

## Newsletter

Volume 10 - Number 1 - 2007

### Hattiesburg Downtown Post Office

The Pine Street United States Post Office was built in 1934 and is listed on the Register of Historic Places. Its limestone, fine gray and pink granite, and art deco style (which it shares with the Saenger Theater and Forrest Towers) have helped make it a beloved landmark in downtown Hattiesburg.

In July of 1992, former Mayor Moran Pope wrote in the Hattiesburg American about the building as it received a much needed facelift and cleaning. The following information is based on his research and interviews with local architects.

"The metals used in the building - the grillwork, the two outside stanchion lights (one of which was damaged by Hurricane Katrina), the doors, and the airplane, train and ship cast metal friezes over the front doors - are rare and fine metal materials," architect Larry Albert stated. "The post office also incorporates Egyptian revival features," said architect Steve Blair, Jr.

"The two large, vertical, sloped pylons, or shafts, forming a gateway to the three front entrances, are a classic Egyptian feature, as are the two large bird symbols over each of the three front entrances, and the wing emblems set in the outside limestone walls," Blair said. "The building is a distinct departure from the 1910 federal building post office diagonally across the street, which is in the Greek revival style, with its 48 square half-columns on the four sides of the square-shaped building and two full, round columns forming a gateway to the entrance."



"The downtown post office had three predecessors. The city's first mail facility was on Railroad Street in back of what is now McKenzie's on Main and adjoined the rear of the Klondyke Hotel (later the Leaf Hotel). The area is now a city parking lot," Pope's article explains.

"A second post office was located in the Rose Theater building, which used to be the Geiger parking lot. A third was located in the federal building at Forrest and Pine Streets, which is now used by the Forrest County juvenile and county court offices and dream of Hattiesburg."

By 1933, the federal building had become too small to handle the volume of mail. A year earlier, Woodruff Furniture Store had burned, and the decision was made to build a post office in its place. The current downtown post office was completed in early 1934." On September 10, 2004, the downtown post office was dedicated to the memory of Metal of Honor Recipient Major Henry A. Commiskey, Sr.

Note: A detailed look at the cast metal friezes and other unique post office art work is available in the [Gallery](#).

