

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SEP 19 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

U. S. Post Offices in North Dakota, 1900-1940

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Federal Post Office Construction in North Dakota, 1895-1940

C. Geographical Data

See continuation sheets.

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.

Bradford W. DeLeon

Signature of certifying official

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

8-21-89

Date

September 15, 1989

James E. Sperry, State Historic Preservation Officer (ND)

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.

Patrick W. Andrews

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

11/1/89

Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

See continuation sheets.

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SECTION C. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The multiple properties are contained within the political boundaries of the State of North Dakota.

Twelve properties in this nomination are as follows:

Wahpeton	620 Dakota Avenue	Richland County
Valley City	149 N.E. Third Street	Barnes County
Dickinson	15 E. First Street	Stark County
Grafton	506 S. Griggs Avenue	Walsh County
Pembina	125 S. Cavalier Street	Pembina County
Carrington	87 N. Ninth Avenue	Foster County
Oakes	611 Main Avenue	Dickey County
Langdon	323 Eighth Avenue	Cavalier County
Hettinger	Lake Street at Adams Avenue	Adams County
New Rockford	821 N. First Avenue	Eddy County
Lisbon	17 W. Fourth Avenue	Ransom County
Rugby	205 S.E. Second Street	Pierce County

North Dakota Post Offices on the National Register of Historic Places
(included by reference in this nomination):

Grand Forks	102 4th St. N.	Grand Forks County
Devils Lake	502 4th St.	Ramsey County
Bismarck	304 E. Broadway	Burleigh County
Minot	100 1st. St. SW	Ward County
Williston	322 Main	Williams County
Mandan	108 1st. St. NW	Morton County
**Jamestown	222 1st. Ave. S.	Sutsman County
Fargo	655 1st. Ave. N.	Cass County

** = in pending historic district, has passed the State Review Board

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The list below details the facility name, accompanying 7.5' Series USGS Quadrangle map, and UTM for the 12 North Dakota post offices in this nomination:

Wahpeton Post Office: Wahpeton, N. Dak-Minn (1964, photorevised 1979)
14 684320 5125980

Valley City Post Office: Valley City West, N. Dak (1961)
14 576035 5197160

Dickinson Post Office: Dickinson North, N. Dak (1959, photorevised 1981)
13 668860 5193995

Grafton Post Office: Grafton, N. Dak (1960)
14 617520 5363905

U. S. Custom House and Post Office (Pembina): Pembina, N.Dak-Minn (1972, photorevised 1979) 14 628520 5424995

Carrington Post Office: Carrington, N. Dak (1950, photorevised 1986)
14 490595 5255000

Oakes Post Office: Oakes, N. Dak (1952)
SE1/4SE1/4SE1/4 Section 20 T131N R59W

Langdon Post Office: Langdon East, N. Dak (1967, photorevised 1983)
14 546375 5400890

Hettinger Post Office: Hettinger, N. Dak (1974)
13 683050 5096690

New Rockford Post Office: New Rockford, N. Dak (1950, photorevised 1986)
14 489550 5280620

Lisbon Post Office: Lisbon, N. Dak (1962)
14 601220 5143840

Rugby Post Office: Rugby, N. Dak (1955, photorevised 1980)
14 426400 5357670

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Multiple Property: U.S. Post Offices in North Dakota, 1900-1940

This multiple property nomination is for 12 United States Post Offices in North Dakota. Eleven are owned by the U.S. Postal Service, one is in private hands. They are distributed throughout the state of North Dakota. As a group, these facilities provide a 35-year statewide chronology of the development of post offices, varying as they do in size, function, materials, and style. They all share a conservative aesthetic characteristic of buildings erected by the U.S. Government.

This nomination is concerned with the various stylistic and functional divisions in post office construction and the ways these divisions reflect changing political and economic conditions in North Dakota and the nation as a whole. All buildings are on their original sites and have been maintained to high standards. Structural and architectural integrity is high for all buildings in this nomination.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS NOMINATION:

This multiple property nomination is divided into two major parts: the multiple property cover document explaining the historical context, associated property type, general description, significance and registration requirements; methodology, and bibliography; and 12 individual nomination forms prepared for each building in the nomination.

The cover document articulates the central theme and several subthemes of this nomination and defines the criteria used to evaluate the significance of individual properties within the theme. In addition, the cover document provides the historic context in which the buildings and themes are evaluated, as well as a list of buildings included in this nomination. Discussion of the historic context, "Federal Post Office Construction in North Dakota, 1900-1940," is found in Section E, below.

The individual nomination forms provide an accessible way of finding specific information pertinent to individual buildings. These forms contain descriptions of the individual properties and discussions of their individual significance, as well as their relation and significance within the overall theme.

The central theme of this nomination concerns the evolution of federally-built North Dakota post offices as a property type during the first four decades of this century. Leased facilities, of which there are many in the state, are not part of this study nor nomination. The buildings included in this nomination are scattered over the state of

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North Dakota and are located in different social, economic, and natural environments, in large and small cities. The buildings surveyed offer a range of styles and functional types, but were erected within the relatively short span of 35 years.

The primary significance of this group of post offices is Political/Governmental and the primary function is Government. The federally-built post offices in North Dakota as a group have significance in the areas of Politics/Government, Community Planning, Economics, Architecture, and Art, but not every individual building possesses significance in all these areas. However, each building contributes to the significance of the the whole.

There are currently eight federally-built post offices in North Dakota listed on the National Register (included in this multiple property nomination by reference).

North Dakota Post Offices on the National Register of Historic Places:

1. Grand Forks (1905-06), 102 4th St. N. (32GF18)
2. Devils Lake (1908), 502 4th St. (32RY8)
3. Bismarck (1912-13), 304 E. Broadway (32BL24)
4. *Minot (1915), 100 1st. St., SW, (32WD15)
5. Williston (1915), 322 Main (32WI22)
6. *Mandan (1916), 108 1st. St. NW (32MN)
7. **Jamestown (1926-28), 222 1st. Ave. S., in pending historic district (32SN454)
8. *Fargo (1929-30), 655 1st. Ave. N., (32CS218)

* = contributing in existing historic districts

** = in pending historic district, has passed the State Review Board

Twelve additional federally-built post offices are being nominated in this multiple property nomination.

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North Dakota Post Offices Being Nominated in This Nomination:

Wahpeton	620 Dakota Avenue	(1914)
Valley City	149 N.E. Third Street	(1916)
Dickinson	15 E. First Street	(1916-17)
Grafton	506 S. Griggs Avenue	(1932)
Pembina	125 S. Cavalier Street	(1932)
Carrington	87 N. Ninth Avenue	(1932-33)
Oakes	611 Main Avenue	(1935)
Langdon	323 Eighth Avenue	(1937)
Hettinger	Lake Street at Adams Avenue	(1938)
New Rockford	821 N. First Avenue	(1939)
Lisbon	17 W. Fourth Avenue	(1939)
Rugby	205 S.E. Second Street	(1940)

SECTION E: FEDERAL POST OFFICE CONSTRUCTION IN NORTH DAKOTA, 1895-1940

This overview provides background information on post office construction for a National Register assessment of U.S.P.S.-owned facilities in the Central Region built in the years 1895-1946. Its immediate use is as background information for the reader of this report. It provides a national construction/ administrative/ architectural context for North Dakota and will be useful in assessing subsequent work leading to a state-wide multi-property nomination of postal facilities.

Currently, 1938 is used as a survey cutoff date by many of the eleven states in the study area because of the National Register's requirement that eligible buildings be normally at least 50 years old. Buildings constructed in the years 1938-1946 are, however, included in the overview because: 1) including another eight years should increase the useful life of this study; 2) the year 1946 is a good stopping place because of the dramatic changes in architecture after WWII (Stopping at 1946 allows this study to include virtually the entire "classical" period of 20th century post office architecture); and 3) the Keeper of the Register has determined that all 1933-43 post offices with murals which were painted under the auspices of Depression-era recovery programs are automatically eligible to the Register.

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The period 1895-1946 includes an incredible concentration of momentous events: depressions great and small; minor wars such as the Spanish-American War, Pershing's Mexican campaign, and the Russo-Japanese War; political upheavals such as the Russian Revolution and Spanish Civil War; two devastating world wars; the invention of the airplane, radio, and radar; the widespread development of the rail system; the growth virtually to modern standards, of electrification; the introduction of the atomic bomb, and so on. The litany is almost boundless.

Through all these changes, those charged with constructing postal facilities maintained an even strain. In post office construction there is only one major change between 1895 and 1946: the change from individual designs to standardized designs. Though the enterprise went through administrative changes and dramatic fluctuations in budget, staffing levels, and levels of building activity, the buildings it produced reflect national standards of design through most of the period and the use of classically-derived building designs through the whole period.

It is informative to view this entire group of buildings as a context within which any individual building can be placed. It is, in fact, difficult to assess individual buildings without an understanding of that overall context. A building that may seem eligible in its own right, for example, may be merely one of many of the same type in a state, and hence not eligible on a statewide level. This kind of judgment can only be made by studying the origins of the entire postal building stock from the period.

THE FEDERAL PRESENCE

In many locales, the postal facility is the only federal presence, and its architecture is the only way for the national government to articulate that presence in tangible form. The Post Office Department even predates the federal government, being a creation of the Continental Congress in 1775. So since colonial times, whether it was housed in a monumental facility or in the back of a grocery store, the post office has been part of the individual citizen's perception of the national government.

The builders of postal facilities have been keenly aware of this federal presence in their choices of building designs and materials. While a postal facility can be seen in strictly utilitarian terms, in the period 1895-1946, the builders of the facilities also saw their job as expressing

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the spirit of America. Hence individual facilities, even the smallest, have a certain dignity in their proportions and their siting, and great solidity.

A simple design element like the front steps, for example, can be used to express the American spirit. It would be unthinkable for a post office from this era to be built without front steps. These steps can be seen as a practical way to raise basements and let in light. They can also be seen as a way to communicate an elevated presence to the patron - a democratic presence to be sure. Requiring people to use ten or twelve steps is a modest statement compared to the effect of the grand stairs of Europe or even those of our own national capitol.

The classical designs which were used in this era of post office construction were well suited to the purpose. The floor plans are usually symmetrical, and the buildings massive and strong. These buildings communicate dignity, strength, stability, and accessibility. Their lobbies are important public spaces in many of the smaller towns they serve.

FUNCTIONAL TYPES

The postal function either stands alone or is combined with other federal functions (see individual nomination forms). The various combinations can be classified by type. They are:

1. Single-purpose post offices. These are found most often in smaller towns, and serve strictly as post offices or post office substations.
2. Combined post office and federal offices. It was common practice to combine offices for various federal agencies with the post office in regional centers. Often these buildings were the first and only federal building in town. These facilities are generally only slightly larger than single-purpose post offices.
3. Combined post office, federal offices, and federal court. In these facilities, usually constructed in major cities, the post office function was generally incidental to the overall purposes of the building. Federal courts often occupied most of the space, though other federal agencies were often included.
4. Large post office or annex. Constructed in the late 30s and the 40s, these buildings were situated in major metropolitan centers and handled enormous volumes of mail. Occasionally the buildings provided space for other federal agencies, but their primary use was as a post office.

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POSTAL BUILDING POLICY 1895-1946

The period 1895-1946 is divided by three major events: 1) the 1915 decision to standardize design. The policy of standardized design had profound effects on the U.S.P.S.-owned building stock of the Central Region; 2) the 1930 decision to use federal building activity as a public works program to assist in the recovery from the Depression. The public-works strategy had little effect on building design, but it did introduce a new element with National Register implications: the mural programs; and 3) America's entry into WWII. WWII virtually halted federal building activity in the period 1942-1946, and did not affect building design.

1895-1912

The years 1895-1912 encompass a swing in public policy and public spirit. The year 1895 falls in what has been called the Gilded Age-- the best recent example of the glories and evils of American individualism. In the late 90s William Randolph Hearst boasted of causing the Spanish-American War. The great capitalists routinely inflicted booms and busts on the economy. Social Darwinism, with its "survival of the fittest" ideas was in its heyday. By 1912, the culture was an entirely different spirit, expressed politically in Progressivism, and in the civic arena as the social welfare movements which began around the turn of the century. So dramatic was the change that all three candidates for President in 1912 were progressives to some extent. In federal building, individualism held out until 1912, principally because it was in the charge of a confirmed individualist, Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor, from 1897 through 1912. The operative enabling legislation through most of the period

1895-1912, the Tarsney Act of 1893, also encouraged individualism. Each building required a separate Congressional authorization. Each building was designed from scratch, usually within the monumental style that most Americans visualize when they think of a government building.

FUNDING OF FEDERAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, 1895-1912

The burst of building activity at the turn of the century was due in no small part to a change in Congressional authorization procedures. In 1902 came the passage of the first omnibus public buildings act. This legislation, which authorized 150 projects, was the first departure from the 19th century practice of individual authorizations for each building.

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Between June 1902 and March 1913, three Public Building Omnibus Acts were approved,¹ which authorized the Supervising Architect to produce facility plans. Funding for construction was not authorized by these Acts. At that time, construction funding had to be authorized by separate legislation.

The effects of the omnibus approach were immediate and dramatic. There were 399 buildings under Treasury control in 1899. By 1912 this figure had jumped to 1,126.² Over 200³ of the 727 buildings put up in the years 1900-1912 were post offices.

Another effect of the omnibus acts was political. The omnibus funding policy was a highly political instrument, and it resulted in political abuses. Federal buildings, including post offices, were often built according to strategies which would be most beneficial to Congressmen and Senators at election time. Buildings were sometimes put up where there was no need⁴ while other agencies with acute needs made do with rented quarters.

PUBLIC BUILDING STYLE 1895-1912

Before 1893, the style of public buildings was a an eclectic mix of such styles as Gothicism, French Second Empire, and Greek temple classicism. In 1893, however, an event occurred which would affect the style of postal buildings for the entire period under study: the Columbian Exposition.

The buildings constructed to house this exposition were an immensely popular and influential expression of the American Renaissance, which was a return to classical building styles. The Exposition was also responsible for the City Beautiful movement, which was an attempt to spread "higher" classical forms into even the smallest towns across the country. The revived classicism of 1893 was, however, quite different from the restraint of, say, Thomas Jefferson's Greek Revival design of the University of Virginia. The highest expression of the new classicism was the Beaux-Arts, a richly ornamented, fanciful mixture of classical elements and textures. The styles of the American Renaissance and the City Beautiful movement, including the Colonial Revival, the Neoclassical, and the Beaux-Arts, were all used in post office buildings in the period 1895-1946.

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Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor committed the federal building program to the classical tradition with a 1901 announcement of a return to the "classic style of architecture" for government buildings.⁵ The turn of the century is also a turning point in post office construction. The Treasury only built 16 post offices in the entire decade of the 1890s. In 1900 alone, 29 were put up.⁶

The classical emphasis was carried on into the post-1915 period of standardized design, and it continued until the WWII era. As a consequence, any cross section of this building stock, such as is found in the U.S.P.S. Central Region, contains primarily classical types, with a few buildings of Moderne design mixed in.

Though the Tarsney Act provided for contracting with private architects, Taylor had the Office of the Supervising Architect conduct an experiment in 1903- 1904, submitting projects under \$500,000 to competitive bids from architects in the vicinity of the project. Taylor concluded from the study that the projects were of insufficient scope to attract skilled architects. Accordingly, he kept the building of most small post offices in house after 1904.

The issue of using outside architects was politically charged. The American Institute of Architects had lobbied hard to get the Tarsney Act to authorize the Supervising Architect to use private architects, only to have Taylor decide on the basis of his study to go against the intent of the Act. There was no further attempt to authorize the use of outside architects until the mid-20s. North Dakota, in fact, is one state where not a single post office ever was designed by a consulting architect outside of the Office of Supervising Architect.

By 1912, the period of individual design, like the national commitment to individualism itself, was fading. The supreme tangible symbol of individualist capitalism, the Titanic, went to the bottom of the sea in 1912. The supreme abstract structure of individualist capitalism, Standard Oil, was broken up by the U.S. Supreme Court in the same year. A new social awareness was everywhere, and individualism was in retreat. Against the tide, Taylor stayed true to his individualist school. He kept the policy of individual design intact through 1912.

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Testifying before a House committee on public building expenditures in 1912, Taylor set down his philosophy for the record. Without bothering to construct a logical argument, he described government buildings as "single propositions - that is, they are not similar; there is no similarity between them and other constructions. Each is individual to itself."⁸ Congress was not persuaded. The government was in fact fed up with the inefficiency and high cost of the old policy. When Taylor's tenure ended there was immediate action to change the policy. The new Supervising Architect for the years 1913 and 1914 was Oscar Wenderoth. Wenderoth continued the Taylor philosophy of individual designs while Congress devised a new system of construction.

Three Post Offices in North Dakota designed during Taylor's tenure as Supervising Architect are currently on the National Register: Grand Forks, Devils Lake, and the Bismarck (304 E. Broadway). Facilities designed under Wenderoth's term are located in: Wahpeton, Minot, and Williston, the latter two of which are already on the National Register.

1913-1915: THE TRANSITION FROM INDIVIDUAL TO STANDARDIZED DESIGN

Wenderoth's first year in office, 1913, saw important innovations. An omnibus Public Buildings Act specified that no new post office buildings would be constructed for towns with postal receipts under \$10,000.⁹ This requirement established a floor below which politics could not, in theory, go. In the same year, Congress established the Public Buildings Commission, which had a mandate to develop a scheme for standardizing the methods of sizing and costing buildings. Congress repealed the Tarsney Act in 1914, and used recommendations from the Commission to devise a new system of federal construction policies, which went into effect in 1915.

The Public Buildings Commission was chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury, William McAdoo. Its report was submitted to Congress in 1914, and its implemented recommendations became the new federal building policy. The commission focused on issues that can be grouped under two headings: appropriateness and cost. The Commission's recommendation on appropriateness can be summarized by the idea that monumental buildings were not appropriate in small communities. In smaller towns, they recommended buildings that were "less costly, but durable, simple and architecturally desirable".¹⁰ The Commission's recommendations on cost were a call for the "practical standardization" of buildings to control costs. The Commission recommended, and the Congress implemented, a

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classification system to enforce standardization. A side effect of the new system was that it imposed a rational decision-making structure on a process that had in the past been subject to extensive political abuse.

THE MCADOO SYSTEM

For post offices, the device to accomplish standardization was a four-class system of classification that has been known as the McAdoo Classification System ever since. The heart of the classification is the level of annual postal receipts and the "character" of the building (i.e., the costliness of the materials in the building). The system uses the terms "first class" and "second class" to refer to the size of city populations.

The McAdoo Classification System

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; improvements on 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 grades 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; fireproof throughout; 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.

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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 satisfying 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 businessman would consider a reasonable investment in a small town.

The new classification system worked. In 1916, Mr. Wetmore, the Supervising Architect, reported that a particular building type was standardized for 30 communities, and that 27 of them were contracted for, demonstrating that the new standardized system speeded construction and cut costs. He did, however, note that costs still varied according to local markets and locations, so that the costs for these similar buildings ranged from \$38,000 to \$57,000.

The McAdoo System was so successful that it remains virtually intact today. Wetmore also noted that the new classification system resulted in "equitable treatment", which was no small accomplishment in matters as politically heated as post office construction.

The McAdoo Classification System is an important consideration in assessing individual facilities. A Class D post office, for example, may be an excellent example of design but be built of very plain materials. In assessing such a building, it is wise to bear in mind that the materials are plain because of specific design criteria and not because of bad design. Another way the McAdoo system may influence National Register assessments is that it is a ready-made typology. A nomination of the best

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Class D post office in a state, for example, can be based on a comparison of all the buildings from that class. North Dakota has only one Class D post office in the state: Oakes.

After the brief transition period from 1912 to 1915, federal building policy changed to one of standardized design with the size and the materials of individual buildings determined by the McAdoo system. Two of the earliest post offices built under the McAdoo system were at Dickinson, North Dakota, and Ishpeming, Michigan.¹² Post Offices at Valley City and Mandan are the other two North Dakota examples of this transitional period from individual to more standardized cost-effective designs.

1915-1926

Though the new policy of standardized design was successfully launched, its practical effect was limited by WWI. There were few new projects during the war when federal construction¹³ was halted, though a number of post office buildings were completed. Given the usual time lapse from authorization to dedication, it is safe to conclude that these buildings were in progress when America entered the war.

After the war, no new federal buildings were authorized until the Public Buildings Act of 1926. There were three noteworthy provisions in the 1926 legislation. The first was that the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General were directed to conduct a nationwide survey of the need for postal facilities and to submit an annual report to Congress specifying the estimated costs and proposed locations of post offices to be built. This policy established a master waiting list which lent a modicum of equity to decisions on which post offices were to get new buildings. During the Depression, an informal quota system of one post office per year per Congressional district imposed another kind of equity. This is not to suggest for a moment, however, that these decisions have not been subject to political influence. The McAdoo system moderated the influence of politics, but it did not eliminate it. The only post offices begun and completed in North Dakota during the late 1920s were located in Jamestown and Fargo.

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The second significant provision was that the Supervising Architect could go outside to outstanding private architects in "special cases." All projects had been handled in house since the repeal of the Tarsney Act in 1913.¹⁴ Despite the Tarsney Act's authorization of outside contracting for architects, James Knox Taylor's decision in 1904 had effectively barred private architects from federal construction projects since 1904. This provision in the 1926 legislation was to prove extremely valuable when the national government undertook to mitigate the catastrophic effects of the Depression on American architecture firms.

The third, unsurprising, commitment of the authors of the Act of 1926 was that, in post office construction, standardization was to continue.¹⁵ Three Post Offices in North Dakota reflect the Act of 1926. All are smaller, more standardized, and were designed under James A. Wetmore's tenure as Supervising Architect in Colonial Revival style: Grafton, Pembina, and Carrington.

1926-33

As the Act of 1926 had mandated, the "interdepartmental commission" composed of the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General surveyed the need for post offices across the nation. The commission submitted a report to Congress in 1927 which contained the following recommendations:

- o That the \$100 million allocation in the 1926 Act be doubled.
- o That at least two new buildings be constructed per state. And,
- o That no building should be constructed where postal receipts were less than \$10,000.¹⁶

The commission's report of 1929 included similar recommendations that each state should get a uniform number of post offices and that a post office must take in at least \$10,000 in receipts to qualify for a building. Though the 1926 Act was the primary source of funding through the 30s, measures taken to cope with the Depression greatly altered the federal building program.

The first step was taken in 1930, when Congress amended the Act of 1926 to authorize increase funding. In 1931, President Hoover directed Secretary of the Treasury Mellon to expedite the federal building program.¹⁷

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Roosevelt's New Deal administration continued to use federal building as a recovery program, and in 1933 formed the Public Works Administration to give formal structure to the effort. Begun under Hoover and continued under Roosevelt, the Act of 1926 provided the legislative foundation for the recovery program in federal building.

1933-1942

The public building program was greatly expanded during the 30s. Three times as many post offices were constructed during the decade as were put up in the preceding 50 years.¹⁸ The surge in activity prompted a dramatic enlargement of the Office of the Supervising Architect and many contracts with private architects. Taylor's earlier finding that first-class architects were not available for small projects was no longer relevant because nearly half the architecture firms in the nation failed in the first year of the Depression.¹⁹ People of great ability leaped to join the Supervising Architect's staff and win postal building contracts. In 1931 alone, the Supervising Architect's Office added 267 staff, increasing its complement to 800. Contracts²⁰ with 133 private architectural firms were also awarded that year.

The use of private architects authorized by the 1926 Act ended with a government order of June 29, 1934 that federal buildings should in future be designed by the staff of the Office of the Supervising Architect. North Dakota has no post offices designed by outside architects because the state did not receive authorization for new facilities between 1932 when Grafton, Pembina, and Carrington were begun and the end of 1934 when the small Class D Oakes facility was under construction.

In the building programs, as in recovery programs generally, there was a Depression-fueled sense of urgency. The increased emphasis on speed made the 1915 commitment to standardized design utterly essential. Every drawing that did not have to be produced moved a project faster. Anything that could be done to simplify ornamentation helped. Avoiding construction glitches caused by design changes or misdrawn plans helped as well. Overall the building program's goals were to put up buildings as

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fast as possible and employ as many people as possible for the smallest number of dollars possible. Fortunately, the standardized design policy was well suited to this high-speed process.

The postal building programs of the Depression years saw no changes in design policy, but there were two new developments: 1) multiple funding sources and 2) decoration of building interiors with art works by artists paid through government relief efforts. The art programs also had multiple funding sources.

In step with the national trend, six of the 21 federally-funded post offices in North Dakota were built between 1935 and 1940: Oakes, Langdon, Hettinger, New Rockford, Lisbon, and Rugby. Oakes was the first North Dakota facility completed under the Public Works Branch.

POSTAL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING SOURCES, 1933-1939

In addition to its basic funding authorization under the Act of 1926, Congress authorized a number of New Deal programs which were used to fund construction of post offices. As of 1933, the Office of the Supervising Architect had a new administrative home: the Procurement Branch of the Division of Public Works, through which it received money appropriated under the Act of 1926. Additional funds were available through the Public Works Administration (PWA), also organized in 1933, and many other agencies charged with relief.

The PWA built 406 post offices in the years from 1933, when it was organized, and 1939, when it was eliminated. This number represents almost an eighth of the total of 3,174 PWA construction projects.²¹ In addition, funds for post office construction came from the Relief Program authorized by the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of July 21, 1932; the Emergency Construction Program under the Appropriation Act of June 1934; and the Building Program for the District of Columbia, authorized by the Act of 1926.²²

Although Depression-era post offices are often referred to as "WPA" buildings, no post offices were constructed with Works Progress Administration (WPA) money. WPA funds were, however, used in the artists' programs which decorated post offices from this era.

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ARTISTS' PROGRAMS FUNDING SOURCES, 1933-1943

The New Deal Federal Art Projects were intended to alleviate unemployment among artists and to decorate the federal buildings produced in the years 1933-42. Three programs were administered through the Treasury Department, and one through the WPA. They were:

1. The Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), whose duration was December 1933 to June 1934. This emergency relief program was applied without a strict relief test. It employed some 3,700 artists and cost \$1.3 million.
2. The Section of Painting and Sculpture (later the Section of Fine Arts) of the Treasury. This was the primary project for murals and sculpture in post offices. Its duration was from October 1934 to the year 1943. It cost \$2.5 million and let 1400 contracts.
3. Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP). Its duration was from July 1935 to the year 1939. Set up by a funding allocation from the WPA to the Treasury Department, the project was administered by the Section of Fine Arts. The project employed 446 people at a cost of \$833,784.
4. WPA/Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP). Its duration was from August 1935 to the year 1943. The WPA/FAP was a part of a larger program called Federal Project No. 1, which included the WPA drama, music, and writing projects. It costs \$35 million and employed over 4,000 people.²³

The Section of Fine Arts was primarily responsible for the murals and sculpture found in most post office buildings today. Commissions were awarded on the basis of anonymous competitions without reference to the artists' economic need. In other words, the program was not strictly speaking, a relief program. It began in October, 1934 and the final commission was completed in 1943, by which time 1400 contracts had been awarded at a total cost of around \$2,571,000. Funds for artwork in post offices was based on 1% of the total appropriation for land acquisition and building construction of a new facility. In effect, this meant that the majority of artist commissions ranged between \$500-\$850 per new facility.

The principal artifacts from the artists' programs to be found in U.S.P.S. Central Region's Post offices are murals. There may, less frequently, be sculptures. In North Dakota, only three post offices have murals. One facility had sculpture, but it has been moved to a facility in South Dakota.

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The style of the post office murals is literally representational. Their stylistic resemblance to Soviet Realism is uncanny. Artists were encouraged to visit the locale where they were going to paint and to choose subjects that were significant to the town or region. The artists' choices are sometimes comprehensible, but they are just as likely to be confounding. A comprehensible example of this literal approach can be found in the mural in the Plymouth, Wisconsin post office, which depicts the making of cheese. This subject is an appropriate choice for a town which calls itself the Cheese Capitol of the World. The mural in the Lake Geneva, Wisconsin post office is an example of the confounding type. The snow-covered farm scene in the Lake Geneva facility appears to have no connection to the locale. The story behind the painting is that the artist wanted the postal patrons of this resort town to see an off-season scene.

North Dakota Post Offices With Murals/Sculpture

On the assumption that post offices which are agency owned with murals are normally eligible to the National Register under Section 106 regardless of date of construction, we have compiled the following short list of three post office buildings in North Dakota with murals. All are still owned by the U.S. Postal Service. No post offices in North Dakota have sculpture. However, Lisbon originally had a piece of New Deal sculpture in the lobby. It measured 7' 6" x 2' 9" and was entitled "Family Group." It was relocated to Sioux Falls, South Dakota prior to 1982.

<u>Post Office</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date Completed</u>
Langdon	Leo Beaulaurier	\$700	1939
New Rockford	Eduard B. Ulreich	\$640	1940
Rugby	Kenneth Callahan	\$850	1943
sculpture removed:			
Lisbon	James L. Hansen	unknown	1942 ²⁴

It was the practice of the Fine Arts Section during the New Deal to reserve one tenth of the cost of the building for a mural during the 1930s and early 1940s in order to put unemployed artists and sculptors to work. This is easily verified. In a check of Langdon, for example, Beaulaurier was paid \$700 for his mural. The Cavalier County Republican reported on July 2, 1936 (page 1) that the new post office was estimated to cost \$70,000.

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Langdon: The Leo Beaulaurier mural measures 12 x 5 feet and is located over the postmaster's door. It depicts a meeting on horseback between three Indian men and a scout from a wagon train. It is executed in tawny golds and medium browns under a blue sky. According to postal service information, it was entitled "Indians Demanding Toll from Wagon Train for Crossing Their Land."²⁵ The subject of this mural is unusual, because artists normally spent time searching for a local theme before picking the subject of their work. In this case, mistook the Red River trails for the Santa Fe Trail thinking wagon trains travelled over the former. We found no mention of the completion of the work in the local newspaper in 1940. According to his son, James Beaulaurier, of Great Falls, Montana, the artist died in 1984. He was born in Great Falls in 1911, attended the University of Notre Dame and the Art Center School in Los Angeles. He did two other post office murals in addition to Langdon. One in Billings, Montana, and another in one other unknown small town, according to his son.²⁶

New Rockford: The Eduard Buk Ulreich mural measures 12 x 7 feet and is also located in the lobby over the postmaster's door. The title of this mural is "Advance Guard of the West." The composition is fanciful, more abstract than representational, and depicts a grouping of Indians holding spears and in headdress on rearing horses. The predominant colors are delicate blues and pinks against a tan earth. Explaining his choice of subject, Ulreich explained that the group was Dakota Indians from which the state took its name: "I feel that Americans should become more familiar with the beauty and character of the red man. Because the white man wished to justify their greed for land, the Indian, unfairly, was often portrayed in an unfavorable light."²⁷ Ulreich was born in Hungary-Austria in 1889 and grew up in Kansas City, receiving formal training at the city's Art Institute. During the 1930s and 1940s, he painted many Western subjects like that at New Rockford. In addition to the mural for the New Rockford Post Office, he painted murals for post offices in Columbia, Missouri; Tallahassee, Florida; and Concord, North Carolina.²⁸

Rugby: The mural in Rugby's post office is also located over the postmaster's door in the lobby. It measures 12' 1 1/2" by 4' 2" and is entitled "Rugby, the Geographical Center of North America." It depicts a sketchy map with Rugby at the center and is flanked on the left with a tall figure holding a chock of wheat and on the right by another man standing next to a cow. A check of a partial list of New Deal art and artists compiled by the General Services Administration does not yield other post office murals done by the artist, Kenneth Callahan.²⁹

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Lisbon: While the James L. Hansen lobby sculpture is now longer at the Lisbon post office, we did find mention that Hansen had done post office sculptures in Burlingame and Los Angeles, California.³⁰ When the Postal Service disposes of a facility, not the case in this instance, it either relocates the art in a new post office or donates the art to a historical society or museum. The Hansen sculpture still may be in the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, post office. It is not clear why this sculpture was removed from the Lisbon Post Office lobby.

1939-1946

The years 1939-1946 include no changes of significance to the study. Post office construction continued until 1942, when the American entry into WWII virtually halted all activity. The few facilities completed in the years 1942-1946 were completions of old projects. The style of design remained the same, as did the Supervising Architect's commitment to standardized design.

THE SUPERVISING ARCHITECT'S OFFICE

During the period under study, federal buildings were constructed by the Office of the Supervising Architect. From 1895 to 1933, the Office reported to the Treasury Department. In 1933, the Treasury Department was reorganized, and layers of bureaucracy added. The Supervising Architect office was shifted to the Procurement Branch of the Division of Public Works of the Treasury.

The list below³¹ identifies the Supervising Architects and Acting Supervising Architects between 1895-1947.

Heads of the Office of the Supervising Architect, 1895-1947

William Martin Aiken	1895-1897
James Knox Taylor	1898-1912
James A. Wetmore (Acting)	1912-1913
Oscar Wenderoth	1913-1915
James A. Wetmore (Acting)	1915-1934
Louis A. Simon	1935-1941
George Howe	1942
Murray M. Davis (Acting)	1942
George Howe	1943-45
Jesse E. Stanton	1946-47

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The period under study includes the most significant change affecting post office design in modern times: the switch from a policy of individual designs for federal buildings to a policy of standardized design. This shift is reflected in the changes in Supervising Architects. James Knox Taylor was Supervising Architect from 1898 to 1912. Taylor was a brilliant architect in his own right, and a firm believer in the old system of individual design. Many of the designs from the Taylor years are fully ornamented "high art" designs that look quite ornate in comparison with later standardized designs. After Taylor, the Supervising Architect was more of an administrator, and was often not an architect by training. James A. Wetmore (1912-13; 1915-34) was educated as a lawyer. Louis A. Simon (1933-1941) was trained as an engineer.

In the early 20s the Office was divided into a Technical and an Administrative branch. The Technical Branch included a computing division which costed and accounted for projects; a drafting division; a structural division; a mechanical engineering division; and a repairs division. The drafting division had a superintendent who greatly influenced design practices.

With the reorganization of the early 30s, the Office no longer reported to the Secretary of the Treasury. In 1933 it became part of the Public Building Branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department. The Office was restructured into four divisions under the Supervising Architect, Supervising Engineer, the Chairman of the Board of Award, and a Chief of the Legal Section. By the early 30s the transition from a small office under a dominant architect to what was in effect a large, bureaucratized architecture firm was complete.

In 1939, the office became part of the Federal Works Agency, Public Buildings Administration. Then, beginning in 1948 after World War II, it came under the General Services Administration, Public Buildings Administration.

POLITICS AND POST OFFICES

Politics are important in federal construction policy, but the influence of national politics is not readily discernible in assessing individual properties. For the purposes of National Register assessment, the politics of post office construction are effectively studied at the local level. Local sources such as newspapers are valuable tools to identify local political activities which impart National Register historical significance under the theme Politics/Government to a particular facility.

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Often, the construction of a post office was preceded by the activities of an ad hoc local group formed to lobby a state Congressional delegation for a post office or a new building. This group usually gathered the information which provided the rationale for a building, and it often consulted on site selection as well. Local groups would enlist the aid of the state's Congressional Delegation and often worked closely through years of correspondence with the U.S. Post Office Department or the Office of Supervising Architect. A case in point is Grafton where an attempt was made locally to influence and cost and design of the new post office. Some of these groups started as Commercial Clubs and became Chambers of Commerce or Businessmen's Associations. This type of historical development alone does not impart historical significance, but it is this type of association explored in making National Register assessments.

Since the local political activities are individual to each new post office facility, this theme is explored in depth on individual nomination forms.

LOCATION STRATEGIES

It is possible in assessing many pre-1946 post office buildings to see evidence of the agency's location policy. Up to around 1930, the principal criterion for selecting a new post office location was its proximity to a railroad depot. This strategy was designed to keep cartage costs between depot and postal facility to a minimum. In the 20s the location strategy gradually changed in recognition of the new dominance of car and truck traffic. From the 30s on, a desirable location was usually a block or two off the main thoroughfare, so that the facility was conveniently located and patrons could come and go by car without disrupting private commerce. Corner lots were desirable. They were easy to find, and gave good access to the facility's loading dock. This strategy has been so consistently applied that it easy to find post offices built after the late 20s even in a strange small town. It is usually a matter of finding the most important intersection in town and driving the streets and avenues a block or two away from that intersection looking for an American flag flying from a pole.

With the possible exception of Wahpeton, Valley City, and Dickinson post offices, the remaining nine facilities in this nomination were built after automobiles and trucks were well established in the American fabric. They are all located within a few blocks of the main commercial intersection.

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NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES: 1890s-1940s

The architectural styles found in North Dakota represent national styles. This is not surprising because the post offices were designed by agencies of the federal government and, so, followed national tastes in architecture. Nationally, the most popular styles for post office design from the 1890s to the 1940s included: Richardsonian Romanesque, Beaux Arts, Neo-Classical, Renaissance Revival, Art Deco and Moderne, International, and the sub-groups of the period revival styles popular during the 1920s up to the early 1940s (including design elements and massing associated with or borrowed from Colonial Revival, Greek Revival, Federal, Georgian styles, and Spanish Revival).

There has been no study of the distribution of major post offices styles in the United States. Nor is it clear that there was a deliberate policy on the part of the Office of Supervising Architect to choose designs to match regional tastes or types of construction. It would be interesting to know, for example, if the Spanish Revival style is distributed more heavily in the west and southwest and whether the northern tiers of states have more Colonial Revival style post offices.

POST OFFICE ARCHITECTURE IN NORTH DAKOTA

Several general statements can be made about post office architecture in North Dakota. Generally, there is a correlation between the architectural style and the date of construction in the twentieth century. This is especially true after the McAdoo system was put into effect in 1913. An additional reason is that 1912 marks the end of Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor's administration--Taylor having been known for his individual designs. The most individual designs for post office and federal building construction are found in the period before 1900. One need only examine the architecture of the 1893 Fargo Post Office (razed), the only pre-1900 facility built in North Dakota.

During the period from the mid-1890s to the late 'teens, most federal buildings and post offices were in one of three predominant styles: Neo-Classical, Renaissance Revival, and Colonial Revival --something of "variations on a theme." Aside from stylistic differences, these structures were usually executed in cut ashlar, brick not having come into general use for post office buildings until around 1916-17. Chart I is our stylistic typology for North Dakota.

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Architectural historians sometimes differ in their names for the revival architecture popular from 1890-1940. It is useful to think of this as a time of Period Revivals. In the beginning of this period, buildings were more "architecturally correct" in details, massing, roof lines, and proportion than they were as the revival movement became more attenuated in the years just before World War II.

What is true of residential architecture is also true of government buildings. These are the years when the "Colonial Revival" style became popular. The Carrington post office (built in 1932-33) is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style in a small facility. Like all facilities by this time, the rear roof over the workroom is flat, but the front portion is side-gabled and the detailing is Colonial Revival. The other two Colonial Revival post offices in North Dakota are located in Grafton and Pembina, both dating from 1932 and designed when James Wetmore was Supervising Architect.

The term "Colonial Revival" can also be used generically to denote the whole period revival era in the early part of this century. Viewed this way, the Federal, Georgian, and Greek Revival become sub-sets of the Colonial Revival period. The Period Revival movement in architecture is partly an architectural reaction to Nativism, itself a conservative reaction to the huge influx of eastern and southern European immigrants who came to the United States between 1885-1925, as well as to our national centennial birthday, and partly a social yearning for an agrarian, simpler, and mostly northern European past. The Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 also shaped our national tastes. The popularity of the Federal, Georgian, and Greek Revival styles after 1900 was a social yearning to escape to our national "sacred time of origins." Examples of the Greek Revival, Federal, and Georgian styles were not employed in North Dakota post office design.

The Period Revival effectively ended with World War II. But from the mid-1930s to 1942, the Supervising Architect's office designed most of the post offices in existence today. These were often cookie-cutter and assembly line designs, especially after 1933. The need for new facilities was enormous and the money was allocated in unprecedented amounts. Blueprints of post offices frequently suggest that the Supervising Architect's office would design a basic structure and add interchangeable exterior details and interior finishes. This practice began in the 1920s and became increasingly popular in the 1930s.

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By around 1935, a distinctly different stylistic sub-set of the Period Revival era began to be seen. It is very useful to distinguish this as "Starved Classicism," a term used by Lois Craig and her staff in The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in the United States Government Building. North Dakota has several good, if standard, examples all built between 1935-40. Typical examples of this style are the Langdon and Hettinger post offices, built in 1937 and 1938, respectively. They have the symmetry and formalism of the Colonial Revival, but stylistic details are strictly limited to the front entrances and windows. In general, "Starved Classical" buildings have flat brick walls up to the parapet coping, no cornice, flat roofs, and detailing only at the front entrance and windows. The other Starved Classical post offices in the state are located at Oakes, New Rockford, Lisbon, and Rugby.

AGE OF EXTANT NORTH DAKOTA POST OFFICES:

Only 21 post offices were built by the Federal Government in North Dakota before 1940. Of these, no currently-owned postal service facilities in the state were built before 1900. In fact, the first and only post office and courthouse built in the nineteenth century was in Fargo (1893-97) and has been razed. Ten, or 50%, of the twentieth century facilities were built between 1929-40. Chart I lists the known ages and architectural styles of North Dakota federally-built post offices and may be referred to in the course of the following discussion.

Most of the post offices in the state are located in leased facilities. Only eleven U.S.P.S.-owned facilities have been built since 1950. None were assessed as eligible. They are located in: Mandan (1960s); Bismarck (1964), Sawyer (1966), Minto (1967), Cooperstown (1968), Devils Lake (1977), Cando (1977), Jamestown (1985), Wahpeton (1988), and Fargo-Prairiewood Station (1988).

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Summary of pre-1945 Post Offices by Age

The breakdown of facilities by age follows for the 21 pre-1940 federally-built post offices. Note: based on construction date:

before 1900	1 (razed)
1900-1909	2
1910-1919	7
1920-29	2
1930-39	8
1940	1

NINETEENTH CENTURY POSTAL FACILITIES

There was only one facility in North Dakota built during the nineteenth century. It was the Fargo Post Office and Court House, built between 1893-97 after the Fargo fire which destroyed much of downtown Fargo. It was located at the northwest corner of First Avenue and Roberts Street across First to the north of the present Gardner Hotel. This building was individually-designed and completed under the administration of William Martin Aiken in 1897 in Renaissance Revival style. It was three stories tall under a hipped red tile roof and was dominated by a three story round tower above a semi-circular portico on the south side. The exterior walls were constructed of buff brick with Bedford limestone and terra cotta trim. Windows were pedimented and round arched, some on the east facade grouped and surrounded by stone molding above a shallow first story loggia. The tower appears to have been removed sometime between 1906 and the early 1920s. This building was probably razed some time after the new Federal Building was completed in 1930.

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CHART I

<u>Facility</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Style</u>
Fargo (razed)	Cass	1893-97	Renaissance Revival
*Grand Forks	Grand Forks	1905-06	Classical Revival
*Devils Lake.	Ramsey	1908	Neo Classical
*Bismarck	Burleigh	1912-13	Renaissance Revival
+Wahpeton	Richland	1914	Renaissance Revival
*Minot	Ward	1915	Renaissance Revival
*Williston	Williams	1915	Neo Classical
+Valley City	Barnes	1916	Classical Revival
*Mandan	Morton	1916	Classsical Revival
+Dickinson	Stark	1916-17	Renaissance Revival
**Jamestown	Stutsman	1926-28	Renaissance Revival
*Fargo	Cass	1929-30	Neo Classical
Grafton	Walsh	1932	Colonial Revival
Pembina	Pembina	1932	Colonial Revival
+Carrington	Foster	1932-33	Colonial Revival
+Oakes	Dickey	1935	Starved Classicism
+Langdon	Cavalier	1937	Starved Classicism
Hettinger	Adams	1938	Starved Classicism
New Rockford	Eddy	1939	Starved Classicism
+Lisbon	Ransom	1939	Starved Classicism
Rugby	Pierce	1940	Starved Classicism

* denotes: currently listed on the National Register

+ denotes: included in this multiple property nomination

** denotes: in pending National Register historic district

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type federally-built post offices in North Dakota

II. Description

See continuation sheets.

III. Significance

See continuation sheets

IV. Registration Requirements

See continuation sheets

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet for additional property types
N/A

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

See continuation sheets.

See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency

- Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND

I. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Norene Roberts, President
organization Historical Research, Inc. date July, 1989
street & number 7800 Tessman Drive telephone (612) 560-4348
city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55445

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Multiple Property: U.S. Post Offices in North Dakota, 1900-1940

SECTION F. II. DESCRIPTION

This nomination is for 12 United States Post Offices distributed throughout the State of North Dakota. Twelve are owned by the United States Postal Service and the Wahpeton facility has recently been sold to a private party. Individual descriptions are detailed on the individual nomination forms. This section includes general information common to or typical of all nominated properties.

Owners:

U.S.P.S.-owned post offices:

c/o Mr. Brad Meador, Real Estate Specialist
Chicago Facilities Center, Real Estate Branch
United States Postal Service
222 S. Riverside Plaza Suite 2000
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6155
(312) 765-5306

Wahpeton Post Office:

c/o Jerry L. and Sandra A. Meide
923 4th Avenue S.
Wahpeton, North Dakota 58075
(701) 642-2641 (Meide Construction Co.)

Description:

The buildings in this nomination vary in size, functional sub-type, and style, but provide a 40 year chronology of a single building type: federally-constructed North Dakota Post Offices, 1900-1940. Materials include facings of cut ashlar or brick-with-stone-trim. Type of construction is overwhelmingly reinforced or poured concrete. They are scattered over a large geographical area throughout the State of North Dakota. As a group, they share the aesthetic conservatism characteristic of many buildings erected by the United States Government in the early half of the 20th century. Stylistically, the twelve properties in this nomination all were designed in one of the national styles popular during the period. In North Dakota, the styles are limited to Classical Revival, Renaissance Revival, Colonial Revival, and what Lois Craig has termed "Starved Classicism."

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Three of the twelve post offices in this nomination were built between 1914-17: Wahpeton, Valley City, and Dickinson. They are associated with the Second Dakota Boom in North Dakota and the omnibus funding acts which themselves were partly the result of political "pork-barreling" as well as actual need. Nine were constructed between 1932-1940 and constitute the sum total of federally-built post offices constructed in the state during these eight years: Grafton, Pembina, Carrington, Oakes, Langdon, Hettinger, New Rockford, Lisbon, and Rugby. They are associated with federal relief programs which were the government's response to the economic hardships of the Great Depression.

Physically, the post offices from the 1930s are smaller facilities than the ones built between 1914-16 and earlier or later ones built between 1900-1930 which are currently listed on the National Register. Floor plans tend to be more consistent from facility to facility after 1930. This reflects the McAdoo system which sought to bring order, consistency, and cost savings to post office construction, during the growth of post office construction as relief projects during the Depression.

Functionally, some of these facilities accommodated other federal offices, such as Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, or Navy and Army recruiting offices, but all were primarily built as post offices. Other governmental offices were incidental to the primary function of housing the post office operations. Smaller facilities, especially Class D post offices, were built solely as a post office facility. The only Class D post office in North Dakota is located in Oakes.

Locationally, the post 1930 facilities were all built within a few blocks of the major commercial intersection in each city and usually on corner lots. It was the preference of the Post Office Department to locate post offices on corner lots for visibility and ease of parking. A formula was developed of parking square footage to square footage of building in order to plan parking. This policy necessitated finding lots on corners for visibility with enough space for street and off-street parking. Congested main thoroughfares in towns did not lend themselves to ease of parking for patrons with quick errands. Earlier decades, especially when the post offices still relied mainly on trains to deliver the mail, the controlling locational policy was to cut down on the cost of drayage by locating facilities near the depots or rail lines. By the mid-teens, however, this preference was beginning to wane and the three post offices built between

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1914-17 represent a transitional period in post office location. The overwhelming majority of post offices in this nomination are located in county seats and within second class cities, which in North Dakota constitute major distribution nodes for the surrounding rural hinterland. State-wide, the post offices in this nomination, together with the eight post offices already entered on the National Register in North Dakota suggest a pattern of fairly even geographical and demographical spread.

All post offices in this nomination are within legal city limits and are located within boundaries of legal lots, blocks, and additions historically associated with the buildings. None have been moved. Within the legal boundary descriptions there are no additional buildings associated with any of the properties, because it was not Post Office Department policy to construct ancillary structures on the properties.

On a state level, the 12 post offices in this nomination are associated with local economic conditions and state and national ones. The post offices in this nomination are associated with the Second Dakota Boom, 1898-1917; political lobbying on a local level which gained a new facility in a particular place at the expense of another place; and with the federal relief programs after 1929.

All facilities in this nomination are in excellent condition, well-maintained and cared-for. Integrity is high. Exceptions to original architectural integrity are largely the result of either changing postal services offered over the ensuing years since construction, increased demand for services, or compliance with legislation on energy conservation or other federal codes. The most common alterations involving services are: removal of the postal savings windows and finance department areas in the lobbies and workrooms. Common alterations involving increased demand for services are: additional lock boxes in the lobby, side or rear additions to the workroom, or additions to the rear loading dock. Many energy retrofitting alterations were accomplished or begun during the Carter Administration in the 1970s. Common recent changes of this nature include: removal of skylights in the workrooms, removal of original double-hung windows and replacement with other types of fixed lights; and new lobby vestibules and new entrance doors. Very few post offices still have original lighting in the lobby and workrooms: original fixtures have often been replaced with fluorescents. These are the most common changes to the facilities. As with other areas of this description section, building-specific alterations are detailed on each of the individual nominations.

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SECTION F. 3 SIGNIFICANCE:

As a group, the 12 federally-constructed post offices in this multiple property nomination has significance under criteria A, and C in Architecture, Politics/Government, Community Planning, Economics and Art. None of the individual North Dakota post offices possesses every type of significance. The majority are associated with the first four areas of significance. Buildings in this nomination are significant on two levels: state and local. The 12 buildings in this nomination (main post offices in: Wahpeton, Valley City, Dickinson, Grafton, Pembina, Carrington, Oakes, Langdon, Hettinger, New Rockford, Lisbon, and Rugby) comprise the remaining extant post office buildings constructed by the federal government in the State of North Dakota prior to the end of 1940 not yet nominated to the National Register. Of 21 such facilities in the state, one has been razed, eight are currently on the National Register and the remaining 12 are being nominated. Taken as a group, these buildings complete the chronology of the development of the post office as a building type in North Dakota up to the end of 1940. They reflect an aesthetic conservatism and several major national styles characteristic of buildings erected by the United States Government. The buildings in the smaller towns were the first, and for many years the only federal buildings and were usually one of the two or three most monumental and imposing structures in town. Three contain lobby murals commissioned by the federal art project, and are iconographically connected to the ideology and aesthetics of the New Deal. In the area of Economics, three are associated with the Second Dakota Boom (1898-1917) and nine are associated with the New Deal's public works programs, and thus associated with major federal legislation and buildings programs. The individual buildings have importance in the history of the Postal Service in their regions; they all provided the first permanent home for the post office in their respective cities. Several owe their existence to political lobbying on a local level.

Integrity requires integrity of design, materials, association, and location. All 12 buildings in this nomination meet the integrity requirements for eligibility.

Specific areas of significance are outlined below, fully developed in the Historic Context, and specifically discussed in each individual nomination form. It is based on the National Park Service's "How to Apply National Register Criteria to Post Offices, by Beth Grosvenor Boland, National Register of Historic Places," NPS Bulletin 13 (Fall, 1984).

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (local and state levels):

1. Criterion C: On the local level, a post office may be the best example of the Renaissance Revival or Classical Revival design in a city, or the only example of reinforced concrete construction. Stylistically, it may also be the most imposing, monumental, or sophisticated building in town. What holds true on a local level may also hold true on a state level. The architecture of the post office may have influenced or reflected the tastes of the community, state, or nation. All buildings in this nomination embody the distinctive characteristics of the property type, period, method of construction, and some represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Wahpeton and Dickinson post offices are two of six Renaissance Revival facilities in the state. Grafton, Pembina, and Carrington reflect the nationally-popular Colonial Revival style. Oakes, Langdon, Hettinger, New Rockford, Lisbon, and Carrington reflect the "Starved Classicism" popular in post office design between 1932-1940. A post office also may have state significance because it is a first or early prototype of a standardized design, as in the case with the Dickinson Post Office, one of the earliest post offices built under William McAdoo's 1915 classification system for Federal buildings.

2. Criterion A: The architectural signifiers and symbols discussed above carry a burden of meaning and associative values beyond their ostensible aesthetic meanings. The post office designs in this nomination constitute a record of the Post Office Department's and the Federal Government's self-image, and of the image which the Federal government wished to project locally. In most cases these post offices are only local record of the Federal presence. All 12 facilities embody qualities which make them eligible under Criterion A in the area of architecture.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT (local and state levels):

1. Criterion A: A post office may be eligible on a local and state level for its associations with the accelerated public works programs of the 1930s (the nine post offices built between 1932-1940), or as an early example of a multi-purpose federal building in a state (Dickinson). A post office may have served as an important center of governmental administration in a city or region, or be the only local

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example of a federal building in a city, as is the case with most of the buildings in this nomination. All of these post offices qualify as significant on the state level because so few federally-constructed post offices were built in North Dakota (21) before the end of 1940. The usual pattern in North Dakota has been to lease post office facilities.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (local and state levels):

1. Criterion A: In no case in this nomination was a post office eligible because it played an active role in a town's development, but some did act as a passive record of that development. The location of the post office did not influence the subsequent physical development of the central business district in a particular town, but the location of several facilities in this nomination were determined by the proximity of other local government buildings, either as a result of actions by a local group or as a possible attempt on the part of postal officials to locate post offices in a particular section of a city. The Grafton Post Office, for example, was located on lots donated by the city as a result of a particularly active local group working with the city council.

2. Criterion C: The new post office may have shared architecturally in a particularly predominant local style and appears to have been so designed as to blend with the architecture of other city or county buildings constructed during a period of local growth.

ECONOMICS (local and state levels):

1. Criterion A: A post office built during the relief programs of the 1930s may have contributed to the local economy during the Depression because of the Federal government's policy encouraging the hiring of local excavators, horse and wagon teams, day labor, quarrymen, electricians, and other small businesses, where possible. On a state level, new post office construction may reflect particular periods in state economic and population growth. Three facilities in this nomination reflect the latter part of the booming economic period known as the Second Dakota Boom, 1898-1917: Wahpeton, Valley City, and Dickinson.

ART (local and state levels):

1. Criterion A (local and state levels): Post Office murals in lobbies were, in many towns, the only examples of the Treasury

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Department's fine arts program. More so than even the architecture of the buildings, these murals represent examples of the work of trained artists in public spaces making them often the most publicly visible. The iconographic and iconological content of the murals may also have local significance, often drawing as they did from local or regional themes for their content. For example, the theme of the Rugby Post Office mural is the geographical center of North America, Rugby's claim to fame. Three post offices in this nomination contain the only three murals painted for post office lobbies in the state: Langdon, New Rockford, and Rugby, making them significant on a state level as examples of federally-funded New Deal art.

2. Criterion C (local and state levels): The general quality of post office murals can be described as competent. Nevertheless, a mural may have local significance as possessing "high artistic values" if it is particularly accomplished, or the town in which it is located is particularly poor in public art. Rugby, New Rockford, and Langdon, all small towns, are not particularly rich in public art, making the post office murals relatively important in terms of their artistic values on a local level.

The Rugby Post Office is, by a few months, just under 50 years old, having been completed in December, 1940. It shares the associative, historical, architectural and artistic qualities of the other 11 nominated properties in this group. It is exceptionally significant at the state level as one of only three post offices in the State of North Dakota to contain a New Deal lobby mural. It is properly placed in this nomination because it has none of the associative qualities or physical characteristics of the next group of federally-funded post offices built between the early 1960s and 1988 after a post office construction hiatus in North Dakota of some 23 years during the 1940s and 1950s.

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SECTION F.4. REGISTRATION:

Intensive Identification and Evaluation:

All 21 federally-constructed post offices in North Dakota built before the end of 1940 were identified, field checked, and evaluated in the course of this study. The first facility in Fargo (1893) has been razed. The remaining 20 are still standing. Eight are currently listed on the National Register. The remaining 12 are being nominated in this multiple property nomination. Therefore, all buildings of the property type "post offices" constructed in North Dakota during the years 1900-1940, are known and have been studied in the course of Identification and Evaluation.

Integrity:

All properties in this nomination retain a high level of historic and architectural integrity. All retain integrity of setting and location: all sit on their original locations and retain original set-backs from the streets. No alterations have been made which would confuse a viewer about the original function or architectural style of any of the post offices in this nomination. None of the buildings have applied materials over the original exterior wall surfaces, roof shapes remain original, entrances and windows are in their original locations. Masonry openings for windows and doors have not been partially infilled with masonry. This made the evaluation of threshold for integrity an easy determination. All 12 properties were evaluated as having met a level of integrity sufficiently high to reflect the period of significance.

Naturally, alterations vary from property to property. Some facilities have had replaced the original multi-paned double-hung windows with one-over-one lights filling the original masonry openings. The Grafton Post Office has had the most egregious window replacement: solid metal panels have been installed in the upper lights of the windows with glass in the lower half of the original window openings. However, the remainder of the exterior is intact and the facility retains over-all excellent integrity.

Integrity of the structure and function of the post offices in this nomination is extremely high. Generally, there have been few alterations to the significant interior space, the lobbies, or to the exteriors. Common minor exterior alterations shared by this property type are new glass and metal front doors and small extensions to the rear loading docks, not visible or intrusive from the main facades. The only facility

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with a large and visible addition is the Dickinson Post Office. It has a one story east addition, 80 x 53 feet, built in 1965, but added in such a way as to preserve the basic integrity of the original two-story structure. A January 13, 1988 E. O 11593 (85-174) Determination of Eligibility Notification for the Dickinson Post Office found that, "Despite alteration, it retains its essential historic integrity."

Period of Significance:

In each of the 12 facilities in this nomination, the period of significance includes the date of construction and the years of continuous service to the local community and surrounding rural area. For the 12 post offices as a group, the period of significance is 1914-1940. In all but one case for purposes of Registration, the period of significance ends at 1939 because of the 50-year mark for National Register properties. In the case of Rugby, the period of significance begins and ends in 1940, because of delays caused by clearing the title to the parcels on which the post office was built. Consequently, the Rugby Post Office was not completed and opened until early December, 1940. Rugby proves to be an exception to the 50-year National Register rule just barely. However, it shares the associations, context, architecture and themes of the other facilities in this nomination. In addition, it is one of only three post offices in North Dakota to have a New Deal mural in the lobby, which contributes to its exceptional significance. After the construction of the Rugby Post Office, no additional post offices were built in North Dakota until the early 1960s, making Rugby the last federally-constructed facility to share the historic context.

Significance:

The 12 post offices in this nomination are significant in ways discussed in the Significance statement above. As a group, they provide a chronology of the development of the North Dakota post office as a property type. None of the individual post offices possesses every type of significance shared by the group as a whole, as demonstrated by the individual nomination forms.

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SECTION G. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS:

This multiple property nomination is based on several previous studies of federally-owned North Dakota post offices completed as Section 106 projects for the U.S.P.S. in recent years, as well as a Phase I study of the current contract between the Field Real Estate office in Chicago and Historical Research, Inc., Minneapolis. This nomination is Phase II of the Historical Research, Inc. contract to identify, evaluate and register National Register of Historic Places-eligible post offices in North Dakota.

Historical Research, Inc. is located at 7800 Tessman Drive, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55445-2734, (612) 560-4348. The following individuals completed the Historical Research, Inc. contract:

Dr. Norene A. Roberts
(art and architectural history, U.S., regional, North Dakota history)

Dr. Joe D. Roberts
(cultural resource management, U.S. and architectural history)

Historical Research, Inc. was a subcontractor to Winsor/Faricy Architects, Inc., St. Paul, on a large three-year term contract with the Chicago Real Estate Office, U. S. Postal Service, of which the North Dakota contract was a separate work order.

Identification:

The Identification phase of federally-built North Dakota Post Offices covered a literature and records search and the field work on North Dakota Post Offices not previously surveyed. Of particular importance to this nomination were previous North Dakota post office Section 106 intensive assessments completed since 1983 for the St. Paul FREBO, whose records are now in the U.S.P.S. Real Estate Regional Office in Chicago. The Jamestown Federal Building and surrounding commercial area was completed by Kurt Schweigert of Cultural Research & Management, Inc. in 1986. Historical Research, Inc. conducted intensive assessments of post offices in Wahpeton, Valley City, Dickinson, Carrington, Oakes, Langdon, and Lisbon between 1983-86. U.S.P.S. Form 4902 (essentially an agency-designed National Register assessment form) was available on these facilities and most had had formal Determinations of Eligibility or S.H.P.O. Section 106 reviews.

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In addition to agency Form 4902s for North Dakota post offices, we had computer lists of all federally-owned post offices in North Dakota, dates of occupation, county, street addresses, etc.; G.S.A. lists of New Deal art (sculpture and murals) in state post offices, and a historic list of previous U.S.P.S. assessments from John Sorenson's office in Postal Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The collections available in Bismarck, North Dakota, at the State Historical Society included files in the Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation (SHPO) and information in general State Historical Society holdings. The Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation office had four types of files which we checked during the records search. They were: 1) the Section 106 files containing material on postal facilities in North Dakota which had been the subject of federal agency action over the years (organized under name of county); 2) the state-wide inventory files organized by name of counties and then under township, range, and section. 3) the files containing individual sites in North Dakota listed on the National Register and the files containing districts on the National Register (as opposed to individual sites); and 4) manuscript files, containing survey reports from cities in North Dakota which have been subjected to intensive or reconnaissance surveys.

The state-wide inventory files, known as the North Dakota Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, contain all the inventoried sites and cities townships in North Dakota since the state program began. In addition, the North Dakota office has survey reports on file detailing the findings of each survey in the program. These reports contain a wealth of information, such as: properties surveyed, properties already on the National Register in a particular county, a brief county overview history, and potentially eligible properties and districts. They are valuable in determining what postal facilities might be in a potential or listed National Register district, as well as whether a particular inventoried facility has been assessed previously as potentially eligible--even though it may not have had a Section 106 review. We made copies of the available records and reports in this office.

The following collections were used at the State Historical Society:
--Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation files (general)
--Section 106 correspondence on post offices (including 4902 forms)
--State survey reports from reconnaissance and intensive standing structures in pertinent communities of North Dakota

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- National Register nomination forms on federal buildings and post offices in North Dakota
- National Register district nominations which included post office structures
- Historic Photograph collection
- Map Collection (Sanborn and other fire insurance maps)
- Reference Library material
- North Dakota newspapers on pertinent cities

In addition, we sent out questionnaires to postmasters of federally-owned post offices on the U.S.P.S. ownership list to determine basic information about facility date of construction, alterations, presence of a mural or sculpture, availability of blueprints, etc. This was done prior to field work on the unsurveyed facilities.

Evaluation:

The purpose of the literature and records search was two-fold: to assist with the field work portion of Identification and to gather information useful to developing the Historical Context and related themes for the Evaluation phase. We developed files on both the general history of post offices in North Dakota and on specific postal facilities which had not yet been inventoried, were not already entered on the National Register, or which had been sold to private parties or razed. In order to evaluate in the areas of Economics and Community Planning, we gathered information and photographed public buildings in each town in our study, such as county courthouses, libraries, city halls, and fire department so that post offices could be evaluated in the local contexts.

The Identification and Evaluation phases overlapped with the field work. The literature and records search determined that 32 federally-built post offices had been constructed in North Dakota between 1893-1988. A total of 21 had been constructed in the state between 1893-1940, of which the first, in Fargo, had been razed. Intensive-level field work was conducted on the following five pre-1941 facilities: Grafton, Hettinger, Pembina, New Rockford, and Rugby. These facilities were photographed, surveyed, and intensively researched for local, state-wide, and national significance. All 21 pre-1941 post offices, including previously surveyed or on the National Register, were re-field visited and photographed to identify any recent alterations together with major county and city governmental buildings in each city.

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Evaluation determined that no post-1960 facilities were eligible to the National Register. No North Dakota facilities had been built in the state between 1940-1960 because federal construction was halted during WWII and the post-war policy was to lease new facilities from private owners. The eleven post offices constructed after 1960 were assessed for unusual significance as being under 50 years old, but were not found to be eligible for inclusion in this nomination.

As part of the Evaluation phase, we identified any post offices or federal buildings not on the computer print-out of agency-owned facilities. Wahpeton has been recently sold and is now owned by a private party and the first federal post office and courthouse in Fargo has been razed. For each of these we made a file folder and entered the gathered material therein, including all newspaper articles on post office construction in each community and historic photographs. There is now one set of updated files which combine the information from the Postal Service with the information from the state preservation office and includes the material we gathered. These files will be ultimately housed in the U.S.P.S. Real Estate office, Facilities Service Center in Chicago to be used for future planning activities by the Postal Service.

With the Identification and a preliminary Evaluation completed, we wrote the final Historic Context essay. Under the three-year term contract between Winsor/Farcy Architects, Inc. of St. Paul and the U.S.P.S., we had previously completed an overview of federal post office construction from 1895-1945. This document was used as the basis for developing the Historic Context for this multiple property nomination. Historical information on North Dakota post offices as a group emerged from general literature and specific facilities in this study, particularly newspaper accounts of the construction of each new post office. The significant themes and National Register criteria emerged from this part of the Evaluation phase. The Historic Context of this nomination was completed and applied to each facility in the study. The results was a determination that the 12 remaining post offices built in North Dakota and completed by the end of 1940 should be included in this multiple property nomination. This assessment included working with the staff of the Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation (SHPO) in Bismarck throughout the Identification and Evaluation phases.

Registration:

This multiple property nomination of federally-constructed pre-1941 North Dakota post offices comprises the Registration phase.

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