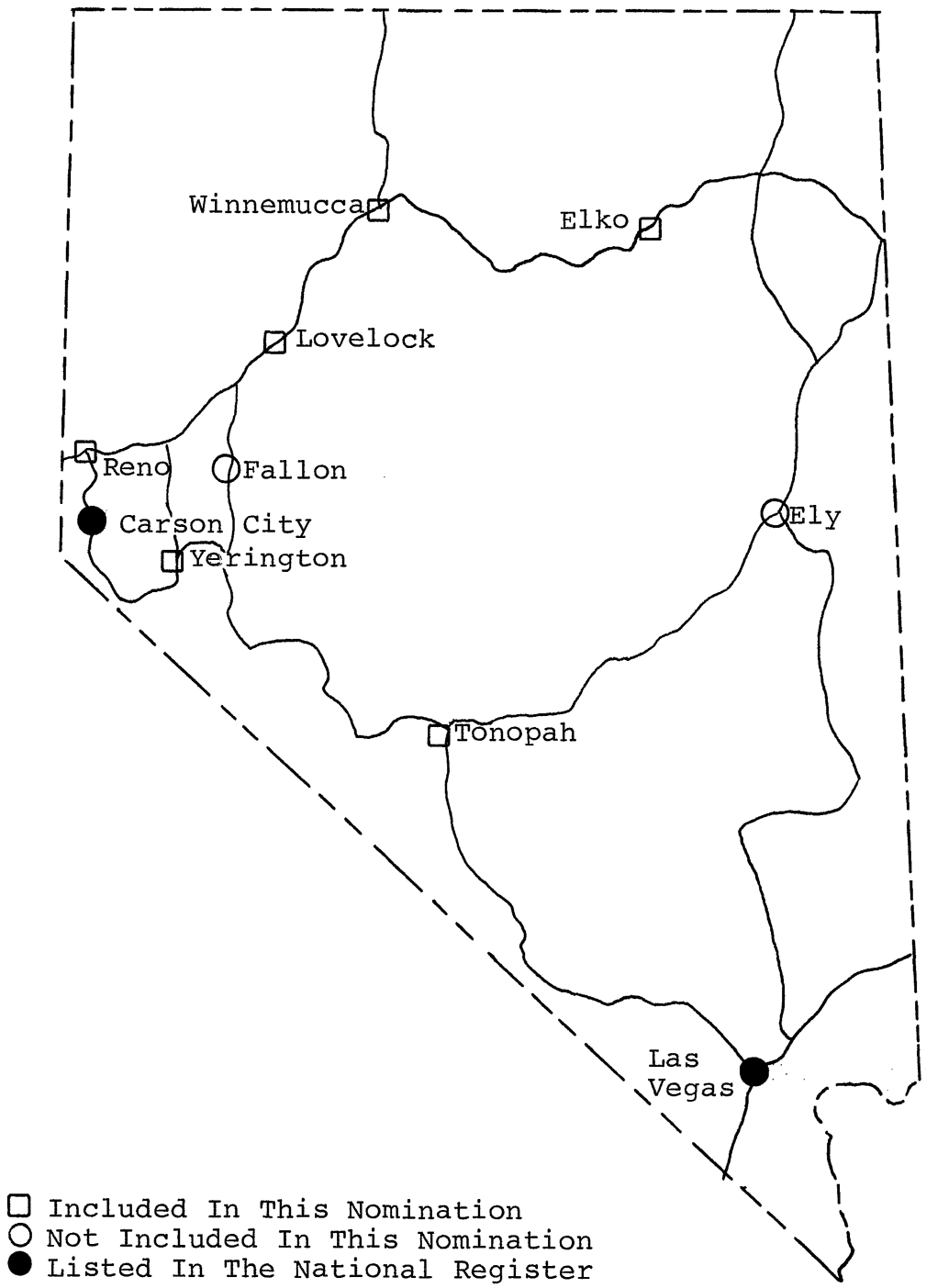
[6]FB: Federal Building

[7]GSA: General Services Administration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 3 USPS - NEVADA



☐ Included In This Nomination
○ Not Included In This Nomination
● Listed In The National Register

FEDERALLY-CONSTRUCTED POST OFFICES IN NEVADA

According to Postal Service records, public building appropriations, and local newspaper accounts, there were 11 post offices constructed in Nevada between 1891 and 1941. Three were constructed between 1891 and 1921. Only Winnemucca remains under USPS ownership; the Carson City Federal Building (1891) is now the Nevada State Library; the first Reno Federal Building (1909) was razed in the 1930s.

One post office was constructed in the late 1920s. The former Fallon Federal Building (1929) is owned by the city and is used for public offices.

Seven post offices were constructed between 1933 and 1941. One, the Las Vegas Federal Building (1933), is owned by GSA. Six, Elko (1933), Reno (1934), Ely (1937), Lovelock (1938), Yerington (1939), and Tonopah (1941) are owned by the USPS.

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 Nevada.

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. It 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 Supervis-

ing 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" were 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 1062].

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 30 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 build-

ings. 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 1930s. 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. Com-

missions 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 were located, 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 the studios and museums and 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 the interpretation of an art critic to be appreciated by the local populace. It was a style that it could relate 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 U.S. MAIL SERVICE IN NEVADA

Prior to 1848, when gold was discovered in California and the lands comprising Nevada were ceded to the United States by Mexico under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, only a trickle of explorers, trappers and sporadic emigrant trains crossed the harsh wasteland on the trail west. The primary route to California was the Humboldt Trail, which cutoff from the Oregon Trail at Fort Hall (Idaho), crossed northern Nevada (through present day Elko, Winnemucca, Lovelock, and Reno) and breached the Sierra Nevada via several alternative passes. In June of 1850, a trading post was established at present-day Genoa in the Carson Valley. In September, the few inhabitants engaged in trading, mining, or ranching in the Carson and neighboring valleys became citizens of the newly formed Utah Territory.

The first U.S. mails between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts were transported by ocean routes. Mail was shipped south to Panama, transported across the Isthmus, then shipped north to various California ports and Astoria, Oregon Territory. Mail was then carried by horseback, wagon, or stagecoach from the coastal ports to the inland destinations. Although U.S. mail service across the overland routes did not begin until 1850, various private modes were used to convey the mails between the territories and the states.

The first U.S. mail route that crossed the nation overland consisted of two segments with Salt Lake City, Utah Territory as the hub. The first originated in Independence,

Missouri and was initiated in July of 1850 by Samuel Woodson and James Brown. They received $19,000 per year to carry the monthly mails to Salt Lake. The second segment, between Salt Lake and Sacramento City, was operated by George Chorpenning and Absalom Woodward. They received $14,000 annually for monthly service, which began on May 1, 1851.

The mules of the Chorpenning and Woodward "Jackass Express" strode a 910 mile route from Sacramento, through the Carson Valley, up the Humboldt River route and around the north end of the Great Salt Lake to Salt Lake City. The route offered many perils. Deep snows in the passes of the Sierra Nevada at the California border and at Granite Pass in Utah required slow and tedious trail breaking. Indian tribes that ranged the vast wilderness could, on occasion, grow hostile and delay or abruptly end a travellers journey. Indeed, in November of 1851, within seven months initiating the service, Woodward was killed by Indians while carrying the mail along the Humboldt.

In spite of the hazards, Chorpenning remained in the business of transporting the U.S. mail. He received the 1854 mail contract, which, to avoid the snow laden passes, stipulated the use of the Mormon Trail, or southerly route, from Salt Lake to San Diego, California. In 1858, the route was again awarded to Chorpenning but was changed back to the Utah-California road via the Carson Valley. He would now receive $130,000 for weekly coach service. Chorpenning was able to shift the eastern and central portions of his route to avoid the snows of Granite Pass and the waterless Forty Mile Desert and thus provide reliable service. He was not, however, able to escape the political maneuverings which caused him financial disaster and led to the nullification of his contract on May 11, 1860.

On this date, Jones, Russell & Company (later Russell, Majors and Waddell) took over the central overland mail route. They now controlled the entire central route between Missouri and California. (The other transcontinental mail route was operated by the Butterfield Overland Express, which originated in St. Louis and followed the southern "Oxbow" route to San Francisco.) Their Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express (COC & PP Ex.Co.) would carry the U.S. mails across the breadth of the vast American wilderness.

While Chorpenning was struggling to forestall his financial collapse in late 1859 and early 1860, William Russell was laying the groundwork for the Pony Express. On April 3, 1860, the relay of ponies that would take only ten days to traverse the 1,500 mile route between St. Joseph and San Francisco initiated its short-lived but colorful history. (The Salt Lake to Carson Valley segment followed essentially the same route developed by Chorpenning.)

Russell was playing for high stakes in his bold venture. He was attempting to convince the nation that the central route should be its primary path across the continent. Sectionalist differences and a Southern-leaning Postmaster General had led to the John Butterfield's southern route gaining that position. Shifting to the central route held the potential for profitable mail contracts for the COC & PP Ex.Co. and a future railroad route. At last, the central route won out. The Post Office Appropriation Bill of March 2, 1861 directed the Postmaster General to discontinue the southern route and commence daily service along the central route. A $1 million annual contract for daily service (23-day run) between the Missouri River to Sacramento was authorized. But, Russell lost, and Butterfield received the contract.

Service commenced on July 1, 1861. Butterfield's Overland Mail Company operated the portion of the route west of Salt Lake and a compromise agreement gave Russell a subcontract to operate the eastern portion. Russell continued to operate the Pony Express, which would only survive until October 24, 1861. The operation of the Pony Express had been a financial disaster and its era abruptly ended when the transcontinental telegraph line was completed on October 24, 1861. (The telegraph also followed the route blazed by Chorpenning.)

The shift of the transcontinental mail to the central route and the completion of the transcontinental telegraph line involved the crossing of Nevada which had been separated from Utah to become a territory on March 2, 1861. Yet, there was nary a post office in the territory to which mail could be delivered. Upon formation of Nevada Territory there were only seven U.S. post offices in the portion that had been wrested from Utah Territory. Furthermore, two of these, Susanville and Carey's Mills, were later found to be within

California's boundaries. The Carson Valley Post Office at Mormon Station (which would be renamed Genoa in 1856 and become the Genoa Post Office in 1863) was established as the Territory's first post office on December 10, 1852. (The August 18, 1856 Post Road Act [11 Stat 123] authorized a route between Placerville, California and Genoa in Carson County, Utah Territory.) Six more years passed before Carson City, which would become Nevada Territory's capital, was granted the second post office on November 18, 1858.

The vast empty space that would become Nevada was home to only a few ranchers, farmers and miners in the Carson and neighboring valleys until the discovery of the Comstock Lode in 1859. The silver and gold ores of the Comstock district, with the raucous and booming Virginia City as its center, fueled the economic growth of the new territory. The horde of assorted wealth seekers caused a rapid increase in the new territory's citizenry. The 1860 census population of 6,857 for Carson County (essentially the area included in the Territory) showed an increase to over 15,000 in the count taken after the March 2, 1861 formation of Nevada Territory. Virginia City was the Territory's "metropolis" with an 1861 population of 2,704. It would grow to 7,048 in 1870. Other mineral strikes that followed the Comstock in the decade of the 1860s took place in Aurora, Humboldt City/Unionville, Jacobsville/Austin, Hamilton/Treasure Hill, Eureka, and Pioche. These districts extended from the western to eastern boundaries of the Territory and State (October 31, 1864) in a belt across its mid-section. Though these towns were in most cases short-lived, they did stimulate further exploration and settlement of the state.

Freight and express activity grew in conjunction with the demand for mining equipment, supplies and ore transport. The transportation network, which consisted of wagon roads and trails and, after 1869, railroads, improved with the increase in traffic. Accordingly, the mail service also improved in frequency and time of delivery. After 1866 (and possibly before) Wells Fargo & Co. controlled not only the transcontinental overland mail, but also had control of the majority of contract U.S. mail routes as well as its own express business in the broadening circle of Nevada mining camps. Wells Fargo was able to compete with the U.S. mail routes it did not control by providing rapid and reliable

service, even though more expensive. It ran local pony expresses along the important trans-Sierra route between Virginia City, Carson City and Sacramento after the failure of the transcontinental pony express and until the Central Pacific Railroad began running the Sierra in 1868.

The network of U.S. postal routes (and subsequent letting of subsidized mail carrying contracts) also expanded as the mining camps developed and clamored for U.S. mail service. The Act of June 2, 1862 [12 Stat 413] established routes from Carson City to Virginia City and Aurora and between Dayton and Humboldt. In 1863 a route was authorized between Chico, California and Humboldt City, via Susanville. The next year, a route was authorized from California, across Nevada to the booming gold camps around Boise City (Idaho). The post roads act of March 3, 1865 (listed under Nevada and the territories of Idaho and Montana) authorized a route from Unionville, seat of Humboldt County, via Star City, Dun Glen, Moore's and White's Ranch, Pah Ute Knob, in the state of Nevada, the Owyhee and Jordan's Creek Mines, Boise City to Virginia City, Montana Territory. In 1866, routes were extended from Carson City to Austin and from Austin to Cortez and to Silver Peak. In 1868, routes were authorized to the White Pine mining district in eastern Nevada. Thus did the authorization of post roads provide links between civilization and the rustic camps that were scattered along the barren Nevada landscape.

In December of 1867, when the Central Pacific Railroad, on its route from San Francisco to Promontory, Utah, crossed into Nevada, the linkages became steel rails and the trading posts and way stations became communities. Reno sprang, by railroad auction in May of 1869, from the trading post of Fuller's Crossing to the major supply center for the state's growth. In August, the Big Meadows trading post of George Lovelock was reached by the rails and was renamed Lovelock's. In the following month, the fledgling community of Winnemucca was assured its permanence as the rails stretched eastward. The new community of Elko was born in January of 1869, when its lots were offered for sale by the railroad. On May 10, 1869 when the Central Pacific and Union Pacific rails were joined by the golden spike, these communities were on the nation's first transcontinental rail system. At the same stroke, the Overland Mail became history as had the Pony

Express when the stroke of a brass key announced the linkage of the nation's coasts by telegraph.

The decade of the 1870s saw an increase in Nevada's population from 42,491 in 1870 to 62,266 in 1880. The Comstock was producing mineral wealth, with a peak production of over $46 million in 1877. After that year, however, production dropped precipitously until the early 1900s. The state's agricultural industry also saw growth during this period. Mining, population growth and the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad stimulated livestock production. Between 1870 and 1880, total production increased from 117,000 head to 555,000 head (cattle, sheep, horses and hogs). Elko, one of the few towns outside of Carson City and Reno which was not a mining town, thrived as a livestock and supply center. Before the decade was over, the Comstock bubble had burst. Not only was the Comstock in decline, but so were the other mining districts of Eureka, Austin, and Pioche. It was hoped that the livestock industry would revive the sagging economy, but in spite of a growth in herd sizes, fluctuating prices dampened the total revenues. Furthermore, the availability of grazing land, and ultimately, the availability of water limited livestock production. Thus, from 1880 to 1900, Nevada experienced depression. The population dropped to 47,344 in 1890 and even further by 1900, to 42,335.

In 1880, the Nevada Central Railroad link between the Central Pacific (CPRR) and the mining town of Austin was completed. Now Nevada had three short lines tied to the Central Pacific. The Virginia City and Truckee Railroad had completed its link between Virginia City and Reno, via Carson City, in 1872. Three years later, the Eureka and Palisade Railroad connected the mining town of Eureka with Palisade. The Annual Report of the Postmaster General for the year 1880 listed 2,904 postal route miles in Nevada. This included two railroad routes which totaled 143 miles: Virginia City to Reno (51.75 miles) and Palisade to Eureka (91.27 miles). The Central Pacific route across Nevada was listed under California, between San Francisco and Ogden City, Utah. By 1889, the total route miles increased to 3,042 with the railroad routes increasing to 608. New routes included the Battle Mountain (on the CPRR) to Austin (94.1 miles); Mound House, Nevada to Keeler, California on the Carson and Colorado Railroad (C&CRR) (293 miles); Belleville to Candelria on the

C&CRR (6.81 miles); and Reno to Liegan Station, California on the Nevada & Northern Railroad (70.3 miles).

At the turn of the century, Nevada's population of 42,335 was less than in 1870. The number of livestock meanwhile had continued to increase; in 1900 there were 351,000 cattle, 696,000 sheep and 79,000 horses. The value for cattle in 1899 had been $6.4 million and for sheep and horses in 1900, $3.2 million. For the same year, mineral production was only $2.6 million. Only three communities had a population of more than 1,000: Reno (4,500); Virginia City (2,695) and Carson City (2,100). The population of the queen city of Virginia City had plummeted from 10,917 in 1880 and would continue to fade. The precincts of Winnemucca and Lovelock had 1,110 and 1,204 residents, respectively, while the precincts of Elko and Yerington remained below 1,000. Ely City claimed 525 residents and Fallon, given a post office in 1896, was not given a count. Las Vegas, Tonopah, and Goldfield did not yet exist.

Although the era of the Overland Mail had ended in 1869, stage coach and wagon freight companies continued to play a major and important role in mail transportation in Nevada until the early 20th Century. Until the proliferation of the automobile (after 1910), there remained many miles of dusty and rutted roads between railroad stations and isolated towns that would be traversed by wagons and mail coaches. In spite of this, Wells Fargo withdrew from the staging business in late 1869, but did, however, continue to operate its express mail service until 1895. (Some sixty express companies were known to have provided express mail service in Nevada during this period.) Government contracts over authorized post routes would continue to be contested among the various Nevada stage companies.

Turn of the century mineral discoveries would lead to new boom towns, an expansion of the rail system, and economic rejuvenation. Tonopah, founded as Butler in 1901, claimed to be the state's largest city in 1906 with an estimated population of 10,000. The next year, Goldfield, founded in 1903, laid the same claim with an estimated population between 15,000 and 30,000. Ely, 200 miles east of the Tonopah/Goldfield district, was resurrected from a sleepy county seat with 525 residents in 1900 to a booming copper center of 2,055 residents in 1910. Finally, Las Vegas, which was

founded in 1905 in conjunction with the construction of the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, grew initially as a supply point for the mining districts south of Tonopah and Goldfield.

Coincident with the growth of the new mining towns was the expansion of the state's rail network. In July of 1904, the Tonopah Railroad Company completed its connection from Soda Springs on the C&CRR to Tonopah. In September, the Goldfield Railroad linked Goldfield to Tonopah. In October of 1907, the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad completed its line by reaching Goldfield. In the same month, the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad from Los Angeles reached Beatty and linked with the Bullfrog-Goldfield Railroad (the lines were later consolidated as the Tonopah and Tidewater RR). On the eastern side of the state, the Nevada Northern Railroad was pushed 140.99 miles south from the Southern Pacific line at Cobre (Omar) to Ely in September of 1906. The 21 railroad routes listed in the 1909 Postmaster General's report for Nevada totaled 1768.7 miles (there were 140 total mail routes covering a distance of 5,476 miles). The bulk of the mail, even though transported in and out of Nevada by rail, continued to be carried by stagecoach along earthen tracks.

It would be less than a decade after the end of the mail stages before daring pilots would stop in Nevada on their air hops across the nation. The 1920 Postmaster General's report discussed a new era in mail transport. New York to San Francisco transcontinental air mail was inaugurated on September 8, 1920. The initial westbound trip was made at the rate of 79.9 miles per hour. The plane arrived in San Francisco 22 hours ahead of the best time a train could make. Elko and Reno had laid out public airfields and provided hangars for the exclusive use of the air mail service.

FEDERAL POST OFFICE CONSTRUCTION IN NEVADA

The first permanent federal building in Nevada owes its existence to the same mineral wealth that enabled Nevada to become a state on October 31, 1864. Given its initial appropriation on March 3, 1863, the Branch Mint in Carson City was completed in December of 1869. The completion of the sand-

stone Classical Revival building was important to the mining interests in the state since it enabled the bullion to be shipped to Carson City rather than to San Francisco.

The first post office constructed in Nevada by Uncle Sam was also in Carson City, rather than booming Virginia City. Even though the population of Virginia City was more than double that of Carson City's 4,229 in the 1880 census, it was Carson City that received an appropriation of $100,000 for a post office, court house, etc. [23 Stat 281] by an act of January 3, 1885. It was thought that the appropriation would do much to advance the development of Nevada's capital city. The selection of the building site was announced in February of the following year. Two months later, the Carson City Tribune (April 15, 1866) discussed the "Opera House Affair." It seems that the block selected for the federal building included the Carson City Opera House which was under boycott by the local citizens. The stockholders of the Opera House had made only a nominal return on their money even in good times. Now, with the cost of moving the building and buying a new lot about equivalent to the $3,500 they were getting from Uncle Sam, the trustees wondered whether if it would be better to make their boycotted building available to the highest bidder. In any case, the opera house was moved and reopened, but the gap left by the building would remain for two more years before construction commenced. An act of March 30, 1888 [25 Stat 47] added another $36,000 to the building fund. Construction began in 1888 and on March 3, 1891 [26 Stat 949] another $10,000 was added to the kitty as the building neared completion. The three-story brick edifice was finally occupied by the post office in May of 1891.

At the turn of the century, Carson City still remained Nevada's second largest city. Reno, however, with a population of 4,500 had moved ahead of declining Carson City and the "busting" Virginia City. (Virginia City's population had dropped to 2,695 in 1900, from 8,511 in 1890 and 10,917 in 1880.) The boosters of Virginia City had missed their chance for a federal gift; the queen city was becoming a ghost town. The Reno boosters had attempted back in 1886, when the search for a building site in Carson City was underway, to get a public building by offering a block worth $30,000 for its site. Good news regarding the long-hoped-for building was announced on the front page of the Reno Evening Gazette on

March 3, 1902: "Public Building Bill for Reno Passed By The Senate." An appropriation of $70,000 had been approved. The June 6th issue of the Gazette carried the following dispatch from U.S. Congressman Francis G. Newlands: "President has just signed Public Building Bill." The amount, however, was an authorization for $60,000 for a site and building [32 Stat 320]. At month end, the Omnibus Public Buildings Act of June 28th granted an appropriation of $15,000 [32 Stat 428]. Another $15,000 installment was granted in the Sundry Civil Expenses bill of March 3, 1903 [32 Stat 1089]. A site at the north end of the Virginia Street bridge across from the Masonic Temple was purchased for the post office on October 24, 1903. The amount was only $9,041, a far cry less than the $30,000 site the city was willing to offer back in 1886.

The Sundry Civil Expense bills of April 28, 1904 [33 Stat 456] and March 3, 1905 [33 Stat 1160] each appropriated $15,000 for the Reno post office. The full $60,000 had been appropriated, but no construction was underway. New mineral discoveries in the Tonopah and Goldfield districts were rekindling the spirit of the Comstock days and Reno, as the state's railroad and shipping center, was booming. As a result, an Act of June 30, 1906 increased the limit of the federal building an additional $40,000 [34 Stat 773]. That amount was appropriated on March 4, 1907 [34 Stat 1302].

While the Reno federal building was finally under construction, Nevada's new boom town of Goldfield was authorized $75,000 for a site and building by the Public Building Omnibus Act of May 30, 1908 [35 Stat 530]. The same act granted an appropriation of $15,000 [35 Stat 485]. Fueled by rich silver and gold strikes in 1903 and 1904, the isolated mining camp would become Nevada's largest city by 1907. In two more years, the obstreperous town would be clamoring for the removal of the State capital to that city. According to the March 2, 1909 issue of the Nevada State Journal, Mr. Hunter of Goldfield was planning to introduce a resolution to move the seat of government to "the great mining city which he represents." He had nothing against Carson City except that "it is a small place and out of the way, not easily reached and has not the modern conveniences that the State Capital of Nevada should have."

On the very next day, the Journal announced that the metropolis of Reno should have the capital. Indeed, Mr.

Charles Burke offered four city blocks for a capital site. He added: "Goldfield is out of the question. It is a mining camp and Virginia City with its millions of production behind it is a sample of the rise and fall of cities built upon mines. By all means move the Capitol, but to Reno, not Goldfield." Neither Reno nor Goldfield were able to wrest the capital from Carson City. Reno did, however, open its new federal building in February of 1909. The two-story brick building with its Classical colonnaded portico was an imposing addition to the city's fine civic buildings--even though it was smaller than people desired.

The census of 1910 showed that Reno was the state's largest city, with a population of 10,867. Goldfield, with a population of 4,838, held the number two position as its glory faded. Tonopah, the other mining boom town on the downhill slide, had 3,900 residents. Carson City, benefiting from the new found wealth to its south, showed a modest increase over 1900 to a population of 2,466. Virginia City was still clinging to life with a population of 2,244. Ely, on the eastern frontier, was booming with 2,055 souls. Up the tracks from Reno, Winnemucca--a county seat, railroad shipping point and livestock center--had grown from 1,110 in 1900 to 1,786 (precinct). Elko, which had boomed as a shipping center for various mining districts in the early 1870s, had settled into its role as a county seat and cattle town. The Elko precinct had a population of 1,677. Lovelock, which, like Elko, was on the Central Pacific Railroad, served as a supply center for the outlying mining districts and local stock ranches. Its population of 1,421 showed an increase of around 200 persons over 1900 (both precincts). Las Vegas, the new railroad town in the state's southern desert, was set for boom with a population of 945. Fallon, which became a county seat in 1902, supplied a mining rush in 1905, and held promise as an agricultural mecca with the completion of the Newlands Irrigation Project in 1908, was just in bud with a population of 741. Finally, Yerington, another community with the promise of agriculture and nearby copper, claimed 682 residents. The sum of these growing communities was reflected in the state's population, which reversed its precipitous decline and almost doubled to 81,875.

Winnemucca and Fallon were the next cities to receive hope of a federal building. The Public Buildings Omnibus Act of March 4, 1913 authorized sites and buildings for the two cities in the amounts of $60,000 and $55,000, respectively [37 Stat 875]. The March 7, 1913 edition of The Humboldt Star broke the good news and thanked senators Newlands and Pittman for their "gallant and successful fight." The article included the text of a telegram from the senators, who reported that a bitter fight had taken place to gain the appropriations. They also stated: "While we were opposed to the method adopted for making up the appropriations bill for public buildings, we were bitterly opposed to the plan of economy which consisted solely in cutting out the little appropriations for the West and maintaining the exorbitant appropriations for the East." The same message greeted the citizens of Fallon when the Churchill County Eagle gave its report on March 8th.

Soon after the bill was signed, site offers were requested. In April, both papers were reporting the activity surrounding the selection of a site. In Winnemucca, the April 23rd edition of the Star reported six sites had been offered. In Fallon, the Eagle reported seven offers, including one gratis and one for two dollars. The first appropriations were made in the Deficiency Appropriations bill of July 29, 1914 [38 Stat 564 & 561]--each city received $5,000. By April of 1915, the site for the post office in Winnemucca had been purchased for $5,000. On May 7, 1915, the Star relayed a hint on how to hasten the Winnemucca federal building that it had received from the Fallon Standard. When advised by the Office of Supervising Architect that it was several years behind in providing building plans and specifications, the good people of Fallon offered to donate the needed documents so as to expedite the project. Even with such an offer, two more years would elapse before Uncle Sam would get around to purchasing his site in Fallon. The good people of Fallon also came to their government's aid in the site purchase. Although offered at $3,200, the government would pay only $1,500 for its favored site. Local property owners, hoping to avoid further delay (and probably seeing the benefit of having a post office next door), took up a subscription and raised the additional $1,700 which they contributed to the purchase.

Both communities received positive news with the passage

of the Sundry Civil Expense bill of June 12, 1917. Fallon received another $10,000 toward its building while Winnemucca received $45,000 [40 Stat 108 & 112]. World War I slowed progress on the towns' buildings, but stimulated the state's mineral, livestock, and farm economies. In 1918, for example, mineral production exceeded the peak reached during the Comstock era. At the end of the War, however, mineral production would again plummet and agricultural prices would decline. Nevada's population would also slip by 1920, to 77,407. Although most Nevada cities experienced growth, relatively substantial in the cases of Las Vegas (to 2,304) and Fallon (to 1,753), it was at the expense of Goldfield (to 1,558), Virginia City (to 1,200), and Carson City (to 1,685). In any case, Winnemucca and Fallon were granted the balance of their appropriations by an Act of July 19, 1919--$5,000 and $40,000, respectively.

In August of 1919, the bids for the construction of the Winnemucca post office were finally called. In the previous week, the bids for the new Humboldt County Courthouse had been accepted. That news, however, was bittersweet: the county had been partitioned in March and Lovelock became the seat of the new Pershing County. The good news regarding the Winnemucca post office came in September when the Star announced that the contract had been let. Apparently, Winnemucca and its post office had received some hard knocks from various detractors in Reno, for the article renounced that group in stating: "Reno and other knockers, political and otherwise, also have been predicting and hoping Winnemucca would never get its post office building, will please shed tears!" Although the excavation for the new federal building was completed in the fall of 1919, actual construction did not begin until March of 1920. Slightly over a year later, the May 9, 1921 issue of the Star reported that the new post office had been occupied the previous evening and was open for business.

Meanwhile, the residents of Fallon waited. Even though a site was owned and the construction money appropriated, the realization of the town's dreams was postponed. Since the appropriation was insufficient to construct the building drawn by the government architect, the project was tabled. It was decided to wait for additional funding rather than settle for a modified plan. Before additional funding could be acquired, however, Uncle Sam stopped building federal

buildings. Actually, no new buildings had been authorized since the Public Buildings Omnibus Act of 1913 and funding that was not authorized at that time would not be approved until the Public Buildings Act of May 25, 1925 (also known as the Keyes-Elliot Act). The 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 (only 122 buildings had been constructed between 1921 and 1930).

The June 12, 1926 edition of the Fallon Standard resurrected Fallon's hopes for a new post office building. Fallon and Goldfield were on the favored list of cities under Section 3 of the Act, for which $15,000,000 was authorized to render old appropriations adequate. Fallon was allocated $69,500 for a post office and other government offices; the allocation for Goldfield was $75,000. (Goldfield's ghosts must have been doing some lobbying since the count of 1,558 living citizens of 1920 was reduced to 692 in 1930.) Another year marked the calendar and no post office was in sight.

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 only two buildings in Nevada--Fallon and Goldfield.

Shortly following the issuance of the report, the February 23, 1927, issue of the Standard reported that a telegram signed by fifteen leading Churchill County property owners had been sent to Senator Tasker Oddie. They asked what had been done regarding their building and requested immediate action. In August, Senator Oddie visited Fallon and expressed confidence that the building would be underway by the first of the year. He told the civic boosters that he had not been rushing things because he wanted a building that would be a credit to the city. Construction bids were finally requested; but, as the year ended, the news came that an

additional $36,500 was being sought because the bids exceeded the amount available for construction. Six months elapsed while the plans were simplified, additional funding set, and bids readvertised.

Finally, June 27, 1928 brought the long-awaited news that work on the building had begun. The cornerstone ceremony was reported on September 15th. On March 20, 1929, the Standard reported that the post office would move to its new quarters on March 31st. On the first of May, post office inspector Newman gave his approval to the new building. He predicted that the town would grow to the post office building. He stated: "A federal building in a town is an indication of the confidence of the government in that town. This building is a guarantee of security for other investors and you will find that other improvements follow quickly." The May 8th issue of the Standard included a photograph of the two-story, brick Neo-Classical building, which was described as a "monument to the future of Fallon."

As the Fallon Post Office was being completed, the next listing of public buildings was revealed in House Document 613 (February 26, 1929). Goldfield, with only the county courthouse to keep it alive, had been omitted from the list--Uncle Sam did not erect his buildings in ghost towns. Reno, Nevada's largest city (with a 1930 population of 18,529), was slated for a new building at an estimated cost of $565,000. Las Vegas, which would move into number two position with a 1930 population of 5,165, was allocated $200,000 for a building. Elko, having gained over 1,000 people to reach a population of 3,217, was allocated $60,000. The report also provided $60,000 for a city not yet named. Finally, Tonopah, which had lost some 2,000 people between 1920 and its 1930 population of 2,116, was listed as a city not included in the program. Nationally, the funding allocated to the building program was doubled to $200,000,000 plus an estimated additional $48,000,000 from the sales of excess facilities. The number of buildings to be constructed was increased to 571.

By the time House Document 613 was released, Uncle Sam was in the throes of attempting to acquire a site for the new federal building in Reno. A July 2, 1928 Reno Evening Gazette article reported that a post office site was being sought. It was thought that a property offered by prominent Reno (and Nevada) banker George Wingfield was the favored

site even though site advertising had not yet begun. Apparently, a federal site inspector had viewed the property two years before, after the government announced that a new federal building was being considered. The August 13th issue of the Gazette reported the results of a hearing that had been held that morning to solicit comments on the location of the new post office. It appeared that only two sites were suitable--that of the existing post office and the block on the opposite side (south) of the river. The bulk of this site was offered by Mr. Wingfield, but a portion was occupied by the public library. The library presented problems: its board of directors did not want to sell and the land on which it stood had been donated expressively for park use. Another problem arose from the business community: Reno businessmen were opposed to moving the post office. They felt that the present location was most convenient and that such action would "disturb realty values in the business part of the city." On the other hand, Senator Oddie, who was also inspecting the site, had indicated to the government inspectors that the library site could be made available. He added that that location would make a fine civic center, particularly if Reno were to get a federal court in the future. An article of September 28th indicated that the state legislature might become involved in the site issue. The possibility of introducing a bill directing the library board of trustees to sell their site to the federal government was being considered. In October of 1928, the Wingfield site and the adjacent Coughlin property were recommended for selection. The library site was not mentioned. This did not mean, however, that it was not needed to complete the site. It was needed, and its acquisition caused four years delay before title could be delivered to Uncle Sam.

While the action on a new federal building was relegated to backroom legal maneuvering in Reno, it was again rising to the forefront in the state's northeast corner. As reported in the Elko Independent of January 23, 1930, the salient topic at the Elko Chamber of Commerce luncheon was getting a federal post office appropriation. One of the members complained that other Nevada cities had recently received appropriations but Elko had not. It was moved to contact Senator Oddie and Congressman Samuel Arentz immediately. (Both had previously submitted requests for an Elko building back in 1925. In fact, Oddie had been working on building allocations since 1923.) By mid-year, the Independent announced

that Oddie had been successful: $140,000 would be available for a federal building (July 5th). The Independent's banner headline of August 19th announced that three sites had been offered for the post office site. It was hoped that a quick decision would be made, but the process became mired in local politics. The County offered a site that was favored by the U.S. government, but the price was too high. Other sites were offered and discussed, and by December progress was nil. At its December 18th meeting the Chamber, according to the Independent, "demonstrated the value of a common forum in which to discuss civic questions ... The luncheon adjourned with a long argument over the postoffice site looming but which was cut by a vote upon a committee report...."

Evidence of Oddie's success was provided by the issuance of House Document 788 (February 27, 1931). Listed as authorized and appropriated was Elko at $140,000. Reno was maintained at its previous level. Las Vegas, no doubt bolstered by its rapid growth, was increased to $320,000. Ely was granted $95,000 and had apparently moved ahead of Tonopah, which was not even listed under those buildings that would eventually receive appropriations. Lovelock and a location not named were slated for $75,000 each.

In March of 1931 a new site was thrown into the Elko fray--the Puccinelli-Fratini property in the southwest part of town. In July, the county jumped back in by reoffering the old high school site. The site issue dominated September news as Elko citizens debated the post office site. Senator Oddie was consulted and was chosen as the "court of last resort." Businessmen in the vicinity of the Puccinelli site had pledged $5,000 to reduce its cost to bring it in line with the government allocation. According to the September 18th edition of the Independent, "Elko's federal building has assumed definement as a cause of argument long in advance of its actual construction delineations, this because owners of property in different parts of the city disagree sharply over the subject." Finally, on February 15, 1932, the site issue seemed resolved: the out-of-the-way site in the southwestern part of town was under federal condemnation proceedings. On May 25th, however, a new revelation hit the press when the federal architect who selected the site was accused of collusion in that process. Word reached Elko that during his alimony trial in San Francisco, William A. Newman, when asked by the judge what his duties were, responded that they were

"to take people out and treat them and give them a good time . . . and get them to donate their properties to the government--to make them pleased and happy to make that donation." In an editorial of May 27th, the Independent seemed resigned to the selected site even though the location was not central. Regarding the collusion issue, it was stated: "The 'salve' didn't come from any local businessmen nor has the Independent ever intimated that any businessman in the city was not perfectly justified in trying to secure the site when it would prove most advantageous to his particular line of business." In June the property finally passed to Uncle Sam and on the 29th, the Independent reported that funds had finally been approved for the Elko building. In addition, the $1,100,000,000 appropriations bill also provided for Ely, Las Vegas, and Reno. Work finally began in September of 1932, with local labor comprising the bulk of the work force.

While the citizens of Elko were embroiled in the federal building site selection process and the Newman trial scandal, the efforts at securing its first federal building were also taking place in Las Vegas. The very same Arthur Newman, by applying his "salve," was able to convince Las Vegas city officials that they should give the government a site that was being held for a city park. Furthermore, the property was accepted only with assurances from the city that it would improve the site and adjacent streets. He had used the old ploy--if a site could not be secured rapidly, Las Vegas would lose its chance to get a federal building. And the people of Las Vegas wanted a federal building. They had been trying since 1911 when the town was barely more than a railroad camp. By December 1923, when another attempt was made to secure a building, Las Vegas had become a city. A flurry of activity ensued and on June 28, 1924, the Las Vegas Age stated:

> There are no government buildings erected in the southern part of the State; yet the City of Las Vegas and the County of Clark have never failed to meet the call of the United States Government for any requirement demanded .... With a population of 4500 people, and with the population steadily increasing, and with no possibility of its growth being stopped or even retarded, we feel that we are entitled to proper postoffice facilities for the handling of United States mail by having an up-to-date Federal postoffice building.

Las Vegas had no more luck that any of the other cities across the nation--no appropriations were being made for new federal buildings. It was not until five years later, in the Second Deficiency Act of March 4, 1929, that $20,000 was appropriated for site acquisition. In August, Newman arrived to find a federal site. After that was accomplished and the building design completed, the selection of a contractor was undertaken. On August 1, 1931, the Evening Review-Journal reported that the Plains Construction Company of Pampas, Texas had won the contract with a bid of $237,000. Thereafter, progress seemed smooth and rapid. A banner headline of September 15, 1931 announced "Federal Building Starts Saturday." Local labor would be used on the job. A headline of September 17th announced: "Federal Building Contractor Here." Before long, however, problems arose. First, it was discovered that the excavation and poured foundations were 32 feet off-center. It was decided to continue in the existing location. Next, on February 8, 1932, it was discovered that J. O. Pearson, owner of Plains Construction, had forged the signatures of the sureties for his bond. The headline of February 29th announced: "Quiz Opens on Federal Building." The Department of Justice would investigate. In any case, the contract was cancelled and re-bid. The June 28th edition of the Evening Review-Journal brought the news that a Chicago firm would finish the building. Two months later, on August 10th, Las Vegans read a second banner headline announcing the start once again of federal building construction. With the exception of the condemnation of the lobby finishing materials in September of 1933, the trouble-plagued $300,000 building finally rose without disaster. "Federal Building is Dedicated," in banner headlines, greeted Las Vegans on November 11, 1933. An Armistice Day parade preceded the event that had been long-awaited by the city. The magnificent three-story Neo-Classical building was the largest in the state and the pride of Las Vegas.

About the same time that the federal indictment halted construction on the Las Vegas Federal Building, bid and site problems were also cropping up in the state's other federal building projects. In Ely, the site that had been selected for the post office--the only one suitable--was priced too high and indefinite delay was expected while the property owner and Uncle Sam fought a court battle (February, 1932). In Elko, work on the federal building was held up because the

contractor who had submitted the successful bid requested a cost adjustment. He had discovered an error and his bid was too low. Work finally began in September of 1932, but a labor dispute arose. It was quickly resolved, however, when labor wages were raised to a minimum of fifty cents per hour. In Reno, award of the contract was delayed when the winning bidder's bonding company withdrew. Then, Congress reduced the building allocation, and new bids had to be submitted. Finally, in October, title was cleared on the site and a contract was signed for construction. (A lawsuit that had been filed by heirs to the library site had been thrown out by the court. The property which had been donated to the county for a park was, in turn, being donated by the city/-county to the federal government.)

A jurisdictional battle between the state and federal governments surfaced in Reno on October 22, 1932 when the treasury department attempted to file the plat for the Reno federal building site. Governor F. B. Balzar refused to accept the plat filing. He contended that the federal government had no authority to claim exclusive jurisdiction over areas set aside as reservations in the state for post office buildings or for other purposes. Lawsuits were pending in federal court involving the Boulder Dam reservation wherein the state asserted that it had jurisdiction to enforce its taxation and other laws within the reservation (the state wanted to tax the equipment of the Boulder Dam contractors). Fortunately, this incident did not delay the construction of the federal building which began the next month.

Unfortunately, the jurisdictional battle did frustrate Ely's efforts to get its post office. By July of 1933, the problems delaying site purchase had been resolved and the $86,575 construction project was ready to begin. But, Uncle Sam had a point to make. Work would not begin on the project until Nevada provided that the federal government would have exclusive jurisdiction over the building site. The Governor discussed the issue with the State Attorney General to determine a method by which the state could cede its jurisdiction without waiting until the new legislative session. (The previous legislature had repealed the act passed in 1921 in which the state had ceded jurisdiction over lands owned or controlled by the federal government.)

While the jurisdictional battle was waged, the buildings in Elko and Reno progressed. Elko's two-story Mediterranean-style building of buff-colored brick was dedicated on November 25, 1933. Congressman James Scrugham, who had been invited as the keynote speaker, was unable to attend so he designated J. E. Robbins, Chairman of the Democratic Central Committee, to take his place. Robbins, however, declined because of his stance in the battle which surrounded the selection of the building site. Reno's building also progressed, and although the possibility of constructing a fourth floor (for which the plans were drawn) was a hot local topic, the building reached only three stories upon completion in March of 1934. The terra-cotta Art Deco/Moderne building, designed by Frederick DeLongchamps, Nevada'a most prominent architect, was a fitting monument to the federal government and its public buildings programs.

Nevada now had seven federal buildings, although the old post office in Reno had been sold and was now used for the headquarters of the state federal emergency relief administration. The statewide bank holiday that had headlined the Reno Evening Gazette on October 31, 1932 was not able to save the banking empire of George Wingfield. (The failure of his Reno bank had precipitated the bank holiday.) In 1935 Wingfield's banks became a casualty of the Depression when he was forced into bankruptcy. The failure of the Wingfield banks caused bankruptcies among the state's stockraisers, who had already been suffering from depressed prices. Gross income from livestock and farm crops dropped to $6.4 million in 1932 (from $22.1 million in 1928). By 1935, however, federal relief programs boosted farm incomes to $12.4 million. Mining, the state's leading industry, also crashed to a low of $4.3 million in 1932 (from $31.5 million in 1929). Silver price supports, pushed by Nevada Senator Key Pittman, and the increased production of copper pushed gross mineral yields back to $25.8 million by 1936.

Ely, one of the towns riding the tide of increased copper production, had renewed hope for its federal building when the March 22, 1935 issue of the Record reported that Governor Richard Kirman would sign a bill to resolve the jurisdictional problem with the federal government and allow the building project to move forward. Apparently, the work done by the local Lion's Club in pushing the Grier-Russell bill failed to bear fruit; the bill failed to be signed.

Following Ely in its quest for a federal building, but a step behind, was Lovelock. The November 29, 1935 issue of the Review-Miner reported that a government engineer was in town to survey the site selected for the post office/agricultural building. Nearly three years had passed since the site had been selected. It was hoped that the $67,000 available from the Garner-Wagner bill of July 31, 1932 would soon be put to work in construction of a building.

The year 1936 opened with the quest by Representative James Scrugham to get a federal building for Yerington, the governmental and commercial center of the Mason Valley. By mid-year, on June 26th, the Mason Valley News announced that Yerington would be one of 321 towns nationwide to receive a public building under the $60,000,000 emergency construction fund authorized under the deficiency appropriations act. The news in Lovelock was also encouraging. On July 3rd, it was reported that R. E. Campbell had submitted the low bid of $79,450 for construction of the post office. Two weeks later, the news turned bad: the bid was rejected as being too high. Back in Yerington, a site was selected for the new post office in September.

The January 22, 1937 issue of the Mason Valley News summarized the relief funds Nevada had received between April 3, 1934 and December 31, 1936. Over $12 million had gone to projects in the state: $3.5 million for highways and streets; $4.8 million for conservation projects; $353,000 for public buildings; $885,000 for recreational facilities; etc. On January 29th, it was reported that income from field and truck crop products had increased by $3 million over the previous year and for 1936 was up to $9.7 million. The economic life of the state seemed to be rejuvenating.

The new year also rekindled hopes for the federal buildings in Ely and in Lovelock. The January 8th edition of the Ely Record reported that the Lion's Club was again seeking a bill to break the deadlock between the state and federal governments. In Lovelock, the January 22nd Review-Miner noted the readvertising for the post office construction bids. Down south in the resurging town of Tonopah, the Nye County Improvement Association began a vigorous drive to get a federal building. On February 3rd, Tonopah's Daily Times reported that a resolution had been sent that day to the Postal Department requesting immediate action. Action, though long-

delayed, was finally reported in Ely on April 30th. Surely the Ely Lion's Club rejoiced at the news that a $65,800 contract had been let for construction of the new federal building. Less that 30 days later, the boosters of Lovelock received similar news--a $60,700 contract had been let for their post office. By July, the construction of the Ely Post Office was well underway. Indeed, on July 4th, Congressman Scrugham hustled across the county in sixteen hours by plane, train and automobile to present a short, rain-soaked address at the cornerstone ceremony. Scrugham made the trip again in November for the laying of the Lovelock cornerstone. The Review-Miner of November 12th wrote that "Scrugham says new building is symbol of faith." Scrugham observed that the building indicated that the federal government had confidence in the mining and farming upon which the city's economy was based.

Soon after the year turned to 1938, the Ely press was discussing the upcoming dedication of the post office. Weekly reports up to the January 29th dedication date informed the readers that Senator Pat McCarran would deliver the principal address; the White Pine High School band, Boy Scouts and American Legion would take part; Grant "Swede" Anderson, a mainline United Airlines pilot, would fly the large ten-passenger Boeing plane from Salt Lake; and airmail letters would be mailed from the new post office. As reported on February 4th: "The plane flew on the beam to Wendover and then, with Grant Anderson, former Ely resident at the controls, came down the valley, circling Ely before landing." Pat McCarran and other dignitaries, whom Anderson delivered safely, addressed the crowd and dedicated the one-story brick post office. (Since McCarran was sponsoring legislation promoting the safety of U.S. air service that was his topic at the ceremony.) The building featured a flat, symmetrical facade with detailing limited to the limestone facing of its central portion. It was modern in every detail.

On the other side of the state, work on the post office in Lovelock was also nearing the dedication stage. Further west, however, both the Yerington and Tonopah projects were mired in the acquisition of a site. The Lovelock Review-Miner provided a running commentary on the progress of its town's new post office. The scene was described as a beehive of workmen. A man named Fowler from Texas was noted for his

rapid painting ability and his skill in seldom losing a drop of paint. The last drop of paint dry, the government accepted the building in early April. The local press extolled the modern building and lent the following caption to its front page photo: "Beautiful, cream colored, brick structure forms a new unit in city's community center." Senator McCarran dedicated the Lovelock Post Office on June 11th during the alumni jubilee fete--a weekend of banquet, barbecue, dance and parade--and spoke of America's role in preserving democracy.

March 4, 1938 brought the news to Yerington citizens that action had been taken on the post office. Apparently the state officials at Carson City had failed to advise the Treasury Department that the state had ceded the land in Yerington to the federal government. This had been done a year ago. After Ted Morrell flew into Yerington with the city's first airmail flight in May, the news of the post office again grew sporadic. Plans were being prepared and, by year's end, bids were let.

The Winnemucca Chamber of Commerce opened 1939 by mounting a campaign to gain an addition to their outgrown post office. On May 24th, the Humboldt Star reported that Congressman James Scrugham, after four years of effort, had secured an appropriation of $85,000 for a post office and federal building. It was thought that the new building would be located on the corner opposite the existing post office. As Winnemuccans were working toward the expansion of their building, construction was actually underway in Yerington. The L. F. Dow Company, with its $61,491 contract in hand, started work in early April. The red bricks climbed upward in a simple one-story facade to be capped by a hipped copper roof. By the end of November, the building was ready. On the 24th a banner headline announced the dedication ceremony of December 2nd. The article stated: "...the building fulfills a life time of hopes and dreams for the citizens of this community." Senator McCarran and Congressman Scrugham would attend the ceremony. According to the recap on December 8th, the Congressman addressed the large and attentive audience and the high school band drew much applause for its first public performance. As the year ended, the Winnemucca Chamber of Commerce was attempting, through Congressman Scrugham, to change the plans for the post office addition. To the dismay of the Chamber, the plans, which had been

received in November, called for a one-story extension to the rear rather than a full two-story addition. The hoped-for office space for the federal agencies in the courthouse would not be provided.

The year 1940 brought the end of the Depression and marked the beginning of significant growth. The state's population had increased from 91,058 in 1930 to 110,247 in 1940 (and would increase to 160,083 in 1950). Reno grew to 21,317 residents and Las Vegas was rapidly expanding with a population of 8,422. Only one other city had over 5,000 residents --Sparks, with a population of 5,318. Ely was the states' fourth largest city with 4,140 residents and Elko trailed closely with 4,094. Winnemucca (2,485), Carson City (2,478), Tonopah (2,471), Fallon (1,911), and Lovelock (1,294) all experienced gains over 1930. Yerington, however, continued its slow decline which had begun in 1920, dropping to 964 residents. Mineral production in 1940 climbed to over $43.8 million and continued to climb through the war. The war in Europe also aided local agriculture--production reached $16 million in 1940.

January of 1940 bore good news for both Winnemucca and Tonopah. On January 11th the Humboldt Star reported that the $85,000 allocated to the Winnemucca post office expansion would not be reduced to $60,000; the rumor to that effect was erroneous. The Tonopah Daily Times of the 25th indicated that the title problems on the Tonopah post office site would soon be cleared. By July they were and title finally passed to Uncle Sam. The project in Winnemucca moved a step ahead as July ended with the news that the $58,000 bid of Bushboom & Raugh had been accepted for the post office expansion. Apparently, the $60,000 rumor was not as erroneous as had been thought. The three-month job began in September, but by December, when L. F. Dow was awarded the $66,666 contract for the Tonopah federal building, it was not yet complete.

Ground was broken in Tonopah in February of 1941 and work, unlike in Winnemucca, moved ahead rapidly. The May 1st issue of the Daily Times provided a schedule of the next Saturday's cornerstone ceremony. Masonic rites, the school band and an address by District Judge William D. Hatton would highlight the day. In his speech of May 3rd, Judge Hatton admonished the listeners that "we must rededicate ourselves to the preservation of democracy in this period of national

emergency." On May 7th, the Winnemucca project was reported to be near completion. The difficulty in getting lumber and cold and wet weather had delayed the work but the addition would be ready by June 15th. The building in Tonopah continued to move ahead of schedule. The one-story facade of buff brick and limestone took shape through the summer. The "type" structure, one of 25 mass-produced standard designs, took the form of a "Starved Classical" design with Colonial lines, the latter provided by its hipped copper roof and copper cupola. The December 1st issue of the Times quoted Dr. R. H. Burkick, local postmaster, as saying "Saturday will be moving day for us and we hope to have the windows open for business as usual Monday morning." The issue of the 6th advised that the building would be open on the 7th for the assignment of post office boxes. It added that an impressive dedication ceremony would be delayed until the weather became more favorable. Thoughts of the dedication, however, were rudely eclipsed by the headlines of December 8th: "U.S. VOTES WAR." (Actually, that headline of the Tonopah Daily Times is dated Monday Evening, December 7, 1941.)

In summary, Nevada received eleven federally-constructed post offices between 1891 and 1941. One of the buildings has been razed--the original Reno Federal Building (1909). Two are no longer used as post offices. The Carson City Federal Building (1891) is now owned by the State of Nevada and is used as the Nevada State Library; the former Fallon Post Office/Federal Building (1929) is owned by the City of Fallon and is used for public offices. One building, the Las Vegas Federal Building/Post Office (1933), is administered by GSA and contains a postal station. Seven buildings--Winnemucca (1921), Elko (1933), Reno (1934), Ely (1937), Lovelock (1938), Yerington (1939), and Tonopah (1941)--are owned and operated by the U.S. Postal Service.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type Federally-constructed post offices and 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 political considerations sometimes entered into site location, building size, and materials. Plans were standardized, but some attention was given to local conditions in the attempt to individualize buildings of different towns. In most all cases, however, the dimensions and envelope were set, with variations limited to minor interior arrangement of functional areas, use of finishing 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 initial appropriation for the former Fallon MPO, even though it was not constructed until 1929, is associated with the major growth period of the city in the same way that 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 Nevada 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: U.S. Postal Service, Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

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 Nevada 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. In some cases, they housed federal offices in the basement. The Tonopah and Lovelock MPOs are examples of this functional category.

b. Small, Combined Post Office and Federal Building

These facilities were also located primarily in small communities, usually in communities 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 type include the Elko and Yerington MPOs and the former post office in Fallon.

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. Examples of this building type include the Downtown Station in Reno (originally the main office), the federal building in Las Vegas and former federal building in Carson City. All of these buildings originally functioned as main post offices in addition to housing federal courts or offices, or both.

It might be noted that various terms are applied to these building which may or may not relate to these functional categories. For example, the term federal or public building is (or was) often generically applied to federally-constructed buildings that housed post offices whether or not they contained other federal offices. On the other hand, a building such as Reno's, with two additional floors of federal offices, has incised on it frieze "United States Post Office" while the Las Vegas federal building, which also contained the federal court, is labeled "Federal Building and Post Office." Both the Las Vegas and Reno buildings are now postal stations; their main office functions were shifted to larger modern buildings because the original buildings and sites were simply too small to meet demands caused by population growth. All of these buildings, when constructed, were the main post offices of their communities. Those of Lovelock, Yerington, Tonopah, Winnemucca, Elko and Ely continue to function as main post offices.

2. Design

Design styles of the Nevada post offices during this period vary, although they are all rooted in Classical design principles and, therefore, display common characteristics. The six post offices included in this nomination and the two other federally-constructed buildings already listed in the National Register represent the spectrum of federal design styles used in Nevada 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 located 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 located adjacent to the postmaster's office or at the opposite end of the lobby.

The workroom, where the mail sorting takes place, is located 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.

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 in the ornament. Starved Classicism, in an effort 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).

Mediterranean Revival (1915-1940)

This term is used to describe eclectic buildings that combine various stylistic elements characteristic of the Mediterranean region, specifically Italy and Spain. Spanish Colonial Revival, Italianate, and other derivative styles are included under this category. Generally the Mediterranean styles are characterized by low tile-clad hipped roofs, round-arched window and door openings, but are less ornate than the Spanish Colonial Revival and Italianate styles.

All of the nominated buildings were selected for their architectural significance, as being well-crafted and well-maintained or notable examples of their style. They represent the evolution 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.

Three post offices included in this nomination are significant in the category of art, as they house murals from the New Deal arts programs.

Specific areas of significance are addressed below. The following criteria explain the ways in which National Register Criteria A, C, and D relate to Nevada 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. For example, this is true of the Elko MPO which is one of the city's most imposing buildings. All of the post offices included in this nomination are locally important and, in most cases, locally unique examples of a given architectural style. The Beaux-Arts-design buildings represent locally unique examples of a style common to government and certain commercial buildings, especially banks, in larger cities throughout the country.

It is doubtful that post office design discernibly affected the designs of subsequent buildings or a town's architectural history. 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 true for essentially all of the small town post offices considered in this nomination. The use of

strong classical forms, 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 Yerington and Tonopah MPOs are excellent examples of standard designs found in the Western United States. None of the Nevada post offices are thought to be the earliest or prototype examples of standard design.

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, all of the buildings have Beaux-Arts derived ornamental motifs, however, the Tonopah MPO represents the Starved Classicism style in which these motifs were substantially reduced and simplified.

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 may, however, be an important local example of national economic trends and the

federal government's policies in dealing with those trends. In particular, those 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. In many cases, the employment provided by post office construction was an important local event. Also, the site selection process within a community was, in most cases, an event that brought into play the political and economic forces of the community. A post office may qualify as locally significant if it is 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. The Reno Downtown Station is a good example of building placement to form a civic core. The county court house, the post office and the former state building (used as a library and razed for the Pioneer Auditorium) formed such a complex.

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.

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 Nevada Historical Society Library. In addition to the USPS-owned buildings that were included in the initial survey work, the Nevada 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.

Finally, federally-constructed post offices and federal buildings that are no longer federally-owned or -operated are not contained within this present nomination, but might be the subject of future amendments.

Other amendments might include an analysis of properties related to the U.S. Post Office within contexts not mentioned here (e.g. commerce, communication, exploration/settlement, Depression-era relief efforts, etc.) in order to broaden its perspective to encompass buildings not owned outright by the federal government.

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