NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

932

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Fresno County Hall of Records

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 2281 Tulare Street n/a not for publication

city or town Fresno n/a vicinity

state California code CA county Fresno code 019 zip code 93721-2105

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

[signature] State Historic Preservation Officer 4 NOV 2011
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

for Edson H. Beall 12.22.11
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [ ] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal
- [ ] private

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] building(s)
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		Objects
		buildings
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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/government office

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: CONCRETE
STONE/Marble
roof: ASPHALT
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Fresno County Hall of Records is a three-story PWA Deco Moderne office building with a full basement. Constructed of reinforced concrete, the building's footprint is in a predominant L-shape. Its massive, linear elevations consist of both Art Deco and stylized Neoclassical details. Notable exterior features include a series of cast aluminum spandrel panels, with herringbone and semicircular design elements, separating most of the second- and third-floor windows; sets of decorative terra cotta medallions on the northeast and southwest elevations, between the first- and second-floor windows; and a zigzag, stylized floral parapet frieze band which wraps around the entire building. The main hallways inside are dominated by Art Deco terrazzo floors; decorative glass panels, with diamond and triangular design elements; and wall spaces divided by fluted marble pilasters. Geographically, the building is situated in the southeast corner of the Fresno County Courthouse Park, at the intersection of Tulare and M streets. The Courthouse is situated to the immediate west of the Hall of Records, and the surrounding neighborhood is mostly occupied by other government buildings. An annex was constructed in 1954-1955, in front of the southwestern elevation and altering the building's original rectilinear footprint. Further interior remodeling was accomplished in 1961-1962. The exterior renovations were kept in harmony with the building's original design. Following a 2002-2004 restoration and refurbishing project, the property is in excellent condition.

Narrative Description

Building Description

All elevations feature exterior staircases leading to the basement level, with International-style aluminum guard rails. The exterior walls of the first floor are divided by a set of two fluted horizontal bands, punctuated by aluminum-framed windows, which are surmounted by a projecting, fluted cornice complementing the bands. The second and third floor aluminum-framed windows are mostly separated by cast aluminum spandrel panels, containing herringbone patterns and semicircles. Vertical spaces between the windows are mostly occupied by fluted pilasters. The second-floor windows feature massive dentilled sills, with the third-floor windows surmounted by a dentilled relief. A zigzag, stylized floral parapet frieze band wraps around the entire building. All the building's external corners are triple-notched.

The building's northeast elevation contains its main entrance, relocated in 1954-1955 from the southeast elevation. Originally, it was a duplication of the current southwest entrance; refer to the description below for an understanding of its appearance. The current entrance, located in the crook of the building's L and facing M Street, is a much simpler design. Set in a slight projection from the building's annex, it consists of a four-part aluminum frame, containing automatically-opening sliding glass doors, and now featuring a light-rise ramp for handicapped access. Above it is a set of cast aluminum spandrel panels, identical to those which characteristically separate the building's second- and third-floor windows. The second- and third-floor windows are of the same width as the main entrance, and are separated by an additional set of cast aluminum spandrel panels.

(See continuation sheets)

Fresno County Hall of Records
Name of Property

Fresno, California
County and State

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.
- [x] 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 a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1937-1955

Significant Dates

1937, 1955

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Villalon, Henry P.

Metz, Maurice J.

Period of Significance (justification)

Period of significance is based on the years between the construction of the original building and completion of the building annex that altered the overall layout of the building.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of signficance and applicable criteria)

The Fresno County Hall of Records, built in 1935-1937 and 1954-1955, is a masterly example of PWA Deco Moderne architecture with stylized Neoclassical design elements, and exemplifies superior quality in aesthetics and workmanship throughout its exterior and public spaces. It harmonizes well within the context of nearby local and federal buildings which date from the same era of significance. Further, the building meets National Register Criterion C as it is the work of a master architectural designer, Henry P. Villalon; is embellished with bas-reliefs manufactured by the internationally renowned terra cotta firm of Gladding, McBean; and was sensitively and effectively enlarged by architect Maurice J. Metz.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

History of Property

Project Origins, Financing and Initial Design, 1929-1935

The Fresno County Hall of Records had its genesis in the 1928 report of the Fresno County Grand Jury. In that document, the panel noted that the county records, then stored in the Fresno County Courthouse and the Fresno County Old Peoples' Home, were vulnerable and would result in a loss "in the neighborhood of $2,000,000" should a fire strike the Courthouse. This was a very real fear, as this type of event had happened at the Courthouse several decades before, on July 29, 1895. While most of the records had been saved at that time, their bulk and the consequent risk had multiplied appreciably in the following thirty-three years.

In the wake of the Grand Jury report, a citizens' committee and other civic leaders succeeded in placing a ballot measure for $500,000 in bonds to build a new Hall of Records. Unfortunately, the measure went down to defeat during the November 4, 1930 election, and the building's supporters were forced to regroup. The intervening Depression years caused the project to be shelved, but by mid-1933 the Fresno County Board of Supervisors decided to ask for approximately $1,000,000 in federal funds for several major local projects, including $300,000 to finance a Hall of Records. Under that plan, 30 percent of the funding was to be a gift, with the remainder a long-term loan. Ultimately, the Supervisors decided to seek $280,000 in bond funding in lieu of the loan, with the assumption that the government would contribute $120,000 of the cost, and that the voters would be more inclined to approve a less-extravagant measure than the one defeated three years earlier. The strategy worked, as the measure passed by a percentage well above the required two-thirds vote, in the December 19, 1933 election.

Retained as architects for the project, even ahead of the bond approval, was the newly-minted Fresno firm of Allied Architects. Consisting of W.D. Coates, Ernest J. Kump, Fred L. Swartz, H. Rafael Lake, E.W. Peterson and Charles H. Franklin. The stated reason for its creation was to provide the "promotion and prosecution of a Fresno district public works program," servicing building needs of city and county government and the Fresno Unified School District. This was, in reality, a means of keeping outside firms away from the Fresno market during the Depression years, when commissions were scarce. At first, the Allied partners balked at the Hall of Records commission being held to five percent of overall costs and wanted a percentage point more, which almost kept the bond proposition from going to the voters. The architects' eventual assent to the five percent fee paved the way for ballot placement of the bond issue.

(See continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See continuation sheet

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 # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.14 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	251120	4069030	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The extreme eastern corner of the block bounded by Fresno, M, Tulare, and Van Ness streets, approximately 265x275 feet, excluding a driveway and front lawn area.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the lot associated with the nominated building and its annex.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William B. Secrest, Jr.

organization Fresno County Public Library date March 17, 2009

street & number 2420 Mariposa St. telephone 559-488-3439

city or town Fresno state CA zip code 93721-2285

e-mail William.Secrest@fresnolibrary.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: **Fresno County Hall of Records**

City or Vicinity: **Fresno**

County: **Fresno** **State: California**

Photographer: **Richard L. Milhorn**

Date Photographed: **November 2007**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Total of 24, see continuation sheet.

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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Fresno County Hall of Records
Name of Property

Fresno, California
County and State

Property Owner:

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

name John Navarette, Fresno County Administrative Officer

street & number 2281 Tulare Street, Suite # 301 telephone

city or town Fresno state CA zip code 39721

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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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To the immediate left of the main entrance is the remainder of the annex's façade, consisting of four three-part aluminum frame windows on each floor, replicating the building's original and basic top-to-bottom design.. Projecting on the entrance's other side is the building's original northeastern façade. Its symmetry is unbroken, and it consists of seven windows on each floor. On the first floor, the three-part, aluminum-frame windows are all identical. Above the three central windows are terra cotta medallions in square decorative relief frames, with female figures symbolizing record-keeping, surrounded by designs which echoed the vertical fluted patterns found elsewhere on the building's exterior. These are identical to those found on the building's original entrance, and yet present on its southwestern entrance. On the second and third floors, the five central, three-part aluminum frame windows are separated by cast aluminum spandrel panels. Flanking these windows, on the left and right and on both floors, are smaller, two-part aluminum frame windows ornamented by plain, rectilinear sills only. Above the extreme left and extreme right pilasters are square decorative terra cotta insets, with female figures in their centers.

The building's southeast elevation, like the northeast, has been modified from its original appearance. Along with the removal and relocation of the main entrance, decorative relief lettering centered directly below the parapet frieze, which spelled out "FRESNO COUNTY HALL OF RECORDS," was removed during the 1954-1955 annex construction. For design reasons this was necessary, as the presence of the annex would have obliterated much of the inscription. The overall appearance of this elevation is symmetrical; five uniform three-part aluminum frame windows on each floor of the annex and original building sides, replicating the building's original and basic top-to-bottom design.

Along the building's southwest elevation, the left-hand side (original building) is almost unchanged, the major addition being two light-rise ramps for handicapped access. Its major feature is a pair of aluminum doors, divided horizontally into thirds. Flanking the doors are a pair of fluted pilasters, topped with banded, stylized curved leaf designs, suggestive of classical Corinthian columns. Flanking the pilasters are two vertical lanterns, in aluminum frames with amber glass panes, featuring horizontally-fluted stone caps and bases. Immediately above the entrance is a decorative frieze, symbolizing the progress of agriculture and industry in Fresno County. Below the frieze is a zigzag-and-wheel relief, which faintly mimics the building's spandrel panels, and alongside it are reliefs which mimic and extend the fluted pilasters immediately below. Flanking the decorative frieze are terra cotta medallions in square decorative relief frames, identical to those yet found on the northeast elevation. The remainder of the left-hand side (second and third floors) mimics the northeast elevation of the original building. Preserved, on both the left and right sides of this section, is the original triple-notching.

The right-hand side of the southwest elevation consists of the building's annex. It is a simple adaptation of the original and basic top-to-bottom design, symmetrical, with six uniform three-part aluminum frame windows on each floor.

The building's northwest elevation is unchanged from its original appearance, save for the omission of an arcade or breezeway which once connected it to the now-demolished Fresno County Courthouse. A one-story structure, the arcade consisted of six doorways on its northeast and southwest sides. It was supported by square columns, which were decorated with fluted pilasters, capped with a double concrete band with a projecting upper tier. Horizontal bands directly above the doorways mimicked the cornices above the main building's first floor windows, and above those were double dentil courses. The arcade, constructed as part of the original 1937 Records building, was removed during the 1965-1966 demolition of the original Fresno County Courthouse.

A fragment of the arcade, now properly finished on its northwestern frontage and in keeping with the original design scheme, still survives. Consisting of four doorways, two in front and one to each side, it sits immediately next to the building's northwest entrance. Above it, and partially inside it, is the building's fire escape.

Aside from this interruption, the elevation presents a symmetrical appearance, with the original and basic top-to-bottom design, and eleven three-part windows on each floor (excepting the entrance).

The interior of the Hall of Records and its annex may be divided, roughly, into public spaces and working spaces. While the working spaces have been reconfigured in different ways over the past decades, the public spaces remain virtually unchanged. These originally consisted of a large T-shaped corridor on the first floor, with vestibules at its ends; a rectangular corridor on the second floor, with vestibules at either end; and a rectangular corridor on the third floor, with a vestibule at its northwestern end. Almost all of this plan remains intact today, save for the excision of the southern vestibule on the first floor. This took place when the annex was constructed, and the main entrance was shifted from the southeast elevation to the northeast.

Art Deco and angular design motifs within the public spaces successfully echo the building's exterior. The corridor floors are made of multicolored terrazzo, featuring diamond and triangular shapes, and sunburst patterns. The corridor walls have black marble baseboards; two-toned, beige marble veneers, framed with aluminum; and, on the first floor, elevator and office entrances flanked by fluted pilasters of burnt orange-colored marble. The upper corridor walls contain windows of obscure glazing that allow exterior light to penetrate from the office areas. A notable feature of the corridor ceilings are flush-mounted light fixtures, featuring linear and triangular divisions with green, gold and white glass. Additional Art Deco elements within these areas are abstract designs engraved on the elevator door panels; streamlined, curved aluminum stairway handrails; and even drinking fountain bowls and signage. As high-grade materials were used throughout the public spaces, remain in place and have suffered little wear, their high initial cost has been justified by continuing savings in replacement and maintenance.

Within the working spaces, numerous changes have been effected since the initial completion of the Hall of Records. The most significant of these have been the linking of the main building and annex basements in 1962 (initially, these were separate compartments), with storage space created between them; and converting the central portion of the annex's third floor into a meeting room for the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. This last-mentioned remodeling required the removal of a central support pillar, made possible by the threading of support beams along the third-floor annex ceiling, and redistributing the building's weight on its support columns.

Office areas on all floors have been re-partitioned, notably the basement; the northeastern half of the original building; the annex portion of the third floor; and the northeastern third floor space of the original building. The southwestern half of the original building, on its first, second and third floors, has been little modified; the upper floors of this zone consist of relatively open areas surrounded by perimeter offices. It should be noted here that much of this partitioning has been accomplished by the use of movable walls, so the building's fundamental integrity has been little affected. It is fair to say that only the functional interior spaces of the building have changed; the public and aesthetically significant areas are almost the same as they were in 1937 and 1955.

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Before the end of 1933, the County and Allied Architects had moved decisively toward commencement of the Hall of Records project. The Board's legal adviser, Deputy District Attorney Arthur C. Shepard, filed a formal application with the Public Works Administration for the $120,000 federal component of construction costs, and Allied Architects put forward a trial design for the new facility. While this design featured horizontal banding, narrow window treatments, fluted entrance pilasters and decorative bas-reliefs, notable design features of the completed building, it featured setbacks which appear to have been removed as a concession to economy. The plan also envisioned runways connecting each floor of the building with the corresponding floors of the courthouse, eventually reduced to a single, ground-level arcade.

On June 30, 1934, the Public Works Administration announced its approval of the $120,000 grant, together with separate funding for the Fresno Memorial Auditorium (approximately $115,000) and Fresno city storm sewers ($15,300). For unspecified reasons, the PWA later made a $5,000 reduction to this amount. The Board of Supervisors soon ordered issuance of the construction bonds, and ordered Allied Architects to begin drawing formal plans.

As the original linen plans for the Hall of Records disclose, while Allied received corporate credit for the job, the actual design was that of Henry P. Villalon, assisted by Allied draftsman Milton Wertheimer; civil and structural engineers Clarkson Swain and Frederick W. Kellberg of San Francisco; and by Kellberg's junior associate at that time, J. Albert Paquette.

By October, scale models of both the Hall of Records and Memorial Auditorium, commissioned by Allied and created by Arthur Winslow of Los Angeles, had been put on public display; a photograph of the Hall of Records models shows that it corresponds to the structure as originally built, with the setbacks eliminated and its rectilinear form established.

It had been hoped that construction of the Hall of Records would commence by November 1934, but when plans pushed the cost $15,000 higher than the $395,000 allocated for the project, the Board of Supervisors ordered changes from Allied to stay within the established budget. Final approval of the plans occurred on January 23, 1935, and Public Works Administration approval, as mandated by the grant, was announced by Ernest J. Kump of Allied on the following February 11. General contracting bids for the project were solicited by the Board on February 15, and final approval of the underbidder, William Spivock of San Francisco, was effected on March 26, for a total price of $251,190. When the major subcontractors' bids were approved ($42,983 for plumbing and heating to the Barrett-Hicks Company, and $23,474 for electrical work to Wessel Electric Company), the entire project cost was lowered to $317,647. PWA approval of the contractors was effected on April 22, 1935, and the lowered costs permitted return of some of the federal funds.

Initial Construction, 1935-1937

Contemporary press reports and official records do not mention a ceremonial groundbreaking for the Hall of Records. Construction commenced in a low-key manner on April 24, 1935, when William Spivock's superintendent, R.E. Frankenberger, began staking off the site. The location selected was roughly consonant with the one designated in the 1933 Swartz and Lake civic center plans, in the eastern corner of Courthouse Park. Interestingly, the Hall of Records site was the only building site on which the two plans agreed, and it was the only site on which a proposed building was actually erected.

On December 29, 1935, a photograph in the *Fresno Bee* disclosed that the building's shell was largely in place, and an accompanying article reported that : "Cement has been poured for the three floors and work is now in progress installing plumbing and electrical wiring. It is expected the cement forms on the upper story will be removed within a month, giving a good view of the exterior of the entire building...The building represents the latest in the construction of office buildings. Re-inforced concrete has been used throughout rather than structural steel. It offers a different style of architecture, but one which harmonizes well with the present courthouse building."

The December 29 article further stated that the Hall of Records was to be complete by the following May. Due to difficulties in obtaining skilled labor for the marble work, it was necessary in March 1936 for the Board of Supervisors and the PWA to grant Spivock a forty-five day extension to finish the building. Further problems resulted when W.D. Coates of Allied Architects, the supervising architect of the project, decided that some of the walls required replastering, and Joseph Mast, a subcontractor of Spivock's entrusted with that work, failed to perform in a timely manner. By mid-summer, the *Bee* reported that the replastering job was well underway, that electrical fixture hanging was beginning, and that furnishing of the building (by the Rucker-Fuller Company of San Francisco, for a total of $29,974) was set to begin in a month and take approximately 30 days. However, this operation appears to have been delayed, as an October 25, 1936 *Bee* article noted that J.C. McQuilkin, a Rucker-Fuller vice president, was in Fresno to discuss furniture installation with the Board members, and a December 11 report mentioned that furniture for the job was still being shipped out of New York.

Last-minute details continued to be worked on until the Hall of Records' dedication on April 3, 1937. The affair was festive, featuring a number of county pioneers, ceremonial tree plantings in the adjoining grounds, and tours of the nearly-complete building. P.H. McMurtry, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, stated that day in his opening address: "Unfortunately, it has been impossible to prepare for the occupation of the building by all of its official tenants at the same time. Some of the officials have been in the building for weeks, and some have not been able to yet enter." Along with McMurtry, local superior court judge and Congressman Denver S. Church spoke about Fresno County's history during the ceremonies.

Annex Financing, Design and Construction, 1953-1955

The post-World War II rapid expansion of Fresno County's population and government conspired to outmode the Hall of Records by the early 1950s, less than two decades after its dedication. The county's chief administrative officer, Earl J. Wallace, said that several offices were "exceedingly crowded," and that the assessor's office alone needed 6,525 additional square feet of space to function properly. On January 29, 1953, these conditions led the Board of Supervisors to set aside funds for a proposed fourth floor addition to the Hall of Records. A total of $160,000 was allocated for the project at that time, with an additional appropriation of $165,000 in the following budget year expected to carry the project to completion. Maurice J. Metz, a former associate of W.D. Coates, was retained as the architect, and mechanical engineer Howard McCandless of Fresno was hired to design an air conditioning system for the entire building. As in 1933, a brief fee controversy hindered commencement of the architectural work; the County wished to hold the sum at six percent, while Metz insisted on two additional percentage points, but Wallace's assent to the higher figure cinched the deal.

Preliminary investigations by Metz revealed that column strengthening would be necessary to add a fourth floor to the Hall of Records, netting an additional 13,500 square feet of space, but a three-story annex to the building (at a cost of $440,000) would gain approximately 20,000 square feet. While Supervisor Rutter Armey was dubious about surrendering more open space in Courthouse Park, and building additional floorspace, minus a comprensive building plan for County offices, Board chairman Sidney L. Cruff and the other members favored the immediate solution offered by the annex, and Armey was persuaded to vote affirmatively on the issue with them. By the time of this official approval (August 12, 1953), the square footage of the annex had increased to 22,000, and its overall costs to $550,000. Previous discussions mentioned situating the annex either between the existing building and Van Ness Avenue, or between the building and Tulare Street; the vote fixed its location at the latter site.

With the changeover in expansion plans, the Board attempted to cut Metz's fee back to six percent, but both sides compromised at seven percent and Metz began drawing preliminary plans for the annex. By October 14, the plans were complete and had secured Board approval; Metz's rendering of the annex, published in the *Fresno Bee* on that date, revealed a design fundamentally consonant with both the original structure, and the current exterior appearance of the Hall of Records. Set perpendicular and flush to the existing building, with a projection housing a new main entrance, the horizontal lines and window treatments were a faithful and sensitive echo of Henry Villalon's masterful work. One detail in the rendering, which speaks eloquently of these tendencies, was removal of the two narrow lanterns flanking the original entrance to either side of a planter box, situated to the immediate left of the new entrance. Sadly, this portion of Metz's design was omitted from the annex as built.

Contracting bids for the annex were solicited by the Board on April 21, 1954, and opened on May 25, with the Harris Construction Company of Fresno winning at $537,201. There appears to have been no formal groundbreaking ceremony; by late June removal of several trees and the ornamental "Boy With the Leaking Boot" sculpture was effected to make room for the new structure, and concrete for the second floor annex walls was being poured by November. Construction history repeated itself when W.C. Harris, owner of the construction company, asked the Board in March 1955 for a 41-day extension to complete the annex; winter rains had delayed the concrete-pouring schedule.

By August, continuing office space problems obligated county personnel to begin moving into the annex, despite the fact it was incomplete and the Board had not given its formal acceptance of the construction work. The new annex occupants were the county assessor's office, public works department, planning commission, and civil service commission. It was not until the beginning of November that Harris completed its work, some twenty-six days overdue, owing to "strikes, the failure of subcontractors to perform and a shortage of labor." An understanding Board decided to fix the actual occupancy date at August 23 and accepted the recommendation of County Administrative Officer Wallace, County Counsel Robert M. Wash, and County Public Works Director Carl F. Lind to waive penalties specified in the construction contract. Apparently, the hasty occupation of the building and the delays in completion precluded a formal dedication ceremony for the annex.

Remodeling and Addition of Board Chamber, 1961-1962

Only six years after completion of its annex, the Hall of Records once again became inadequate to service the needs of Fresno County's increasing population and expanding government. This caused County Administrative Officer Ernest N. Mobley to move the public works, planning and building inspection divisions out of the building, and into the remodeled admitting and maternity wing of the Fresno County Hospital, east of the downtown area. The elections division, once situated in the Hall of Records' basement, was relocated in quarters vacated by the county welfare department. He further recommended a $185,000 remodeling program for the emptied space in the Hall of Records and its annex, along with the addition of a second elevator ($61,000) and the upgrading of mechanical and electrical equipment ($15,000).

The overall plan was to move the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrative Office, and the County Counsel's office out of the Fresno County Courthouse and onto the Hall of Records' third floor, using the vacated courthouse space for a new courtroom, and areas housing offices and records. In addition, a new meeting room for the Board was to be created out of the space vacated by the Public Works Department.

To determine the feasibility of this overall space-shuffling project, the county retained the Fresno architectural firm of James Oakes and Robin G. McCline. At first, it was anticipated that the Fresno County Planning Commission would get a boardroom in the remodeled hospital wing's dining room. When this became cost-prohibitive, Oakes suggested that the County investigate the possibility of removing a pillar in the Hall of Records annex, permitting the creation of a more open meeting space that could be used by both the Board and the Planning Commission. It was determined that this would be feasible by threading three horizontal steel beams above the proposed space, transferring the load onto support columns, and removing the pillar. In this effort, Oakes was assisted by J. Albert Paquette of the original Hall of Records design team.

On January 23, 1962, the Board committed formally to Oakes' plan and approved the expenditure of $221,179 for the entire project, which included additional remodeling of the Hall of Records and its annex, the second elevator installation, and the mechanical/electrical improvements. Shortly afterward, this total was increased to $240,056 after the Westinghouse Electric Corporation agreed to supply the second elevator for $32,623, and the R.G. Fisher Company, Inc. of Fresno was selected as the general contractor for the project, for a low bid of $182,570, with work expected to commence the following month and occupy a 180-day schedule.

Despite a slight delay caused by a painters' strike, the remodeling job proceeded largely on schedule. By early July, the project was characterized as seventy-five percent complete, with the basement computer room (used by the auditor-controller's office) and western portion of the first floor, now occupied by the tax collector, already functioning. The purchasing and personnel offices were then relocated to the old tax collector's quarters, also on the first floor. According to Oakes, the computer room is believed to be the first of its kind in Fresno County, and remodeling in that area was especially difficult as a passageway had to be jackhammered open between the previously-separate Hall of Records and annex basements. In the course of this work, a four-foot-wide space was discovered between the basements and appropriated for storage.

By August 28, 1962, the Board of Supervisors was able to hold its first session in the new meeting room, and the second elevator was running by early September. Later in the month, a plaque commemorating the remodeling was added outside the Hall of Records' main entrance, joining three others attached adjacent to the first floor entrances, all of which document the 1935-1937 and 1954-1955 construction activities. With this act, the Fresno County Hall of Records was rendered into the complex which remains today.

Historic Context

1. Period and Locale Context

Origin and Early Growth of Fresno County

Fresno County was created by an act of the California State Legislature, on April 19, 1856. During the first sixteen years of its existence, mining and stock raising predominated as its economic mainstays. The county seat was located at Millerton, centrally located in relation to these activities. However, the routing of the Central Pacific Railroad down the floor of the San Joaquin Valley, and the growth of irrigation networks and agricultural properties in Fresno County's flatlands, dramatically altered the course of its history and growth.

The railroad's arrival within the county, in 1872, and the concurrent expansion of farming in the surrounding country, caused the county seat to be relocated from Millerton to the new town of Fresno. This permitted the export of local agricultural products nationwide and worldwide. Highly favorable soil and climatic conditions, coupled with ease of market access, eventually allowed the county to lead every other in agricultural production—both in California and nationally.

Civic Center Plan, 1918-1929

The sustained growth which Fresno County experienced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries translated into a steady expansion of governmental services. When the county seat came to Fresno, a new courthouse was soon built on a large site three blocks northeast of the railroad tracks, on land donated by the railroad itself. A boxlike, domed structure, it was accepted for use by the county on August 19, 1875. By 1892, it became necessary to add two wings to the building, and two decades after that, space problems in the enlarged building were becoming acute. It is instructive to note that at this time, and until the Hall of Records' construction, the Fresno County Courthouse housed the entire apparatus of county government.

That a space solution was needed for the County was recognized when, in 1917-1918, urban planner Charles Henry Cheney was retained to draft a new civic center plan for Fresno. His ambitious scheme was approved by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, the Fresno City Trustess, and the Fresno City Planning Commission. Trained at the University of California, Berkeley and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Cheney was an enthusiastic exponent of the City Beautiful movement, and his plan was a graceful representation of its principles. It envisioned turning Mariposa Street, from N to O streets, into a tree-lined plaza flanked by four Neoclassical city and county buildings. The County Courthouse was to provide the southwestern terminus of the plaza, with a cultural complex at the northeastern end.

While Cheney's plan was never fully implemented, it retains significance as certain elements of it eventually came into being. A library, post office, auditorium, and two Fresno city halls were built in the immediate vicinity, though none were placed according to Cheney's specifications. More significant, however, is that his master blueprint anticipated the addition of two mirror-image annex buildings to the Courthouse, both of them fronting M Street. This was the first envisioning of what became the Fresno County Hall of Records, and the idea was not forgotten by subsequent civic center planners. In 1933, when local architects Fred L. Swartz and H. Raphael Lake developed rival plans for the area, they both allocated space for a Hall of Records near the corner of Tulare and M streets, not far from the spot Cheney slated for one of the annex buildings. Thus, the Hall of Records concept is traceable to Cheney's plan and represents one of the few instances in which it was partially realized.

2. Architectural Context

Allied Architects

As mentioned earlier, the Allied Architects consortium was formed to promote a "united front" among Fresno's major architects during the Depression years, and resist competition from out-of-town firms seeking commissions during those lean times. Together, its members left a major imprint on Fresno's built environment, one which endures even today.

Ernest Kump, Sr. (1888-1939) was born in San Jose, California, and educated at St. Joseph's College there. After working in the Bay Area building trades, he apprenticed in the Bakersfield architectural firms of Jefferson & Griffith and Bemus & Clark, receiving his license to practice architecture in 1912. Moving to Fresno two years later, he became a prolific designer of area school campuses, notably the Caruthers Union High School, Wasco Union High School, Orosi Union High School, Gustine Union High School, and Alta Grammar School. In Fresno, he drafted plans for the sumptuous Hoover and Maracci homes, and for the now-demolished Elks Lodge on Tulare Street.

William D. (W.D.) Coates (1880-1953) was born in Oakland, California, but raised in Fresno. He apprenticed with the Fresno office of the McDougall Brothers architectural firm (based in San Francisco), but received formal academic training at the University of Pennsylvania under Paul Cret, graduating in 1904. Returning to California, he worked for Frederick H. Meyer as State Architect (1909-1911) and then partnered with H.B. Traver. The latter business moved to Fresno in 1914, where their most important projects included the A. G. Wishon home (1915); the Liberty Theatre (1917); Fresno and Hanford High Schools (1920); and Porterville High School (1921). After Coates and Traver dissolved their partnership, Coates practiced alone until 1948. In that year he became associated professionally with Maurice Metz, who went on to design the Hall of Records annex.

H. Rafael Lake (1894-1958) received his architectural education first at the University of California and then at the Massachusetts Massachusetts Institute of Technology, graduating in 1916. His apprenticeship was served under Cass Gilbert in New York. He moved to Fresno in the early 1920s, designing the Californian Hotel, and became the staff architect for the Trewhitt-Shields construction firm. The firm reorganized as Shields, Fisher and Lake in 1924, then in 1925, reformed as Fisher, Lake and Traver, including H.B. Traver, mentioned earlier. Fisher and Traver manned the firm's Los Angeles office and Lake its Fresno office. Among the firm's projects were the Stillwell Apartments in Long Beach, the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel and the Phoenix Westward Ho Hotel. In Fresno Lake designed the Wilson Theatre (1926), the L. C. Wesley Garage (1931), and the Blue Cross Veterinary Clinic (1936). Lake also designed several fine residences in Fresno, including a Sunnyside home for himself in 1925, the Ralph Merritt Home on Huntington Boulevard in 1926, the Arthur Bernhauer Home in Old Fig Garden in 1928, and the Harry W. Shields Home on Huntington Boulevard in 1936. Lake later partnered with Fresno architects William Hastrup and Elso Di Luck.

Charles H. Franklin (1891-1956) apprenticed to the Reid Brothers architectural firm of San Francisco, best known for its design of the Hotel Del Coronado in Coronado, a suburb of San Diego. In 1912 Franklin moved to Fresno to work for the R. F. Felchlin Company. Licensed as an architect in 1917, Franklin became a full partner in the construction/architectural firm of Felchlin, Shaw & Franklin in 1925. That partnership became one of the first full-service, turn-key firms in California, and designed or built many of Fresno's largest buildings, creating the skyline that characterizes the city today. Among the firm's major projects were the Bank of Italy Building (1918), the Patterson Building (1922), the San Joaquin Light & Power Building (1923), the Pacific Southwest Building (1923), and the Radin & Kamp Department Store (1925). Felchlin, Shaw & Franklin dissolved in 1930. For nearly five years, Franklin practiced alone as he undertook a series of exploratory modernistic designs, including the Kearney Boulevard Gateway of 1933; the Dutch Modern style "gem," the Fresno School Administration Building, for Allied Architects., with the assistance of Ernest Kump, Jr.; and, again with Kump, the Fresno City Hall (1941), selected by the Museum of Modern Art as one of the most significant American structures built between 1932 and 1944. He worked for the Corps of Engineers in the Bay Area during World War II, and subsequently returned to Fresno, partnering with his former office manager, Alastair Simpson. Diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, he retired in 1953, returned to San Francisco and died there in 1956.

Fred L. Swartz (1885-1968) though born in Girard, Kansas, attended Fresno High School and was an architectural apprentice and logger before obtaining formal academic training at the University of Pennsylvania under Paul Cret, as had W.D. Coates. In 1909 he returned to Fresno to work for his father, A. C. Swartz (1846-1919), who had been practicing architecture in Fresno since 1890, and later, with C.J. Ryland. As junior partner in the firms of Swartz & Son, Swartz, Hotchkin & Swartz, Swartz & Swartz, and senior partner in Swartz and Ryland, he established a solid reputation as an architect of schools, commercial blocks, and homes. After the Swartz and Ryland partnership ended, Swartz joined

Allied Architects of Fresno and assisted with the Fresno County Hall of Records and Fresno Memorial Auditorium designs, both funded by the PWA. He briefly joined Coates in 1937 to design the Fresno Scottish Rite Temple. During World War II, Swartz worked as a civilian architect for the Navy and designed a SeaBees base near Pleasanton, California. After the war Swartz formed the firm of Swartz & Hyberg with William G. Hyberg. They designed the Fresno County Library (1958) and C. L. McLane High School (1959). Swartz retired from practice in 1965, and was regarded as the dean of Fresno architects at the time of his death.

Edward W. Peterson (1886-1977) studied architecture at Armour Institute in Chicago, now Illinois Institute of Technology. Coming to California in 1906, Peterson settled in Kingsburg to work on his uncle's ranch. After the San Francisco earthquake, he went to San Francisco to work on the reconstruction of government buildings. He then worked in Sacramento for the California Department of Engineering before moving to Fresno in 1920. A modest and quiet man who pursued his career without leaving much documentation to identify the breadth of his work, among his known projects were a number of small rural schools, including Bowles School (1922), Caruthers School (1922) and Raisin City School (ca. 1925). His largest and perhaps finest work was the Fowler Presbyterian Church (1922). For a short time he was associated with Fresno's Glass & Butner Architects, and is said to have worked on the plans for the Physicians Building (1926), which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. During his tenure with Allied Architects he designed Fire Station No. 3 in 1938, a striking PWA Moderne structure in Fresno's Chinatown. His 1949 design for the U.S. Post Office in the Tower District is a clean little International style building that adds measurably to the character of that unique commercial neighborhood. At the time of his death, he was the last surviving member of the Allied partnership.

Henry P. Villalon (1894-1984)

While surviving records indicate that Coates and Lake made supervisory contributions to the Hall of Records construction, the basic design was that of Henry P. Villalon, affiliated with Allied Architects as a draftsman during the Depression era. Born on March 5, 1894, in San Francisco, California, he was the second of eight children of Damian Villalon (1863-1940) and Carmen Flores Villalon (1872-1937). His father, who worked in a cigar factory during the early 1880s, and later became the head barber at the Palace Hotel, and his mother, an operatic singer, immigrated to California in 1863 and 1883 respectively.

Reared in San Francisco, Henry Villalon completed his early education in local schools. As a youngster, Henry displayed a precocious artistic talent, and his father proudly displayed his son's drawings in his hotel shop. These early works of art are said to have attracted the attention of a prominent San Francisco financier and benefactor of the arts. Family lore recalls this early patron to have been either Mortimer Fleishhacker (1866-1953) or his brother, Herbert Fleishhacker (1872-1957), who reportedly commissioned

several drawings from the novice artist, and paid the then-princely sum of $20 at that time for the youth's work.

Henry Villalon appears to have taken his first entry-level job as a draftsman while still a teenager. In late 1911 or early 1912, Henry entered the office of German-American architect Joseph Cahen (1877-1961), who was responsible for various projects in San Francisco, producing plans for numerous apartments and flats, including the James Ward Apartments (1913) at Clay and Taylor Streets, and the three-story Auerbach Mill (1918). By 1913, Villalon had begun organized studies in architecture as a member of the San Francisco Architectural Club, training principally under Loring P. Rixford (1870-1946), as well as other prominent program instructors and guest lecturers. Rixford had graduated with honors from the University of California in 1894, then spent three and a half years in Paris at the École des Beaux Arts. Before establishing his own office, Rixford had worked for the greatly influential Albert Pissis (1852-1914), and was one of a distinguished group of architects who organized the Beaux Arts Society ateliers in San Francisco in 1901, under the auspices of the Architectural League of the Pacific Coast.

As a young man, Henry Villalon tried without success to secure a job in the office of the legendary Julia Morgan (1872-1957), an École-trained architect whose work he much admired. When meeting with Henry, Morgan spoke positively of his portfolio, but counseled him to visit her again after he had gained more experience. Henry did not return to Morgan's office for a second interview, as she had suggested, but drew enormous encouragement from having spoken with her. According to Villalon family history, Henry had also made plans to depart for Paris to study at the École des Beaux Arts, but his mother fell seriously ill, forcing him to abandon his formal educational goals in order to work to assist in her care. His subsequent pursuit of on-the-job training in architecture, including intermittent employment as a pressman in the printing trades, would help frame his highly developed understanding of historical styles, define his personal philosophy of design and craftsmanship, and assure his later achievements as a superior designer, production draftsman and architectural detailer.

Henry Villalon's first major opportunity came during the planning and construction of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (P.P.I.E.), when he was one of six architectural assistants hired in 1914 to work throughout the spring and summer months for Cuban architect Francisco Javier Centurión y Maceo (1886-1969). The designer of notable structures, such as Havana's Casa de Alfonso Gómez Mena (1910-12) and the San Carlos Institute of Key West (1924), Centurión went on to great renown in both Cuba and Florida. As a twenty-year-old student still learning the skills of his trade, Villalon tested his early mettle under Centurión's guidance, rose to become one of Centurión's lead architectural draftsmen, and paved his way toward an enviable period of professional apprenticeship.

By the opening of the San Francisco World's Fair in 1915, Villalon had accepted a position as a draftsman for Richard W. Moller (1876-1932). Moller was a prominent Bay Area general contractor known throughout California as a builder of schools, later including campus structures at the College of the Pacific (now the University of the Pacific), Stockton. Villalon continued working as a junior draftsman in San Francisco until 1918, when he relocated to Fresno to complete a two-year stint in the office of Ernest J. Kump, Sr. This move represented a mutually beneficial professional match for both men. Kump was a school specialist, and Villalon brought solid trade-based skills to Kump's Fresno practice, having come from Moller's construction company with its school-building expertise.

While working in Kump's office during the late teens, Villalon assisted in the design and production of eleven known projects. These included the Alameda Grammar School in Fresno County; the Prairie-style Esrey Residence, Lemoore; the Perry Auto Garage, Chowchilla; the Kaweah Grammar School in Tulare County; the Grangeville School in Kings County; the exquisite River Cobble Craftsman-style George Seubert Residence, Reedley; the W.E. Dunlap Residence, Tulare; the Mendota Grammar School in Fresno County; the barn-like Lemoore Union High School Auditorium; the Holt Residence, Reedley; and the Sig Levy Residence, Fresno.

Henry Villalon returned to San Francisco in 1920. By then, he was a journeyman draftsman with considerable experience. He entered the office of Alfred Henry Jacobs (1882-1954), a noted theatre designer who had been educated at the University of California, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the École des Beaux Arts, and later joined the firm of architect Carl Werner (1875-1943). Werner, who had matriculated at M.I.T. during the late 1890s, built a major reputation in northern California as an expert in the design of Masonic facilities, Christian Science churches, municipal buildings and schools. Werner is credited with designing the striking Moderne-style Scottish Rite Temple (1937) in Fresno, along with Fresno architects Fred L. Swartz and W.D. Coates. During his association with Werner, Villalon is said to have been heavily involved in the firm's Masonic projects on the East Bay.

Following the 1929 stock market collapse, Villalon held a position with San Francisco architect George H. Weimeyer (1886-1963). During his tenure in Weimeyer's office, the firm produced its best-known work in the 1930 additions to the Vista del Arroyo Hotel in Pasadena. A faltering national economy, and no doubt the lure of Hollywood, encouraged Villalon to relocate to Los Angeles circa 1931. There he went to work for the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer motion picture studio as a set designer in its art department. In 1934, he was again recruited by his former employer from the late teens, Ernest J. Kump Sr., to return to Fresno, where he would ultimately become a project designer for a number of high-profile Depression-era projects.

As would become clearly evident by the mid-1930s, the traditionally-trained Kump harbored a deep disdain for the modernistic styles being promoted by the PWA during this period. In what became a major turning point in his career, Kump relinquished the task of designing the Records facility to Henry Villalon, one of his two draftsmen at that time. Villalon, who was comfortable working in all the Period Revival and National styles, and also a great admirer of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, had a distinct and natural flair for the Moderne.

Villalon radically reconceived the design of the building, departing from an earlier (and far more academic) study of the principal elevation. This early proposal had been published in the *Fresno Bee* on December 31, 1933. A later perspective rendering, drawn in pencil & coloured pastels, dramatically anticipates Villalon's ultimate scaled-back revisions. The final version of his plan was then meticulously crafted in an "elaborate scale" architectural model by Arthur F. Winslow (1903-1954) of Los Angeles.

Villalon's final drawings, officially PWA Project No. 8327, are dated January 2, 1935, and handsomely detail his thoughtful, simple embellishment of a solidly massed structure, including his vivid schematic proposals for the contents of the entry frieze panel and companion sculpted medallions. A review of construction phase correspondence and memoranda preserved at the California State Library indicates that Villalon began with considerable artistic and technical control over the Hall of Records project during its construction. However, this role was later wrenched away owing to unspecified dissension at Allied Architects, with Coates and Lake taking over these responsibilities. By June 8, 1935, administrative building phase oversight was largely dictated on behalf of the entire Allied group by Coates. Coates then delegated the approval of final shop drawings and product samples to Lake. Nonetheless, Villalon continued to be consulted throughout the balance of the project, generally through the designated chain of command. On October 27, 1936, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors accepted the completed structure. When critiqued in *Architect and Engineer* in 1937, the building was lauded for "fenestration and decorative courses ... handled ... so skillfully and adroitly that the dangers of monotony and severity ... in a rectangular prism were completely avoided."

Soon after the Hall of Records drawings were signed off as complete in early 1935, Kump's office secured a private commission to design the unapologetically urbane Hart's Restaurant (1936), located in downtown Fresno. In Villalon's hands, this downtown eatery became a dazzling display of colorful neon ("the largest neon display in the San Joaquin Valley at the time"), as well as glazed terra cotta tiles and sleek polished aluminum. Its Art Deco-style clock was a kinetic masterpiece in the central district, until hurriedly dismantled two decades ago. The loss of Hart's to an unsympathetic remodeling - at the hands of absentee property owners - ranks among the worst historic preservation tragedies in the city's history.

Kump's office, with Henry Villalon working on staff, completed a number of high-profile plans during the latter half of the 1930s. Among these projects were Visalia residences for Dr. W. C. Zeller and T.J. Crowe (1936); the Porterville Clinic (1937); a handsomely executed Monterey Colonial-style residence in Fresno for Dr. Kenneth Leuchauer (1937); the Visalia Elementary School (1938); and the Madera Masonic Lodge No. 280 (1939). In addition to the Leuchauer Residence, Henry Villalon is also credited for earlier design contributions to a landmark Fresno home on North Van Ness Boulevard. Designed for Dr. Floyd L. R. Burkes in 1934, the impressive, mock half-timber home was constructed by premier local builders Orville R. Taylor (1898-1968) and Dennis Wheeler (1899-1991) of Taylor-Wheeler, Inc. These two historically significant pre-war Old Fig Garden properties are widely admired in Fresno for their high architectural values, and are attributed, in whole or part, to Villalon.

Villalon, who had forged a strong bond with the ailing Kump, remained with the firm until Kump's death on November 12, 1939. He then returned to San Francisco at the age of 46. Like countless mid-career architects, engineers and design professionals who served the military in civilian posts during the war years, Villalon worked as a draftsman throughout much of World War II, designing vessels for the United States Navy. By 1944, he had taken a position as a draftsman with Western Asbestos Company, a military contractor and acoustical specialty firm with facilities in San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Richmond and Salt Lake City. He remained in San Francisco with Western Asbestos after the war, but was actively recruited during the late 1940s to return to Fresno.

Accepting a position with Inland Showcase & Fixture Company, Villalon settled in Fresno for the third and final time in 1949. A major architectural specialties firm, Inland had been founded by Lee Terzian (1909-1987) in 1932, to build "custom-made bars, backbars and sophisticated refrigeration boxes." For the balance of his career Villalon would work as the head of Inland's engineering department, serving clients in California, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho and Guam. The firm completed interior architecture contracts in Fresno for Bank of America, Gottschalks Department Store, McKesson-Robbins Pharmaceutical Company, Pardini's Restaurant, Patrick James Men's Store, Hastings Men's Furnishings of San Francisco, Edmonds Jewelers and Fig Garden Village.

One of Villalon's largest projects during the late 1960s was completed for airline executive and real estate developer Kirk Kerkorian (1917-). Inland crafted carved mahogany doors and theatre paneling for Kerkorian's new Las Vegas International Hotel. Completed in 1969, the International was called the largest hotel in the world at that time, and was reported to have cost between $60-80 million. In 1976 the Woodwork Institute of California recognized Villalon's highly-crafted architectural interiors for the Silver Dollar Hofbrau, located at the corner of West Shaw Avenue and Freeway 41 in Fresno.

Villalon died at age 90 on April 4, 1984, in Fresno, California, survived by an impressive catalogue of work produced over seven decades in architecture and construction-related offices throughout the state, including his masterful design for the Fresno County Hall of Records, located at the corner of Tulare and M Streets in Fresno, California.

Sculptural Ornamentation

Gladding, McBean & Company of Lincoln and San Francisco, since 1875 a major supplier of custom-crafted terra cotta for significant buildings located throughout the Pacific Coast and the nation, produced architectural ornamentation for the new Hall of Records. Carved and molded to Henry Villalon's inventively-drawn specifications, these terra cotta features were crafted under the personal supervision of the renowned German-born sculptor and modeler, Ernest Kadel (1885-1959). Kadel had immigrated to the United States in 1902. Shortly thereafter he apprenticed under a notable group of European artisans at Gladding, McBean's Lincoln facility, including then chief sculptor and modeler, Italian-born Pio Tognelli (1880-1942). Tognelli had studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence, Italy, before immigrating to northern California after 1904. By the mid-1930s, during Kadel's tenure as the company's chief sculptor and modeler, Gladding, McBean operated ten plants and maintained principal offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, Portland, Seattle and Spokane.

At the close of his long and influential career, Kadel completed the monumental full-scale modeling for the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial in Los Angeles, designed by fellow German-born sculptor Henry G. Kreis (1899-1963) of Connecticut. When dedicated in 1958, the Los Angeles memorial was "the largest bas relief in the United States." Two decades earlier, the seven bas-relief ornamental panels for the Fresno County Hall of Records were comparatively small in scale, and just a portion of a much larger subcontract that included truckloads of wainscoting, coping, plinth courses, entrance surrounds and other decorative elements. Nonetheless, the modestly-scaled rectangular tableaux and companion medallions required and received Ernest Kadel's most thoughtful attention to sculptural detail throughout the entire modeling process. Incorporating a number of minor textural and compositional changes requested by senior representatives of Allied Architects, Kadel gave exquisite three-dimensional expression to Henry Villalon's stylized and symbolic two-dimensional figurative drawings (evocative of the idealized agricultural worker), that had first been sketched in 1934, then formalized in his final building plans as signed on January 2, 1935.

By January 6, 1936, a partial delivery of seven sculptural panels had been shipped to Fresno from the Lincoln studio and factory. San Joaquin Materials Company of Fresno, a clay products and building materials firm managed by Hubert A. Rothgarn (1888-1952), coordinated their shipment and installation.

Cast stone and other embellishments for the Hall of Records were supplied by the Sculptors Work Shop of San Francisco, located at 121 Fourteenth Street. The Sculptors Work Shop had been managed during its early operations by Stephen [Istvan] Miletin (1881-1927) and Albert Bernasconi (1888-1978). By 1936, Lorenzo Cardini (1885-1969) maintained his studio at the Fourteenth Street location under the same business name. All three sculptors had produced carved ornamentation for William Randolph Hearst at his San Simeon estate, as well as other notable works throughout the Bay Area. Cardini, in addition to his role as the cast stone artisan on the Fresno County Hall of Records, is to this day recognized for his beautifully crafted "Standing Swan" lampposts, carved after drawings executed by designer Thaddeus Joy (1883-1942) for architect Julia Morgan, and situated along the Neptune Terrace at Hearst Castle.

Maurice J. Metz (1920-1975)

Maurice Jean Metz (1920-1975) was born on May 20, 1920, in Los Angeles, California, the son of Franklin Amandus Metz (1884-1954), an automotive mechanic, and Bessie Barkley Metz (1897-1955), a secretary by training, and later a clerk in the Fresno County Tax Collector's office.

By the age of 10, Metz resided with his parents in rural Fresno County, where the family lived on State Highway 99 near McCall Avenue. Metz entered Fowler Union High School in 1934, after completing his early education at Fowler Elementary School, but transferred to Sanger Union High School two weeks into his freshman year. He graduated from SUHS in 1938, where he served as manager of the football team, assistant manager of the track team, and participated in the Junior/Senior Hi-Y, Student Council Citizenship Board, debate team, and the Mechanical Drawing Club, in which he was designated "Chief Draftsman."

Metz began a traditional apprenticeship as a junior draftsman in the Fresno office of Edward W. Peterson, one of the Allied Architects partners. Metz then took a position with David H. Horn, FAIA (1885-1967), a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of U.C. Berkeley who had apprenticed under legendary California architects Julia Morgan, Bernard Maybeck, and William Wurster. After a formative period in Horn's office, Metz moved to the Bay Area to complete the balance of his advanced apprenticeship, formal education, and professional office training.

Again working as a draftsman, Metz secured his first job in San Francisco with the influential structural engineering firm of William Peyton Day & Associates, followed by a position in 1942 with the renowned consulting civilian military engineer, Clyde E. Bentley, C.E., M.E., E.E. In 1943, Metz joined architect Frank Wynkoop, formerly in practice in Los Angeles, Seattle, Fresno and Bakersfield, who had trained under Parkinson & Parkinson and Swasey & McAfee in Southern California, and was a specialist in school facility architecture. During this period, Metz also affiliated with the San Francisco

Architectural Club, and completed nearly 18 months training under the auspices of its historically prestigious program.

In 1944, Metz accrued additional office experience working with Stone & Mulloy (later Stone, Mulloy, Marraccini and Patterson), and then John H. Devitt (later San Francisco Assistant City Architect), in preparation to enter the University of California, Berkeley in 1945. Admitted to a special (non-degree) program, Metz resided in Oakland, California while undertaking courses in *Elementary Design & Theory* under Professor Stafford L. Jory, and *Design & Theory: Junior Problems*, taught by professors Michael A. Goodman and Raymond W. Jeans.

Metz subsequently worked on the East Bay as a draftsman for the prominent Oakland firm of Reynolds & Chamberlain, before taking a position with famed designer Mario J. Ciampi in San Francisco. His first position working as a designer himself then came in the office of Ellison & King, Engineers. William Henry Ellison and Stanley C. King were noted for their pioneer work designing concrete ships and barges for the American military during World War II, at the Belair Shipyards in South San Francisco, and were earlier associated with engineering the Tower of the Sun for the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939-1940.

In 1948, Metz returned to Fresno to join architect W.D. Coates, another former member of the Allied partnership. Metz received his certificate to practice architecture in California on April 14, 1948 (License No. C-998), ultimately becoming a partner in the firm of Coates & Metz. After Coates' death in 1953, Metz practiced in Fresno until the early 1970s, when he took a position as a production architect in the Burlingame, California office of St. Louis-based Bank Building Corporation (BBC).

BBC was at that time "the nation's largest firm specializing in planning, designing and construction management of financial and health care facilities." Founded in 1913 in St. Louis, the firm grew to have regional offices in Chicago; Dallas; Denver; Atlanta; Bloomfield, Connecticut; Richmond, Virginia; and Burlingame; and employed 1600 professionals holding "more than 260 architectural [certificates] and more than 75 engineering licenses."

During his professional career, Metz was a member of the American Institute of Architects, having first joined as a Junior Associate in San Francisco in 1946. He was elected to AIA Corporate Membership in 1948, then served as President of the San Joaquin Chapter, and later as Secretary-Treasurer of the AIA's California Council. He also served as chair and co-chair for Fresno County March of Dimes fund raising campaigns during the 1950s, in the fight against polio.

Notable architectural commissions from Metz's career include the Fresno County Hall of Records Annex (1955); Fresno Colony School (1955); Nordic School, Scandinavian School District (1956); Tranquility Union High School (1956-1958); Bryant Elementary School Additions, Dos Palos (1958); Madison Elementary School (1958); Scandinavian School (1958); Sierra Hospital (1958); Viking School Additions (1958); Vinland School Additions (1958); Leif Ericson School (1960); Physicians Osteopathic Hospital, Bakersfield (1960); Andrew Jackson School, Selma (1961); Temperance-Kutner School (1965); Fresno County Juvenile Hall Dormitory Additions (1970); and various production projects for banks and credit unions while serving under architect Carl R. Klager (1925-1983) at BBC.

Maurice Jean Metz died in Mountain View, California, on October 16, 1975, at the age of 55, after a long struggle with kidney disease.

James E. Oakes (1929-) and Robin Gay McCline (1928-2008)

As noted above, the major contribution of the Oakes and McCline firm to the Hall of Records was limited to work and meeting spaces, leaving the exterior and interior public spaces untouched, and not altering the fundamental character of the building. However, as with the other architects and professional alliances associated with the Hall of Records, Oakes and McCline did leave a notable legacy within greater Fresno's built environment. Among the firm's projects were Modernist structures, such as the McKinley Medical Center (1960), the Delta Gamma Sorority House (1962), the L. Dean Whitlow Dentist Building (1962), and the Bullard Professional Center (1964, 1965). They were also responsible, in part, for public housing designs within the South Angus Street Redevelopment Project (1962-1964); some of the structures in Roeding Park's Storyland (1961-1964); and helped draft the master Civic Center plan for the City of Fresno (1965-1966).

Oakes attended Fresno State College and served in the 850th Engineer Aviation Battalion, activated at Hammer Field (later, the Fresno Air Terminal). He received his architecture degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 1951, returned to Fresno and worked as a draftsman for David Horn, FAIA (1885-1967), as had Maurice Metz. Subsequently, he teamed with McCline for approximately a decade. A member of the Artists League of Fresno and the San Joaquin Architectural Club, he established a notable record as a historic preservationist. One of his earliest efforts in that area was the re-creation of the Millerton Fresno County Courthouse after its dismantling, a lengthy project which stretched from 1955 to 1970. He was also instrumental in saving the Old Administration Building on the onetime Fresno State College (now, Fresno City College) campus, and helped renovate the Fresno Water Tower into a visitors' center.

In his solo career, McCline—who studied at the University of Utah and graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with an architecture degree—tackled a number of industrial, commercial and residential commissions within Fresno, including an addition to the Gray Lift Plant (1966); the conversion of a portion of the Fresno Memorial Auditorium into formal theater space (1968); the Ridge Electric Motor Company and St. Moritz Apartments (also 1968); and Sierra View Plaza, 1988. McCline also established himself as a notable plein air watercolorist. He achieved membership in the California Watercolor Society, belonged to the Artists League of Fresno, and participated in numerous one-man and group shows. In addition, he served as president of both the American Institute of Architects' San Joaquin Valley Chapter (1970) and of the Fresno Arts Center (1964-1965). At the time of his death, he was professor emeritus in architecture at Fresno City College.

3. Stylistic Context

That the Fresno County Hall of Records is part of a loosely-knit and notable collection of downtown Fresno Depression-era buildings has been long recognized. Writing in *The Architect and Engineer* (April 1937), Homer M. Hadley observed:

> About two years ago, the city of Fresno...found, as many another American city has discovered, that a number of its public buildings were obsolete and in need of enlargement, modernization, or replacement...
>
> As a result, the city now has a fine large Municipal Auditorium, a new Hall of Records...and a School Administration Building. All of these are permanent, spacious, carefully planned buildings...They constitute a notable group of public buildings with which the city may well feel pleased and satisfied.
>
> Of the three, the largest and most impressive is the Memorial Auditorium. It is set well back from the street, on a site which covers an entire city block and the unobstructed views from all sides give proper and suitable recognition to the commanding size and scale of its masses...
>
> The Fresno School Administration Building...is modern in its architectural design and treatment...The main entrance at the principal corner of the building, with its glass blocks, very wide canopy above the entrance, metal and glass doors and other details, is fully modern...

Stylistically, the Auditorium is identified as Monumental Moderne with Art Deco details, and the Administration Building (now, a City of Fresno office building) as Dutch Moderne.

Within the immediate neighborhood, the 1937 trio were soon joined by the U.S. Post Office, across the street from the Hall of Records (1939, Lewis A. Simon and William Dewey Foster; Monumental Moderne); and, two years later, Franklin and Kump's City Hall (1941, International), whose completion marked the end of the late Depression-era public building surge in Fresno. Physically detached from the other buildings, but part of this heritage thanks to its connection with Allied Architects and its PWA Moderne style, is Edward Peterson's Fresno Fire Department No. 3 Station, located in Fresno's Chinatown.

Conclusion

The Fresno County Hall of Records, designed by Henry P. Villalon, a master designer/draftsman affiliated with Ernest J. Kump, Sr. (a principal in the historically influential architectural alliance Allied Architects of Fresno), appears eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, at the local level of significance, under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria. The property qualifies as follows:

1. The core structure exceeds, by 22 years, the minimum requirement of 50 years in age.

2. It is the work of a heretofore unrecognized master architectural designer.

Architectural designer:	Henry P. Villalon
Production architects:	Ernest J. Kump & Company, E.J. Kump, Sr., principal
Architects of record:	Allied Architects of Fresno, W.D. Coates, chairman

3. It is a notable built example of the PWA Art Moderne style that was recognized at the time of its construction for its overall excellence by *The Architect and Engineer* (April 1937), the leading regional professional architecture and engineering journal of its era.

4. It substantially meets the required standards of architectural and material Integrity, despite more recent additions and alterations.

The compiler acknowledges the research and editorial assistance of Roger B. Taylor, and additional contributions of John Edward Powell.

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A complete bibliography of materials consulted would run to approximately 30 typewritten pages. What follows is an abbreviated list of the most helpful sources used in compiling this nomination:

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1. Northwest elevation showing porch, viewed facing south.
2. Porch detail, northwest side of building, viewed facing southeast.
3. Northeast elevation, viewed facing southeast.
4. Southwest elevation, viewed facing east.
5. Southwest entrance, viewed facing east.
6. Relief over southwest entrance, viewed facing east.
7. Medallion over southwest entrance, viewed facing east.
8. Southeast elevation, viewed facing northwest.
9. Southeast elevation showing addition, viewed facing northwest.
10. Northeast elevation, viewed facing west.
11. Northeast entrance, viewed facing west.
12. Three medallions on northeast side of building, viewed facing west.
13. Single medallion on northeast side of building
14. Dedication plaque in west entry, viewed facing north.
15. West hallway showing elevators—first floor, viewed facing east.
16. Elevators—first floor, viewed facing east.
17. Elevator door showing mailbox detail—first floor, viewed facing east.
18. Interior stairway—first floor, viewed facing southeast.
19. Stair railing detail—first floor, viewed facing southeast.
20. North entrance and hallway—first floor, viewed facing north.
21. Drinking fountain—first floor hallway, viewed facing southeast.
22. Original oak bench—third floor hallway, viewed facing east.

23. Fire escape sign—second floor hallway, viewed facing north.

24. Art glass light fixture—second floor, viewed facing north.

FRESNO COUNTY HALL OF RECORDS

2281 Tulare Street
Fresno, California 93721

UTM Zone
Part of APN 466-160-01T

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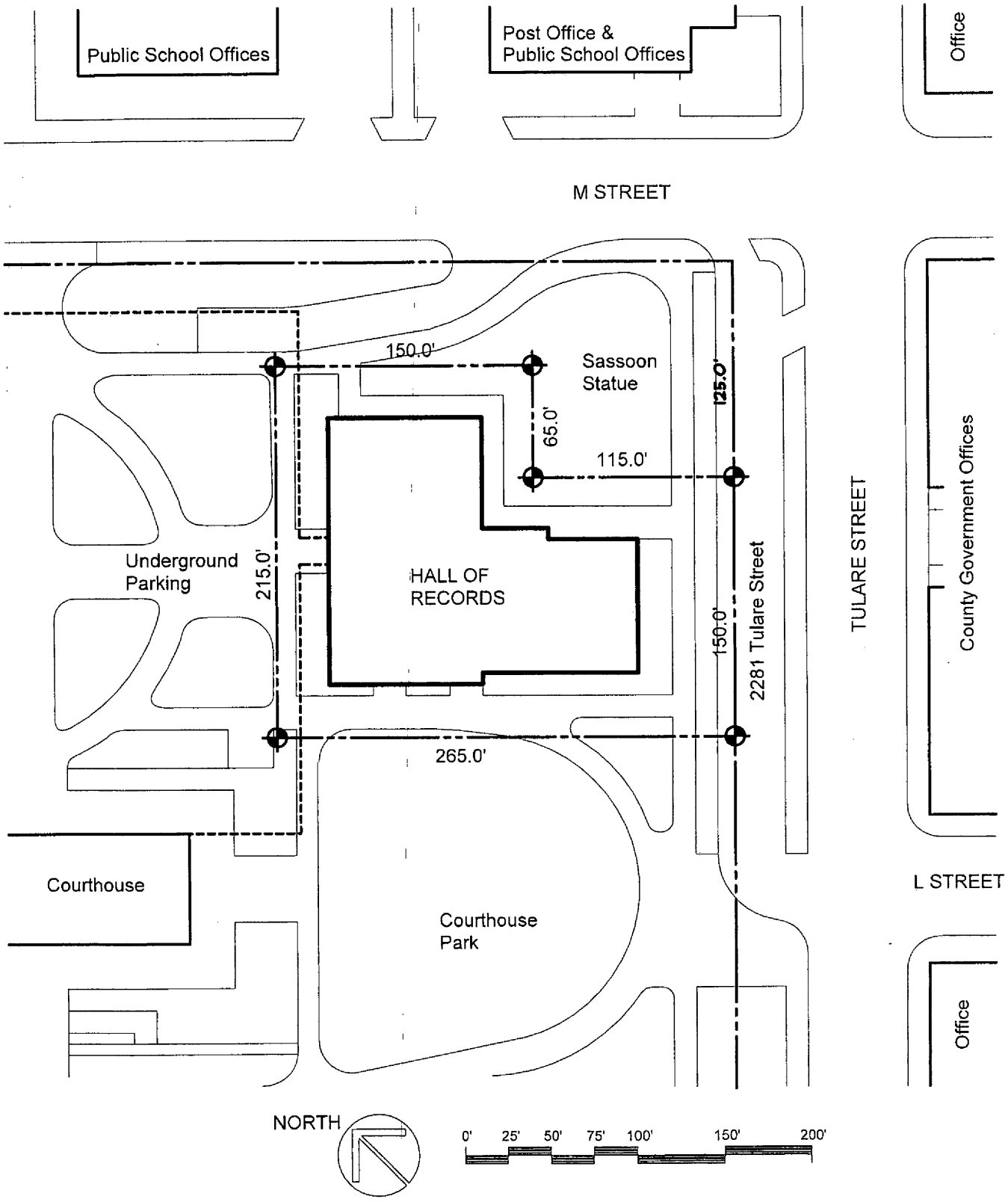

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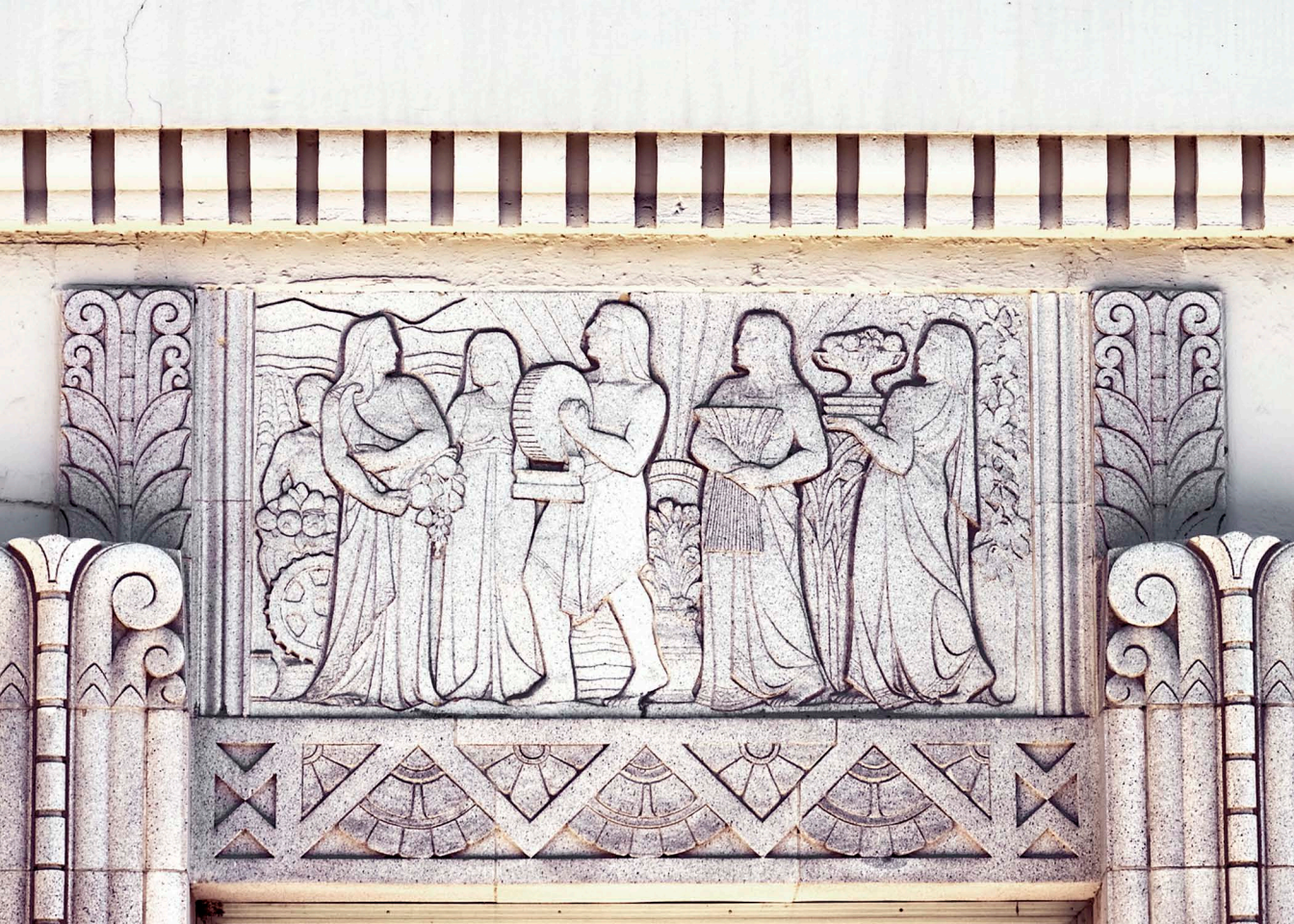

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HALL·OF·RECORDS
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OF PUBLIC WORKS
PROJECT NO. 8327
FRESNO·COUNTY
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P·H·McMURTRY
— CHAIRMAN —
MIKE JONES
W·A·COLLINS
C·TODD CLARK
T·C·EFIRD
ALLIED ARCHITECTS OF FRESNO
CHAS·H·FRANKLIN H·RAFAEL LAKE
FRED·L·SWARTZ E·W·PETERSON
ERNEST·J·KUMP W·D·COATES

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