

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name McGehee Post Office
other names/site number Site #DE0287

2. Location

street & number 201 North Second Street not for publication
city or town McGehee vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Desha code 041 zip code 71654

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets
does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other, (explain :) _____ _____ _____	_____	_____

McGehee Post Office
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
1	1	objects
2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/post office

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY: Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK

roof METAL
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack Individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1937

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Architect: Louis A. Simon
Builder: Neal Meleck

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

McGehee Post Office
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>648635</u> Easting	<u>3722164</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rubye Graham-Emerson/Edited by: Even Silva (Intern) and Travis Ratermann (Survey Historian)
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date July 9, 2009
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name McGehee Industrial Foundation
street & number P.O. Box 612 telephone (870)364-2388
city or town McGehee state AR zip code 71654

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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McGehee Post Office

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SUMMARY

The former McGehee Post is an excellent example of Colonial Revival style built in 1937 in McGehee, Arkansas. Designed by architect Louis A. Simon, the Treasury Department's Supervising Architect, for the City of McGehee, Arkansas, this great one-story masonry building built in 1937, features a cupola with rounded arch louvered vents on each side, dentil molding beneath the eaves and large twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows, exemplifying the taste and ideals articulated in the Colonial Revival Style of architecture. The site originally housed the first school in McGehee. The school was originally a one room framed school house. However, in 1905 Reverend J.L. Cannon organized the McGehee First Methodist Episcopal Church within the school house. Consequently, in 1906 a permanent school building was built at the corner of 2nd and Pine Street. Both the school and the church would use the new building for their services, until the white framed church was rebuilt on the original site of the school. The church would remain on the site as a home to Wade Kerr, until the 1930s when it was relocated to provide a lot for the new McGehee Post Office in 1937.

The Post Office faces northeast and is located in the commercial area on one corner of a city block at the intersection of 2nd and Oak Street in McGehee. The building offers a remarkable contrast to the nearby Twentieth century commercial buildings which are located in the blocks surrounding the Post Office. The site also includes a non-contributing concrete and bronze cast historical marker along the front faced of the building and a contributing aluminum flag-pole.

The one story building rest on a brick foundation, and has walls of load bearing red brick in a common bond pattern. The overall massing of the building consists of two large bays, both rectangular in shape, while the southern bay is capped with a standing seam side gable roof, the other consists of a flat roof with a parapet. The rear section of the building is one-story masonry irregularly-shaped mass covered by a flat parapet wall.

ELABORATION

FRONT FAÇADE

The front façade faces northeast. Granite slab steps lead up to the aluminum double doors which are flanked by two fluted Doric columns. The cornice above the columns features dentils with a golden eagle perched on it. Another cornice runs the length of three of the four elevations, and includes the east, south, north and the outer two bays of the west elevation. Reminiscent of the rear dollar bill design, a pyramid with an eye and the United States eagle also adorn the building. The main entrance has an accentuated segmented arch above a set of aluminum double doors. On either side of the aluminum double doors are decorative metal light fixtures, that are copper color. On the main segment of the building, to the south of the front door are two, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows. The northern side of the entrance is fenestrated with two, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows. The northern bay of the main façade, which was constructed in 1963, is accentuated by

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the lack of a gable roof and the beginning of the flat parapet roof. This bay is adorned by four, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows. A concrete stairway is located to the north of the main staircase and is ornamented with an iron railing. It is located on the main façade and leads to a steel basement door. The roof of the post office has a cupola with one rounded arch louvered vent on each side.

SOUTHERN ELEVATION

The southern elevation recedes from Oak Street in four sections. The easternmost segment is the main portion of the building; the façade is fenestrated with two, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows. Above the cornice is a single stationary arched semi-circular window with eight panes of glass. The gable end is sided in wood weatherboard, and features dentils on the eaves. The next segment to the west is fenestrated by a pair of twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows, flanked by one nine-over-nine window on each side. The nine-over-nine, double-hung windows are separated from the twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows by a set of two faux buttresses capped by a rectangular cut of limestone. The next segment features a single six-over-six window centered on the wall. The final segment has concrete steps leading up to a metal door. The loading bay has a flat roof that extends out from the building several feet.

WESTERN/REAR ELEVATION

The western elevation is dominated by an open concrete loading bay with an overhanging flat roof. The wall is fenestrated by three metal doors, two of them double. Receding from this main segment are two segments to the north, and three to the south. The first segment to the north is fenestrated by a single, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows. The next segment to the north has the last of the projecting cornice with dentils wrapping around the building. The segment immediately to the south of the overhanging bay is adorned with a single metal door, as well as steps leading up to another door not on this façade. The next segment over has one, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung window. The last segment to the south features one, one-over-one, double-hung window. The flat roof of the additions is articulated by the large central chimney above the loading bays located on this elevation. The loading bay, a large elevated poured slab of concrete, is covered by a flat roof supported by two load bearing brick walls. Located between the loading bay and the northern wall is a concrete ramp used in transporting items from the ground onto the loading dock.

NORTH ELEVATION

The northern façade is somewhat obstructed from view by a nearby building, but the main segment is fenestrated by four, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows. This façade resembles its opposite to the south, as to the west the building recedes from the main section. This first segment features a single, six-over-six, double-hung window. The next segment is simply a brick wall that makes up the projecting loading bay. The wall is unadorned.

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Other important exterior details include the very typical cornice. The cornice is part of a boxed roof-wall junction with little overhang, and is decorated with small dentil molding. This configuration of the molding is a very typical of the Colonial Revival style. While the dentil molding is typical of the style at this time, so is the brick exterior. At this period in time the vernacular construction of the style was constructed using wood. The wooden frame was typical of the period prior to the 1920s. It is following the 1920s that the brick exterior came to be prominent in high-style architecture.

The McGehee Post Office still retains excellent integrity, and is able to convey the Colonial Revival style of architecture very well. The quality of the construction of the building in 1937 is still readily apparent. The building has not been heavily modified from its original design, other than the addition added in 1963 to accommodate the need for more space and loading docks on the western elevation. Although an addition was added, the building still retains its integrity since it also reflects a simplified interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. The property is a good example of a Colonial Revival style government building from the early twentieth century.

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SUMMARY

The old McGehee Post Office in McGehee, Arkansas, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**, for its Colonial Revival architecture under the work of Louis A. Simon, a prominent Supervising Architect for the U.S. Treasury Department of the early 1930s. Simon's design was typical of the style movement in Post Office design in the early to middle 1930s. The old McGehee Post Office is one of the few remarkable examples of Colonial Revival style in McGehee, the old Post Office building is the reflection of the nationalist view and building preferences taken on by the American population following the end of World War I in both domestic and public buildings.

ELABORATION

The old McGehee Post Office, built in 1937, is significant for its representation of Post Office architecture in 1930s. The Colonial Revival style was used more often in public buildings, owned by the United State Government, and domestic architecture primarily because of the inherent feeling of a nationalistic sentiment, which is "the desire to have in America an American style distinct from the European modes."¹ This was a direct result of the post war activities and thoughts brought back from Europe following World War I. In the field of domestic architecture, the colonial style was taking root in the fact that the home was of a more simple character and design.

During the late Nineteenth century, the area currently known as McGehee, Arkansas, was at the beginning of a steady increase in population. It is stated that Abner McGehee made an application for the establishment of a post office on February 21, 1879 and submitted the name of the proposed office to be Holly Glade because of the holly trees in the area. He stated that the location was to be in Chicot County at McGehee Station on the Little Rock, Mississippi River and Texas Railroad. He apparently was unaware that the location submitted on the application had been removed from Chicot County on February 10, 1879. When the application was received and investigated by the postal department this error was noted and Chicot was replaced by Desha. However, the location of the post would subsequently be located 150 to 200 yards from the railroad station and 50 yards to the east of Crooked Bayou, thus placing it in the Abner McGehee commissary. Due to the location of the post office, Abner McGehee was appointed postmaster on March 8, 1879. It is unknown how long the post office remained in Abner McGehee's commissary but it is quite possible that the post remained in that location until the post office was completed in 1937.

¹ William B. Rhoads, "The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* Vol. 35 Num. 4 (Dec.1976): 194.

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The Post Office built in 1937 on the site of a 1903 one-room schoolhouse and later a home owned by Mr. Abner McGehee, was designed in the Colonial Revival style that was especially popular in the 1930s. The Colonial Revival style was inspired in part by the 1876 Centennial Celebration. The style took off in 1890 at the time that "manifest destiny" was at its peak, when Americans began to value their own architecture and heritage. Interest in Victorian architecture was beginning to wane as Americans sought architecture that reflected American values and traditions.

A new post office was originally sought in a petition by "Congressman John L. McClellan to use his influence to obtain construction of a post office."² The petition was sought after the Treasury Department sent out a press release stating that McGehee was one of six towns in Arkansas under consideration as a possible location for a formal post office building.³ The Treasury Department had made its decision by June 25, 1936, and the Post Office was approved.⁴ As the first round of bids was sent out for the location of the new post office, stipulations were set for the size of the lot. If the lot was set on the corner, it must have "120 feet of frontage and 170 feet [of] depth."⁵ If the lot was located in the center of the block or other interior lot, it must contain "145 foot of frontage and 170 foot of depth."⁶ By July 16, 1936, four sites had been found to suit the specifications given.⁷ After inspecting the sites Chas. C. Taul, the federal building site inspector, contacted several other property owners and obtained additional sites for the proposed building.⁸ The site would not be chosen until the week of August 13, 1936, with the bid going to the Abner McGehee Estate, for the property located at the corner of 2nd and Oak Street at a price of \$4,500.⁹

The construction of the one and half story, red brick post office was set to cost \$66,000, which also included equipping the post office.¹⁰ In order for the property to be sold, the taxes on the property had to be cancelled or paid in the amount of \$48. By November 1936, the working drawings of the soon to be constructed building were "practically completed."¹¹ The check, totaling \$4,500, was given to the Abner McGehee Estate on November 8, 1936.¹² It is at the same time that W.A. McGehee stated that the house occupied by "Wade Kerr would be moved immediately to the corner of 2nd and Holly Street."¹³

² "New Post Office Is Sought By McGehee," *McGehee Times*, 14 May 1936.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "McGehee Will Get Federal Building," *McGehee Times*, 25 June 1936.

⁵ "Seek Location For Federal Building," *McGehee Times*, 2 July 1936.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ "Four Sites Offered for Federal Building," *McGehee Times*, 16 July 1936.

⁸ "New Post Office to Cost About \$50,000," *McGehee Times*, 23 July 1936.

⁹ "Location For New Post Office Chosen," *McGehee Times*, 13 Aug. 1936.

¹⁰ "Will Receive Bids For New Postoffice," *McGehee Times*, 17 Sept. 1936.

¹¹ "Postoffice Bids to Be Received Soon," *McGehee Times*, 19 Nov. 1936.

¹² "Government Pays For Site For Postoffice," *McGehee Times*, 10 Dec. 1936.

¹³ *Ibid.*

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Bids for the construction of the post office were put out on December 17, 1936. The house located on the site was to be moved within a week of the 17th of December.¹⁴ With the relocation of the frame structure from the site, a bid of \$43,979 was accepted by the Treasury Department and given to A. Farnell Blair of Lake Charles¹⁵, Louisiana.¹⁶ On the week of April 5-8, 1936, the ground was broken for the construction to begin. By May 20, 1937, the colonial style building was beginning to take shape with the cornerstone already having been laid.¹⁷ The post office was complete by the first week in September, with the dedication being held on September 18, 1937, and the keynote speech being given by Congressman John McClellan.¹⁸

The Colonial Revival elements on the 1937 post office include the accentuated front door with a decorative pediment supported by two columns, a façade showing symmetrically placed windows and a centrally located door, windows with multi-panes double-hung sashes, and a large cupola. This building stands alone with its architectural highlights for this downtown area.

Though an addition was added to the northeast corner of the building in 1963, the addition provided significantly more room as the postal services responsibilities began to grow. The addition added in 1963, holds true to the original materials used during the original construction. The addition matched existing brick, mortar, and window placement to try to retain the front façade.

In 1999, the old McGehee Post Office was relocated to a new building at 104 South 1st Street. This ended more than 60 years of service to the City of McGehee and the surrounding community from its location on the corner of 2nd and Oak. The McGehee Industrial Foundation would later purchase the property.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The old McGehee Post Office still retains excellent integrity, and is able to convey the Colonial Revival style of architecture very well. The quality of the construction of the building in 1937 is still readily apparent. The building has not been heavily modified from its original design, other than the addition added in 1963 to accommodate the need for more space and loading docks on the western elevation. Although an addition was added, the building still retains its integrity since it also reflects a simplified interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. The property is a good example of a Colonial Revival style government building from the early twentieth century.

¹⁴ "Bids Are Sought On New Postoffice," *McGehee Times*, 17 Dec. 1936.

¹⁵ In the April 8, 1937 *McGehee Times*, A. Farnell Blair was stated as residing in Lake Providence, Louisiana, rather than Lake Charles.

¹⁶ "Contract Let For New Postoffice," *McGehee Times*, 21 Jan. 1937.

¹⁷ "Postoffice May Be Occupied August 1," *McGehee Times*, 20 May 1937.

¹⁸ "New Postoffice Here Dedicated By Congressman John McClellan," 23 Sept. 1937.

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Colonial Revival, found at: <http://www.fullertonheritage.org/Resources/archstyles/colonial.htm>.

Desha County, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=765>
Date Accessed: 31 July 2009.

McGehee (Desha County), <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=877> Date Accessed: 31 July 2009.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 9-10 & S1/2 Lot 11, Block 48 Subdivision McGehee Original Inside. Description 27-12-03 W.

Boundary Justification

The boundary contains all of the remaining land and buildings historically associated with the property.