

Iowa Site Inventory Form

State Historic Preservation Office

(January 2016)

State Inventory Number: 44-00786 New Supplemental

9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number: _____

Non-extant Year: _____

Read the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions carefully, to ensure accuracy and completeness before completing this form. The instructions are available on our website.

• Property Name

A) Historic name: United States Post Office

B) Other names: 2023 downtown survey # DT-059

• Location

A) Street address: 200 N. Jefferson St

B) City or town: Mount Pleasant (Vicinity) County: Henry

C) Legal description:

Rural: Township Name: _____ Township No.: _____ Range No.: _____ Section: _____ Quarter: _____ of Quarter: _____

Urban: Subdivision: Original Block(s): 19 Lot(s): Lot 4 - also S 5' of Lot 3

• Classification

A) Property category: *Check only one*

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

B) Number of resources (within property):

<i>If eligible property, enter number of:</i>		<i>If non-eligible property, enter number of:</i>	
Contributing	Noncontributing		
<u>1</u>	Buildings	<u>—</u>	Buildings
<u>—</u>	Sites	<u>—</u>	Sites
<u>—</u>	Structures	<u>—</u>	Structures
<u>—</u>	Objects	<u>—</u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	Total	<u>—</u>	Total

C) For properties listed in the National Register:

National Register status: Listed De-listed NHL NPS DOE

D) For properties within a historic district:

- Property contributes to a National Register or local certified historic district.
- Property contributes to a potential historic district, based on professional historic/architectural survey and evaluation.
- Property *does not* contribute to the historic district in which it is located.

Historic district name: Mt Pleasant Downtown Historic District Historic district site inventory number: 44-02280

E) Name of related project report or multiple property study, if applicable:

MPD title Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of Downtown Mt Pleasant, Iowa Historical Architectural Data Base # HADB-02986

• Function or Use *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

A) Historic functions

04F: GOVERNMENT / post office

B) Current functions

04F: GOVERNMENT / post office

• Description *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

A) Architectural classification

10: Mid and Late 20th Century Building Types

B) Materials

Foundation (visible exterior): 04C: Limestone

Walls (visible exterior): 03: Brick

Roof: 15C: Rubber

Other: _____

C) Narrative description *SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED*

Site Number: 44-00786 Address: 200 N. Jefferson City: Mt Pleasant County: IA District Number: 44-02280

• **Statement of Significance**

A) Applicable National Register Criteria: *Mark your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria*

- Criterion A: Property is associated with significant events. Yes No More research recommended
Criterion B: Property is associated with the lives of significant persons. Yes No More research recommended
Criterion C: Property has distinctive architectural characteristics. Yes No More research recommended
Criterion D: Property yields significant information in archaeology/history. Yes No More research recommended

B) Special criteria considerations: *Mark any special considerations; leave blank if none*

- A: Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. E: A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
 B: Removed from its original location. F: A commemorative property.
 C: A birthplace or grave. G: Property less than 50 years of age or
 D: A cemetery. achieved significance within the past 50 years.

C) Areas of significance

Enter categories from instructions

05: Commerce

02: Architecture

D) Period(s) of significance

E) Significant dates

Construction date

1936 *check if circa or estimated date*
Other dates, including renovations

F) Significant person

Complete if Criterion B is marked above

G) Cultural affiliation

Complete if Criterion D is marked above

H) Architect/Builder

Architect

Wyatt C. Hedrick, Fort Worth, TX

Builder/contractor

Barnes Construction, Logansport, IN

I) Narrative statement of significance **SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED**

• **Bibliography** *See continuation sheets for the list research sources used in preparing this form*

• **Geographic Data** *Optional UTM references* *See continuation sheet for additional UTM or comments*

Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD	Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD
1				2			
3				4			

• **Form Preparation**

Name and Title: Rebecca Lawin McCarley / research by Pat White Date: May 3, 2024
Organization/firm: SPARK Consulting / Mt Pleasant HPC E-mail: sparkconsulting@octaspark.com
Street address: 1630 Park Ave SE Telephone: 319-200-9767
City or Town: Cedar Rapids State: IA Zip code: 52403

• **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION** *Submit the following items with the completed form*

A) For all properties, attach the following, as specified in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions:

- 1. Map** of property's location within the community.
- 2. Glossy color 4x6 photos labeled** on back with property/building name, address, date taken, view shown, and unique photo number.
- 3. Photo key showing each photo number on a map and/or floor plan, using arrows next to each photo number to indicate the location and directional view of each photograph.**
- 4. Site plan** of buildings/structures on site, identifying boundaries, public roads, and building/structure footprints.

B) For State Historic Tax Credit Part 1 Applications, historic districts and farmsteads, and barns:

See lists of special requirements and attachments in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

The SHPO has reviewed the Site Inventory and concurs with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility:

- Yes No More research recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

SHPO authorized signature: _____ Date: _____

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7. Narrative Description

The United States Post Office in Mt Pleasant is a one-story buff brick building with limestone trim built in 1936. The building reflects the Stripped Classical style, popular in the 1930s for governmental buildings. It faces N. Jefferson St to the west. The building is symmetrical, with a centered double-door entry with tall transom windows and tall sidelights to either side on the west elevation. The original double doors have been replaced by a modern 36" door for ADA accessibility, and a ramp has been added to the north of the stone steps that lead up to the entry. The steps are flanked by pillar lights on brick piers. Paired windows found in the bays to either side of the center entrance bay are the same style as the sidelights, with a two-light transom, tall eight-light wood window, and lower granite panel. The window and entry openings are framed with curved brick on both sides. A limestone band / water table extends across the building under the openings. A limestone band with simplified Classical detail spans the width of the building at the top of the openings, with a short parapet/frieze and simple limestone coping/cornice. The individual metal letter signage remains centered on the frieze. The cornerstone is located at the south end of the west elevation, including the date of 1935 and names of associated people. The south elevation is likewise symmetrical, with the limestone bands extending across this side below the windows, above the windows, and across the top of the parapet. This side has four sets of paired windows of the same style as the façade, each with a two-light transom, tall eight-light wood window, and lower granite panel. Stairs lead to the basement level on this side from the west corner, with basement windows providing light for the lower level rooms. The north elevation reflects the same symmetry, details, and style of windows as the south elevation. An exterior brick chimney is located in the center of this side. The stairs extend down to the basement level from the south corner. The rear/east elevation is likewise symmetrical, with the same limestone bands continuing across this elevation. The center section has the rear loading dock, which has been partially enclosed. The center section consists of the rear double-door entrance, with a double-hung window to either side. The bays to either side of the center section have the same tall, paired windows as the other sides of the building, with a two-light transom, tall eight-light wood window, and lower granite panel.

While interior assessments were not included as part of the survey project, it is noted that the interior of the post office retains its original materials and general layout. The octagonal metal grills between the lobby and work areas remain intact, and the three canvas paintings/murals remain in their original locations. A glass wall with two glass doors has been added on the interior to create a secured lobby area separated from the mailbox section.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The United States Post Office appears to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building within the potential Mount Pleasant Downtown Historic District. The building contributes to the history of the downtown. Its construction in 1936, along with the new municipal building, spurred additional improvements throughout downtown. This building is the first that was constructed specifically for use as a post office in Mt Pleasant, with the post office moving between several buildings over the previous 80 years. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a historic commercial building in a historic district.

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Based on research and evaluation conducted to date, this building appears to be potentially individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Further research and assessment of the interior features and modifications would be required for a full evaluation of the individual eligibility of the building.

Developmental history of property

This 1-story, brick post office building located at 200 N Jefferson Street was built in 1936.

The 1886, 1892 and 1899 Sanborn fire insurance maps show a large 2-story, frame structure at the east end of lot 4, with a one-story addition to the west on the 1892 and 1899 maps. The large frame structure is a livery and feed establishment, with an address of 208 W Madison. In 1899, the address of the west end of lot 4 is indicated as 200-202 N Jefferson.

On August 30, 1904, James C. Whitford sold lot 4 of block 19 to W.B. Seeley, Trustee, for \$5,500. And on May 15, 1906, W.B. Seeley, Trustee, transfers lot 3 and lot 4 of block 19 to the Y.M.C.A. of Mt. Pleasant (Transfer Book "C", page 24). The 1909 Sanborn fire insurance map shows a very large, 3-story, brick building on lot 4 and the south part of lot 3 to the north. The building is used for the Y.M.C.A., with offices on the 1st floor, manual training on the 2nd floor, and lodge rooms on the 3rd floor. The address of the Y.M.C.A. building is 200-202 N Jefferson.

In October 1918, W.B. Seeley and the Y.M.C.A. sold lot 3 and lot 4 of block 19 to the Independent School District of Mt. Pleasant (Transfer Book "1", page 22). The 1920 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for this large, 3-story, brick building as the previous map. The building is now used for the Mt. Pleasant High School and the address is 200-202 N Jefferson. The high school building was destroyed by fire on the morning of February 23, 1932. A new high school was built on E. Madison, dedicated in April 1933 (*Mount Pleasant News*, February 23, 1932, page 1; Jaynes 1976: 129). Thus, the remnants of the earlier building, particularly the high stone foundation, remained on this site. With approval for the construction of the new municipal building at 220 W. Monroe with PWA funding, Bedford stone from the Y.M.C.A. was salvaged in 1935 and sent to Indiana for recutting for use in the new building (HCBC 1982: 20).

Construction of a new post office in Mt Pleasant was completed as a federal Public Works Agency project. Planning for the new building began in August 1934, with consideration of five sites in town. The former high school / Seeley Y.M.C.A. site was one of the three sites under serious consideration, along with the sites of the Auditorium Theater and Ross Garage on E. Monroe St. The initial budget of \$72,000 was cut to \$40,000 for the site and building, with a smaller post office then planned for Mt Pleasant in comparison with the larger ones recently built at Fairfield and Washington during "lush" times. The new building would be a dignified structure consisting of one story and a basement. There would be less cut stone and granite than originally envisioned, as well as no expensive bronze doors. The construction was part of the programs to provide work for the unemployed using funds of the Public Works Agency. It would be built by the Treasury department and occupied by the post office. There were approximately 600 new post offices to be built in the next year, with one in nearly every congressional district ("The Bystander's Notes," *Mt Pleasant News*, August 14, 1934, 1).

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Plans and specifications for the new federal building were received in April 1935 for the files of the custodian of the property, who was the local postmaster (C.S. Rogers). The plans called for a one-story structure and basement, measuring 55 feet by 72 feet. The main entrance would face Jefferson with a mailing platform on the east on the alley. The boiler, fuel rooms, and the chimney would be on the north side of the building. The face brick would range in color from buff to light tan with pink or autumn tones, and it would be sand finished with flush points. The building would have buff limestone trim. The main entry would be approached up a series of five gray granite steps with granite risers, with two light towers of granite with chromium globes. A sign in raised metal letters stating "United States Post Office, Mount Pleasant, Iowa" would be above the entry. The interior would be lit with four great windows on each side, as well as a large ornamental window at the main entrance. There would also be four windows at rear with two large skylights over the work rooms. Concrete stairs to basement entrance would be located at the southeast corner and northeast corner. An 85 by 50-foot area at the rear of the building would be provided for parking of post office vehicles. A flag would be above the main entrance, which would lead into a handsome lobby (14' by 42'). The lobby would have polished marble wainscotting of a rose color, quartered sawed white oak with silver gray finished for mill work, and terrazzo floor. A private office for the postmaster would be to the right (12' by 18'), with doors to the lobby and work room. It would also have a private toilet room and windows on south and west. There would be four service windows for customers, which would be dedicated to registered mail and postal savings, money orders and C.O.D.s, stamps, and general delivery. There would also be a large window for parcel post. The financial department would have a tight wire caged room (12 by 18) and a large vault. The remainder of the ground floor would be dedicated to the mailing division, which included city and rural carriers. The basement had a fuel room in northeast corner and the heating plant to the west and also on north side. Firemen could enter the basement from a special entrance at the northeast corner. There was a "swing" room for clerks and carriers in the southeast corner, including toilets, lockers, seats, and lounges. Two office rooms were in the southwest corner to be used for Farm Bureau and other federal service. A storage room was in the center of the basement. Bids were received in Washington D.C. in June ("Plans for New Post Office Building Received," *Mt Pleasant News*, April 13, 1935, 1).

On June 5, 1935, the Independent School District of Mt. Pleasant sold lot 4 and the S 5' of lot 3 to the United States of America (Transfer Book "1", page 22). In early July, postmaster Charles S. Rogers received word that all bids on the post office were rejected, with a new call for bids expected to be issued ("All Bids on Post Office Are Rejected," *Mt Pleasant News*, July 6, 1935, 1). The new bids were opened in Washington D.C. on September 25, with a new set of plans and specifications prepared ("Will Call For Post Office Bids Again," *Mt Pleasant News*, August 22, 1935, 1). The low bid for the post office was submitted by James I. Barnes of Logansport, IN for \$45,540 in September ("Post Office Bid, \$45,540," *Mt Pleasant News*, September 25, 1935, 1). Thus, the Barnes Construction Company of Logansport, IN was awarded the contract for construction of the post office in Mt Pleasant.

Initial plans for construction of the post office proceeded in October 1935. The resident superintendent was anticipated to be here at the end of the month, planning to make his official headquarters at the Harlan Hotel (immediately south of the site). About a dozen more families were expected to move to town for the construction, with local labor expected to also be used. The Treasury Department inspection would be coordinated with inspections in Osceola and Waverly where post offices were under construction. The total cost would be around \$55,000, not including furniture and fixtures. The contractor was allowed a year to complete under the contract but expected to be done before the next October ("Work on Post Office Begins This Month," *Mt Pleasant News*, October 12, 1935, 1). On October 31, F.G.

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Drompp, office manager of Barnes Construction Company of Logansport, IN, arrived in town to look over the site of the new post office, with construction expected to start by November 10 and continue through the winter ("The Bystander's Notes," *Mt Pleasant News*, October 31, 1935, 2). In late November 1935, Raymond Brown, construction engineer of the Treasury Department, arrived in town. He was in charge of supervising the post office construction, as well as supervising the new post office at Carthage, IL. He would make his headquarters in Mt Pleasant for the next year ("The Bystander's Notes," *Mt Pleasant News*, November 24, 1935, 2). The cornerstone of the building reads:

Henry Morgenthau, Jr – Secretary of the Treasury
James A. Farley – Postmaster General
Louis A. Simon – Supervising Architect
Neal A. Melick – Supervising Engineer
Wyatt C. Hedrick – Architect
1935

Louis A. Simon was the supervising architect for the U.S. Treasury Department from 1934 to 1939 and then of the Public Buildings Branch of the Federal Works Agency until 1941. Wyatt C. Hedrick was an architect based in Fort Worth, Texas, where he opened his own office in 1925 after working for Sanguinet & Staats. He was noted to work significantly in the Stripped Classical style, with his designs representing a wide range of historical and modern styles. With its extensive university and government work, his firm was once the third largest in the United States. He designed post offices in other states as well.

In May 1936, Raymond Brown addressed the misapprehension on the quality of the brick in the exterior walls, noting that it met the specifications of the department with the structure and texture what the architects desired. It was a sand finished and would get a handsome weathered appearance found in old brick buildings. The dark creamed color brick contrasted well with the limestone trim. The structure was about one-third completed, about two months behind schedule due to weather conditions mostly ("The Bystander's Notes," *Mt Pleasant News*, May 4, 1936, 2).

On Saturday, August 29, 1936, post office employees were preparing to move from their location on the south side of the square to the new post office building later in the evening and on Sunday. The new post office building was finished except for some minor work ("Preparing to Move to New Building," *Mt Pleasant News*, August 29, 1936, 1). Public inspection of the new post office building was held on Saturday, with all mail moved to the new location to open on Monday August 31, 1936 ("Mail Distributed at New Building," *Mt Pleasant News*, August 31, 1936, 1).

The 1938 city directory for Mt Pleasant notes the new post office. The federal building was completed for \$60,000, and it served several rural mail routes and a long star route as well as the town of Mt Pleasant (Groce 1938: 5).

In November 1939, the murals by Mrs. Dorothea Tomlinson Marquis were installed in the post office. She was a niece of George Tomlinson of Mt Pleasant. They were eight sided and sized to match the grill openings in the post office, with chromium moldings used. The three murals represented life in Mt Pleasant in the early years. On the north wall, in the direction of the college, was a mural representing life on the campus of Iowa Wesleyan in the early days, entitled "College." On the south wall, towards downtown, was a mural showing the first court house built in the state in 1839, entitled "Town." The buildings depicted were authentic to buildings on the square in an early day. The third mural, on the west

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wall, shows agricultural life near Mt Pleasant in the early days, entitled "Farm." Mrs. Marquis had previously painted a mural for the Hoisington, KS, post office. She was listed in *Who's Who Among American Artists and Leading Women of American Art* ("New Murals in Post Office," *Mt Pleasant News*, November 20, 1939, 1). A later article notes that ancestors of Dorothea Tomlinson settled in Salem in 1836, and she grew up in Henry County. She was paid \$350 for the three oil on canvas panels as part of the New Deal program that employed artists. Over 50 federally subsidized murals were painted in Iowa for post offices and other public buildings. Dorothea Tomlinson Marquis was living in Des Moines at the time of the commission. She began painting rural scenes at age 16 and later studied with Grant Wood. A year prior to the paintings, she had published a folio of pen and ink sketches showing how Midwestern pioneers lived ("Art Sleuthing," *Mt Pleasant News*, May 24, 1995, 3).

The 1942 Sanborn fire insurance map shows a 1-story, brick building, 18' in height, situated at the southwest corner of lot 4, at the corner of N Jefferson and W Madison. There is a 1-story, open loading platform on the east side of the building. The building is a Post Office, and the address is 200-202 N Jefferson.

In September 1956, a new street numbering system prepared in the last several months by city engineers was reviewed and approved by post office. Letters were mailed out with new numbers to residents. It would be more orderly than the old system. Many changes were made due to new residences, changes in business arrangements, and other changes that had created situations where the former numbering was confused or duplicated ("Local Residents Notified of Street Number Changes," *Mt Pleasant News*, September 18, 1956, 1).

In 1961, a city parking lot was constructed to the west of the post office at the northwest corner of N. Jefferson St and W. Madison St. In March 1980, parking meters were removed in town, with a two hour parking limit enforced during business hours. It was limited to 12 minutes for certain spaces in front of post office, city hall, Henry County Savings Bank, Mt Pleasant Bank and Trust, Iowa Southern Utilities Office, and Capitol Savings and Loan ("Ordinance No. 527," *Mt Pleasant News*, March 24, 1980, 4).

The Post Office building located at 200 N Jefferson is currently occupied in 2024 by the United States Postal Service. The building is owned by the United States of America Post Office.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Building and sign permits, City of Mount Pleasant, Iowa

City and telephone directories, Mt Pleasant:

Mount Pleasant Telephone Company. Telephone directories issued in 1913, 1915, 1918, 1921, 1925, 1927, 1937, 1939, 1944, 1948, 1950, 1952.

Groce, W.H. *The City Directory of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa*. Mt Pleasant: Groce, 1938.

Johnson Publishing Co. *Mt Pleasant, Iowa*. City directories issued in 1955, 1957, 1960, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1873, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1993, 2001, 2011. Manitowoc, WI: Johnson Publishing Co.

Cornerstones. Mt Pleasant: Mt. Pleasant Beautiful Committee, 1991.

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Henry County Bicentennial Commission (HCBC). *The History of Henry County*. Dallas, TX: National ShareGraphics, Inc., 1982.

Henry County Historical Society. Vertical files and albums in files at Mt Pleasant Public Library.

Henry County Heritage Trust. Collection of historic images, in files and posted in Facebook albums. Collection in former Saunders School, Mount Pleasant, Iowa.

Henry County Recorder's Office / Henry County Auditor's Office. Property records, transfer books, and deed records. Henry County Courthouse, Mt Pleasant, Iowa

Jaynes, Peter H., ed. *Highlights of Henry County History 1833-1976*. Burlington, IA: Doran & Ward Lithographing Co., 1977.

Mount Pleasant, Iowa, Sesquicentennial, 1835-1985 (MPS). Mt Pleasant, IA: The Committee, 1985

Naumann, Molly Myers. *Architectural and Historical Resources of Mount Pleasant, IA*. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Documentation Form, May 1991. On file with the State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, IA.

Sanborn Map Company. *Mount Pleasant, Iowa*. Fire insurance maps for 1886, 1892, 1899, 1909, 1920, 1942. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Sanborn Maps Collection.

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Location map



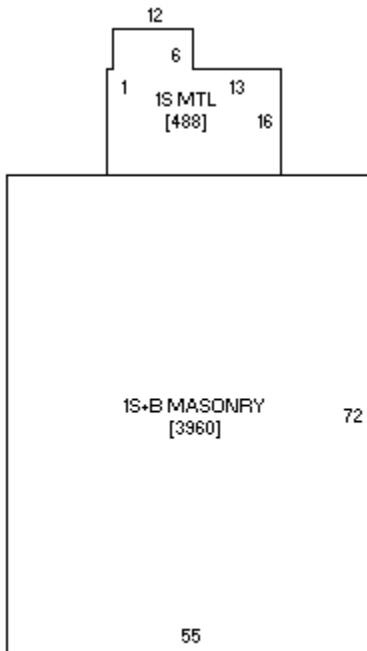
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Building footprint



Sketch by www.camavision.com

Henry County Assessor (<https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>)

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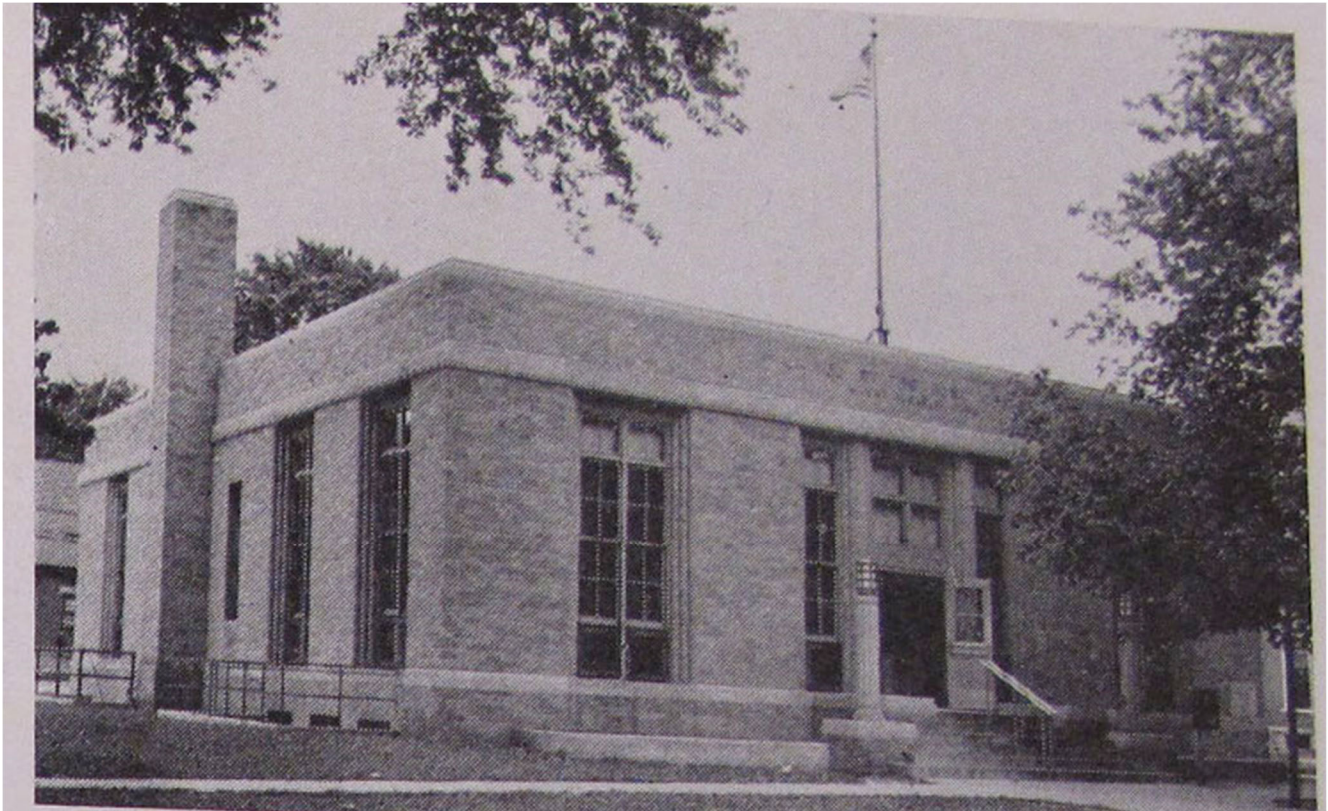
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Historic images



Post office in 1938 directory

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Post Office on N. Jefferson in 1940s (HCHT Facebook album)

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Post office in 1950s prior to 1958 work (HCHS files, Mt Pleasant Public Library)

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Post office in August 1958 after completion of work by Chalender Construction Co of Springfield, MO (interior and exterior painting, new flagpole) (HCHS files, Mt Pleasant Public Library)

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**Post office in June 1958 showing new flagpole by Chalender Construction Co of Springfield, MO
(HCHS files, Mt Pleasant Public Library)**

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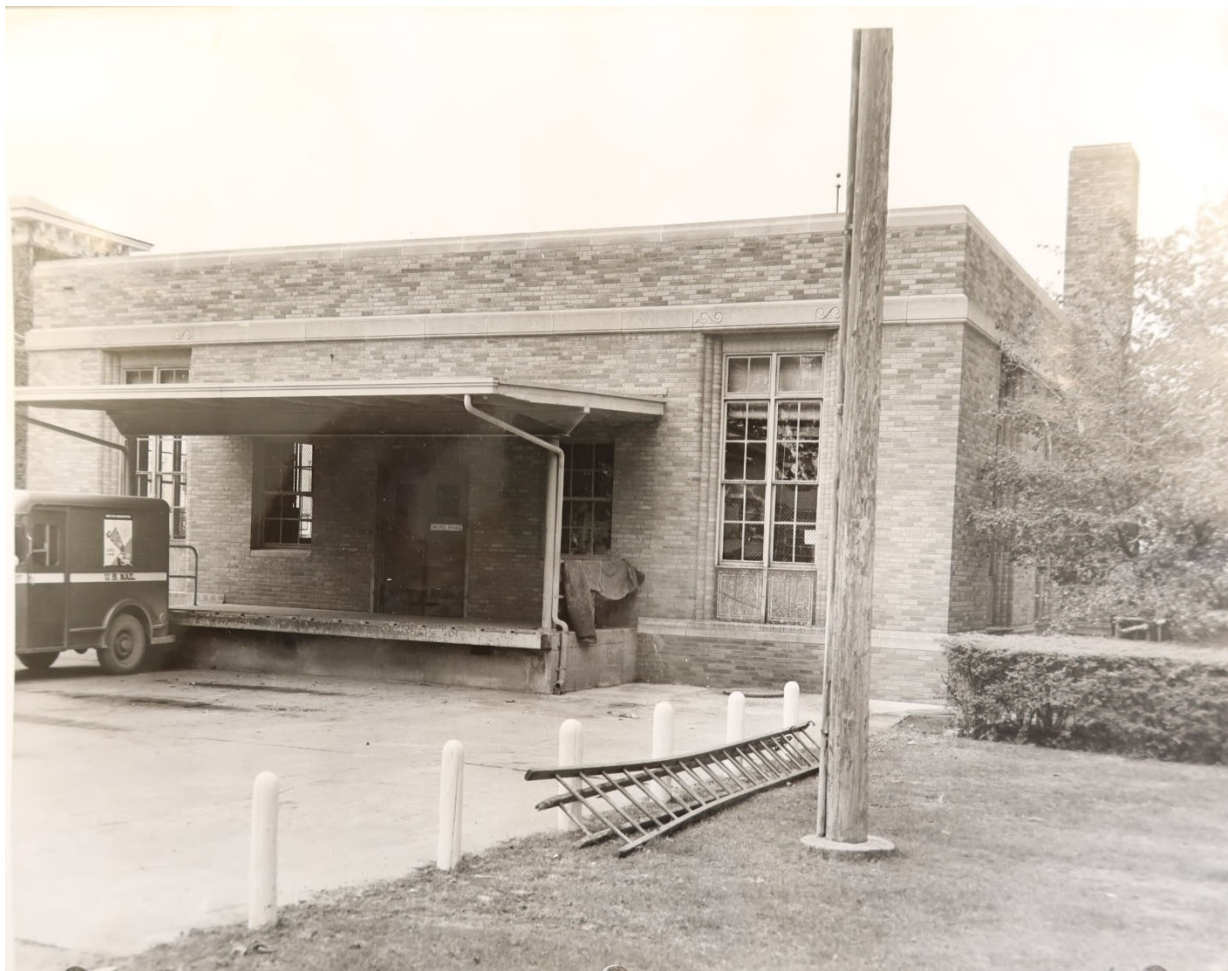
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Post office in August 1958 after completion of work by Chalender Construction Co of Springfield, MO (interior and exterior painting, new flagpole) (HCHS files, Mt Pleasant Public Library)

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Digital photographs



Photograph 44-00786-001. West elevation, looking southeast (June 2024)

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Photograph 44-00786-002. West elevation, looking east (October 2023)

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Photograph 44-00786-003. South elevation, looking north (October 2023)

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Photograph 44-00786-004. North elevation, looking southwest (October 2023)

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Photograph 44-00786-005. East elevation, looking west (October 2023)

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Photograph 44-00786-006. Lobby, looking northeast (June 2024)

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County

200 N. Jefferson St
Address

Mount Pleasant
City



Photograph 44-00786-007. Lobby, looking southeast (June 2024)

Iowa Site Inventory Form
State Historic Preservation Office
Continuation Sheet

Site Number: 44-00786
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United States Post Office
Name of Property

Henry
County

200 N. Jefferson St
Address

Mount Pleasant
City



Photograph 44-00786-008. Grill in lobby, looking southeast (June 2024)

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United States Post Office
Name of Property

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County

200 N. Jefferson St
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Mount Pleasant
City



Photograph 44-00786-009. Lobby, looking north (June 2024)

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200 N. Jefferson St
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Mount Pleasant
City



Photograph 44-00786-010. "College" painting on north wall, looking north (June 2024)

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Henry

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200 N. Jefferson St

Mount Pleasant

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Mount Pleasant in the Forties
Farm
by Dorothea Tomlinson 1939

Photograph 44-00786-011. "Farm" painting on west wall, looking west (June 2024)

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United States Post Office

Name of Property

Henry

County

200 N. Jefferson St

Address

Mount Pleasant

City



Mount Pleasant in the Parlor
The Town
by Dorothea Tomlinson 1898

Photograph 44-00786-012. "Town" painting on south wall, looking south (June 2024)