

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

167-4820-0008

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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Russell United States Post Office

other names/site number Same

### 2. Location

street & number 135 West Sixth Street

not for publication

city, town Russell

vicinity

state Kansas

code

KS

county Russell

code 167

zip code 67665

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	_____ Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Kenneth Bowen State Historic Preservation Officer March 8, 1989  
Signature of certifying official Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

20th Century Revival: Classical  
Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls Brick  
roof Asphalt  
other Stone: limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Russell United States Post Office (c. 1939-1940) is located at 135 West Sixth in Russell, Russell County, Kansas (pop. 5,427). The one story, ridge hipped roof, red brick building has a southern orientation. The building measures approximately seventy feet by seventy feet. An arched double door accentuated with a classical surround pierces the center of the building's facade. Steps lead up to the doorway. Two pairs of large, multi-paned windows surmounted by flat, limestone lintels and underscored by flat, limestone sills flank the doorway. Similar fenestration is employed on the lesser elevations. A limestone watertable delineates the building's foundation and a wooden classical entablature delineates the building's eave line. A wooden cupola marks the center of the roof. This post office is an example of the smaller class C or D standardized design type that was repeated throughout the country during the 1930s and 1940s.

The mural, "Wheat Workers" was installed on the west wall of the Russell Post Office lobby above the post master's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller class C and D type post offices. "Wheat Workers" is an oil on canvas mural that depicts farm laborers cutting and shocking wheat by hand, oil derricks stand in the background. Six workers labor in the foreground on a day so hot that the sweat rolls off their brows and soaks their clothes. Bundles of wheat are stacked in the foreground waiting to be loaded onto wagons that will take the wheat to threshing machines. The expanse of the rolling, golden wheat field seems unending but several groups of oil derricks suddenly emerge, marking the near horizon. Schweig employs a primary palette of gold and blue for the mural.

The mural was installed on November 22, 1940. It measured 14' by 5' before installation and is surmounted by a cornice. Schweig recommended using bread or kneaded rubber to clean the mural. In 1980 the mural was cleaned and restored by Kansas artist Trudy Furney. It is in good condition.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

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A varnished, wooden vestibule projects into the lobby, cutting off some view of the mural. This is a traditional design feature found in most of the post offices included in this nomination. The original marble wainscotting and terrazzo floor tiles are retained. The postmaster's door and the bulletin boards retain their varnished wood surrounds. The original hanging lights have been replaced with almost flush mounted fluorescent lights.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Art	1940	1940
Politics/Government	1940	1940
Social History	1940	1940

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Schweig, Martyl: Artist  
Simon, Louis: Supervising Architect  
Busboom and Rauh: Builders

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Russell United States Post Office (c. 1939-1940) is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources nomination at the local and state levels of significance under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Treasury Department's Section program and for the mural that it contains. The mural, "Wheat Workers", was painted by St. Louis, Missouri artist Martyl Schweig (1918- ?) in 1940. Because the mural is less than fifty years old, criteria consideration G, which allows for exceptional significance in the case of properties achieving significance within the past fifty years, is also a factor. The National Register has identified post offices containing Section artwork as being exceptionally significant if they retain integrity from their period of significance.

"Wheat Workers" is an oil on canvas mural that depicts farm laborers cutting and shocking wheat by hand, oil derricks stand in the background. Six workers labor in the foreground on a day so hot that the sweat rolls off their brows and soaks their clothes. Bundles of wheat are stacked in the foreground waiting to be loaded onto wagons that will take the wheat to threshing machines. The expanse of the rolling, golden wheat field seems unending but several groups of oil derricks suddenly emerge, marking the near horizon. Schweig employs a primary palette of gold and blue for the mural. This scene is rooted to the local economy of the Russell region and through its portrayal is elevated to represent broad aspects of the American tradition. Schweig's wheat workers are nondescript in their appearance but seem slightly larger than life, they represent the common aspects of all agricultural workers and the dignity therein. "Wheat Workers" is representative of the regional social realism that was encouraged under the Section program.

The extent of community involvement in the development of the subject material and presentation of the mural is not clear in the Russell case. Schweig received the commission as a result of an honorable mention in the Forty-Eight State Competition. Schweig received the contract

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   2  

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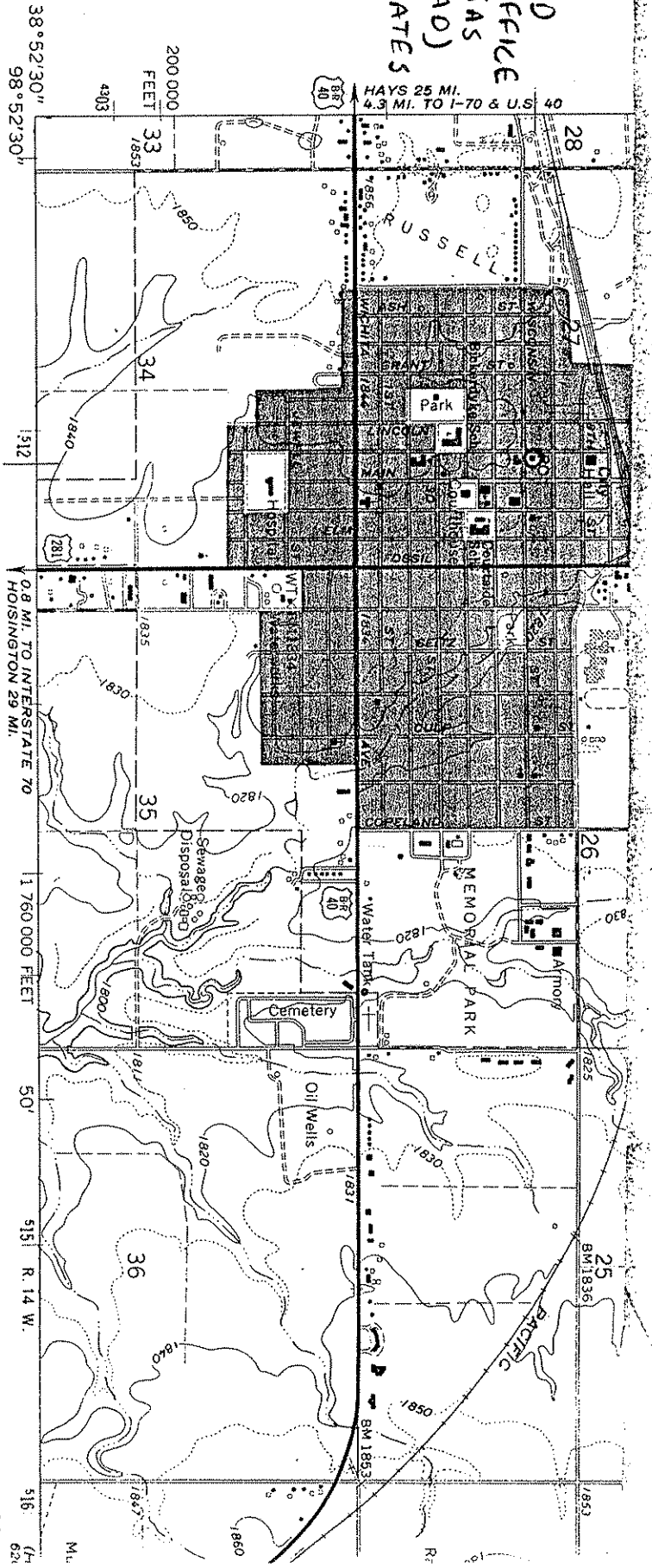
for the mural on January 15, 1940 and installed the mural on November 22, 1940. "Wheat Workers" was installed on the west wall of the lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. It measured 14' by 5' before installation and is surmounted by a cornice. Following the preliminary planning, sketches, and cartoons, Schweig spent two weeks actually painting the mural and returned to Russell for the installation. She received \$800 for the commission. The Russell Post Office is an example of one of the many smaller class C or D type post offices that received Section artwork in Kansas.

Schweig was born in St. Louis, Missouri and graduated from Washington University. She began her study of art as a young girl and by 1940 had studied under Arnold Blanch, Boardman Robinson, and Charles Hawthorne. Today her paintings are found in many public and private collections. Schweig is also responsible for the Section mural in the St. Genevieve, Missouri Post Office.

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



RUSSELL UNITED STATES POST OFFICE (RUSSELL, KANSAS) (RUSSELL QUAD) UTM COORDINATES 4 512120 4 304545

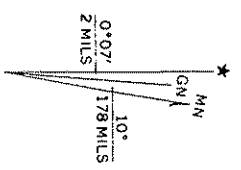


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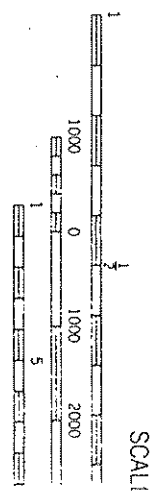
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey as part of the Department of the Interior program for the development of the Missouri River Basin Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965. Field checked 1967  
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Kansas coordinate system, north zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 14, shown in blue

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation  
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



UTM GRID AND 1967 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY, DENVER AND BY THE STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, TOPOGRAPHIC MAP A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP