

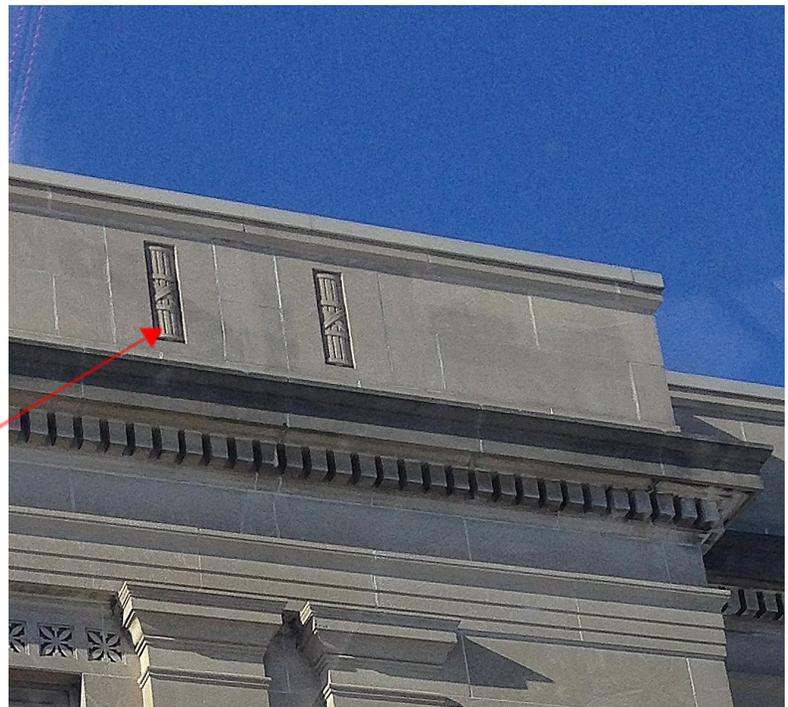
**202 S Chestnut Avenue**  
**Architectural Style: Neoclassical Revival**  
**Marshfield Post Office**

Finished in 1931, the Post Office (not flat roofed rear addition) was the first federally owned Post Office in Marshfield. The corner stone was laid in 1930 by “Acting Supervising Architect” James A. Wetmore. It has a shingled hip roof. Its main façade, facing Chestnut, gives access to the lobby. The entry doors & side windows are pulled out from the façade, which is constructed of limestone & brick & set on a limestone base. Limestone is the primary trim material throughout: pilasters supporting a denticulated cornice which extends around the perimeter of the building, carved eagle within the cornice; sides of the granite & concrete entry stairs. The parapet wall at the top & dark band below the eagle unify the main façades symmetrical composition. Windows & entry doors are not original.



*The American Bald Eagle is our national bird, symbolizing strength.*

*The “fasces” symbol is ancient. It is literally many rods (usually wood) bundled together, making the united bundle very strong. It was originally used in ancient Italy to symbolize a magistrate’s authority over subjective areas or communities, with an axe blade protruding from the bundle. In the last few centuries it came to symbolize “unity,” the French Revolution & the American Revolution stating “Together we stand, divided we fall.” More recently it was used as the root word for “fascism.”*



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**Narrative Description**

The Marshfield Post Office is a one-story, limestone and brick building constructed in 1930 in a simplified Neo-Classical Revival style. The post office is located on one of the major streets in the business and commercial district of Marshfield, Wisconsin.

The front façade consists of a three-bay central pavilion with single bay units on the sides. The central portion is brought forward and is further emphasized by a concentration of decorative detail. The middle bay contains a recessed door with a transom window above. The area between the door and the transom is decorated with a classically inspired frieze and cornice. On either side of the entrance are windows with transoms. Paired pilasters frame the windows and doors. The pilasters support a frieze and a denticulated cornice. The cornice wraps around the perimeter of the original building. Above the cornice is a parapet. Above the door the parapet steps up slightly and contains a carved eagle. A wide flight of granite stairs leads to a landing before the front door.

The single bays on either side of the main pavilion each contain one window. The windows have stone lintels. In the area of the transom is a carved panel with a large rosette at its center. The side wings are framed in stone, but the central wall portion is of red brick. The first bay of the side elevations is treated in the same fashion. The original windows throughout the main portion of the building have been replaced with aluminum framed units within the original opening. Likewise, the doors are aluminum replacements dating from ca.1960.

The building cornerstone notes: "A.W. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury, James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect, 1930."

A lower, one-story addition was constructed to the rear of the building ca. 1960. It was designed to complement the original building. The addition is of red brick and its windows are approximately the same size and dimension of the original openings. A large loading dock is located at the rear. The addition is clearly not a part of the main building and does not detract from the integrity of the original portion of the post office building.

The interior lobby of the building has its original terrazzo floor and marble wainscot. The walls and ceiling are of plaster. There is some original wood trim in the lobby, but no other features of note. A glass dividing wall has also been added to separate postal functions.

The building is in good condition. With the exception of the replacement doors and windows, the façade of the Marshfield Post Office retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Marshfield Post Office is evaluated in the context of the multiple property nomination "United States Post Office Construction from 1913 to 1943, State of Wisconsin - Milwaukee District." Specifically, the Marshfield Post Office is an example of those facilities constructed in the period after the adoption of the McAdoo Classification System, but before the massive construction program of the Roosevelt era. The Marshfield Post Office is nominated under Criterion C for architecture as a locally significant example of the Neo-Classical Revival style.

**Historic Context**

This building is the first federally owned post office in Marshfield, Wisconsin. Prior to its construction, postal business was conducted in numerous locations depending on the current postmaster. The first post office in Marshfield was established in 1872 with Louis River as the first postmaster.<sup>1</sup>

As part of the larger context of federally owned post offices in Wisconsin, the Marshfield Post Office represents a Class "C" facility under the McAdoo Classification System. Stylistic and construction issues were standardized and used in a series of facilities of the same class across the country. The McAdoo system and the character of the building constructed using the system are discussed in the multiple property nomination.

**Significance**

The Marshfield Post Office is considered eligible for listing by meeting the registration requirement for federally owned post offices as specified in the multiple property nomination for post office construction in Wisconsin between 1913 and 1943.

This resource is considered eligible under Criterion C, Architecture, as an excellent local example of the NeoClassical Revival style of architecture as applied to a public building. The Neo-Classical Revival style was a popular choice for public and institutional buildings in the early twentieth century. Elements of the style seen in this example are the parapeted roofline, the use of square headed versus arched openings, and the smooth stonework of the central pavilion. At the post office, the giant order Roman columns have been translated to Doric pilasters. The pairing of the pilasters is a departure from the Neo-Classical style, which preferred single columns. The use of varied wall claddings is also atypical of high style examples of this style.

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<sup>1</sup> George O. Jones and Norman S. McVean, History of Wood County, Wisconsin (Minneapolis: 1923).

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In conclusion, the Marshfield Post office is an example of the Neo-Classical Revival style used by the Treasury Department designers for a mid-size post office in the 1930s. The design displays signature aspects of the style, while simplifying or eliminating others for cost containment, such as the use of brick infill for wall areas. With the exception of the window replacements, the exterior of the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity and is a good, local example of the Neo-Classical Revival style.

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The above and previous two pages are excerpted from the National Register of Historic Places Application Form for the Marshfield Post Office. The application in its entirety can be found at: <file:///C:/Users/Mother/Documents/Local%20History%20stuff/Brochure%20Folders/National%20Register%20Applications/Marshfield%20Post%20Office%20202%20S%20Chestnut%20Ave%20National%20Register%20Application.pdf>

The following ten photos were also included with the National Register of Historic Places Application. The Photos can be found at: <file:///C:/Users/Mother/Documents/Local%20History%20stuff/Brochure%20Folders/National%20Register%20Applications/Marshfield%20Post%20Office%20202%20S%20Chestnut%20Ave%20Photos.pdf>

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Marshfield Post Office  
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Joseph Jurkiewicz, 1993  
Negatives in the possession of HNTB, Milwaukee, Wisconsin



1. Building cornerstone.



2. Interior view, lobby.



3. Interior view, lobby.



4. Façade detail.



5. Rear elevation, looking northeast.



6. Side elevation, looking east.



7. Façade detail.



8. Façade detail.



9. Façade detail.



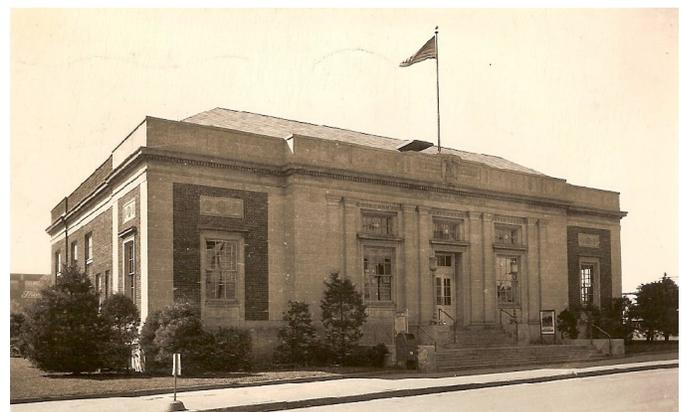
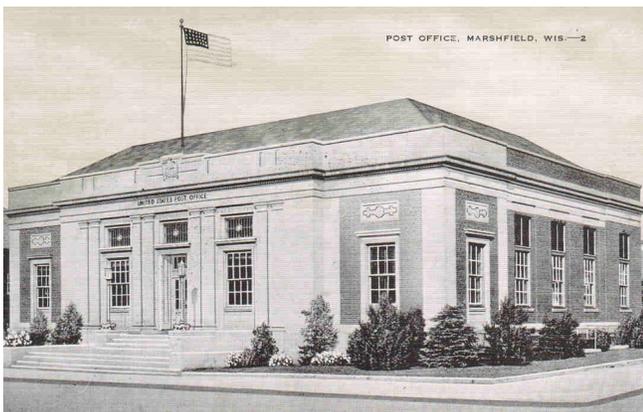
10. Front elevation, looking southwest.

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*There are many addresses throughout the city of Marshfield, WI that can claim to have been the city's Post Office at one time or another, businesses and private homes. This building sat in the 100 block of E 3rd St. and is the first building built by the City of Marshfield for the purpose of a Post Office (1902-1923). It also served as the city's telephone building from 1902-1958 and had meeting rooms for many city groups and clubs. It was razed in July of 1964.*



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*Post cards images of the Marshfield, Wisconsin Post Office.*

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For additional historical and architectural information on the Post Office see the link to the Wisconsin Historical Society: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI55570>