

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | FEB 12 1986 |
| DATE ENTERED | MAR 14 1986 |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Billings Post Office & Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Billings Downtown Station

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2602 First Avenue North

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Billings

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

Montana

CODE

30

COUNTY

Yellowstone

CODE

111

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | NA | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Postal Service, Western Regional Headquarters

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

California

94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Yellowstone County Assessor's Office

STREET & NUMBER

2620 Third Avenue North

CITY, TOWN

Billings

STATE

Montana

59101

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>NA</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Billings Downtown Station is a three story structure on a raised basement with flat roof. The structure consists of reinforced concrete and steel framing with brick and stone exterior. The front facade is symmetrical and divided into seven bays--five in a slightly projecting central salient and one in each of the end wings. Horizontally rusticated limestone delineates the first story with a molded belt course separating the first story from the undifferentiated dressed limestone of the second and third stories. A balustraded parapet resting atop a projecting cornice terminates the facade. Segmental arches with rusticated voussiors frame the five central bays of the first story. Round-arch window bays extending through the second and third stories are aligned over the first floor bays of the central salient.

The present building has been twice altered. In 1932, the original single story wings flanking the central section were extended to three stories and the building was expanded to the rear (doubling the original side dimensions). The front and north facades remain unaltered from this addition. In 1940, an addition was made to the rear central and southern portions of the building. In addition, several interior alterations have been made, including the conversion of the courtroom to offices in 1965 and lobby remodel in 1980.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The basement and footings are constructed of concrete. Steel is used for structural framing which is faced with dressed buff-colored limestone on the north and east facades. Buff-colored brick is used for the west and south (rear) facades. The balustraded parapet consists of terra cotta. Granite is used for the entry stairs and belt coursing. The roof is metal with tar composition.

The building is three stories in height and faced with limestone. The front facade (north) is relatively flat, symmetrical in elevation, and displays classical

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proportions. The main portion of the facade projects slightly from the side wings and is divided into five bays. The flanking wings each contain a single bay. The first floor consists of three entry bays, flanked by one window on either side. The entries consist of double aluminum framed glass doors. A flat aluminum panel is set above the doors, with an arched single-light transom window above. Rusticated limestone voussoirs form a segmental arch to frame the openings of the entries and the flanking windows. The horizontal joints limestone facing is rusticated to provide a horizontal emphasis to the first floor.

The windows of the main portion of the facade are 1-over-1 light double hung wood sash with an arched single-light transom. Single cast iron lanterns affixed to the wall are located between the entry bays and flanking windows. The first floor windows of the end wings are smaller than those of the main portion of the facade. One (west corner) is blocked-in and the other (east corner) consist of paired single-light wood sash with a single-light transom. The openings are topped by a flat arch formed by rusticated voussoirs.

A narrow molding, which projects slightly from the facade plane, separates the first floor from the second and third floors. The main portion of the facade contains five arched bays corresponding to the bays of the first floor. These window bays extend through the second and third floors. Flat pilasters topped with flat, fluted capitals separate and frame the window bays. A fret work molding runs above the window arches between the capitals. The pilasters support relatively simple entablature consisting of unembellished frieze, leaf molding, dentils, and projecting cornice. A balustraded parapet of buff-colored terra cotta rests atop the cornice.

Additional emphasis to the windows is provided by a molded semi-circular arch supported by flat pilasters

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and capitals. The keystones project out from and above the arches. The lower portions of the window bays consist of a single-light flanked by side lights, the mid-portion consist of horizontal louvers, and the upper portion a four-light semicircular arch. Wood sash frames the windows. The end wings consist of a large second floor window (1-over-1 light double hung wood sash with single-light transom window) and a smaller third floor window (paired single-light transom window) and a second floor window is topped with a projecting window head supported by scrolled ancons. The third floor window is framed by slightly projecting limestone molding.

The east facade (along North 26th Street) is flat, faced with limestone, and consists of 11 window bays. The first floor rustication of the front facade also extends along the east side first floor. The windows are paired single-light wood sash with single-light transom. A flat, rusticated voussior arch tops the window openings. As with the front facade, a narrow molding course separates the first and upper floors. Flat pilasters divide the window bays which are slightly recessed. The pilasters also support an entablature topped with balustraded parapet identical to that described on the front facade. The bays extend from the top of the first floor to the top of the third floor with a simple limestone panel dividing the second and third floors. The second floor windows are 1-over-1 light double hung wood sash with a single-light transom. The corner windows, as on the front facade, are topped with a projecting window head supported by scrolled ancons. The third floor windows consist of paired single-light windows framed with wood sash.

The southeast corner of the building (added in 1965) consists of a three-story buff-colored brick enclosed emergency stair well. With the exception of double metal doors topped with a single-light transom window,

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this addition is unadorned. The cornice line extends from the main portion of the building and consists of limestone (lacks leaf molding and dentils of original).

The west facade (facing alley between Sheraton Hotel) is essentially the same in motif as the east facade with the following exceptions. The rear half of the facade is recessed approximately 15 feet and brick (buff-colored) is used for the second and third floors of the front portion and the entirety of the rear portion. The window details of the east facade are repeated on the west with the exception of the second floor corner window which lacks the projecting window head (and is bricked-in). Horizontally rusticated limestone is used on the front half of the first floor. The rustication is carried to the rear half, but with brick.

The rear facade consists of the loading platform and rear of emergency stair well. Buff-colored brick is used as facing for the entire facade. The loading platform is concrete and covered by a flat metal roof and projecting marquee. Six window bays identical to those described on the east facade are located over the loading platform. The entablature is also identical to that of the front and side facades. The parapet, however, is solid with the exception of balustraded sections on the ends. The emergency stair well is plain brick except for single windows on each of the three floors in the western corner.

The building has received two major additions and two minor renovations over the years. These additions, however, have been faithful to the design character of the original. The first major change took place in 1932 when the side wings of the first floor were extended to three stories and the building was extended to the rear to approximately double the building size. In 1940, the remainder of the third floor was filled in (1940 construction photo shows building as completed in

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1932 with framing for third floor expansion). In 1965 the emergency stair well was added to the southeast corner, second and third floor rooms were altered, and the original courtroom was abandoned (for offices and mechanical equipment rooms). Finally, extensive interior remodeling took place in 1980, however, no changes were made to the exterior facade.

Interior materials consist of the following: basement--concrete floors with some terrazzo and asphalt plank covering, plaster and concrete walls, and plaster and concrete ceilings; first floor lobby--terrazzo floors with marble edging, plaster walls with marble wainscotting, aluminum framed glass partition walls, and plaster ceiling; work room--hardwood floors, plaster walls with wood wainscotting, and plaster ceiling; offices--vinyl asbestos and carpeted floors, plaster walls, and plaster ceilings; and second and third floor offices--vinyl asbestos and carpeted floors, plaster walls, and plaster ceilings.

The post office also contains a mural at the east end of the original lobby (presently separated from lobby by glass partition). The mural, entitled "Trailing Cattle", was completed in 1942 by Leo Beaulaurier for a sum of \$800. As suggested by the title, the mural depicts a drover and cattle herd stretching across the Montana landscape.

Leo Beaulaurier was in Great Falls, Montana in 1911 and studied at the Los Angeles Art Center. Beaulaurier also completed a mural in the Langdon, N.D. Post Office in 1939. He is listed in the Illustrated Biographical Encyclopedia of Artists of the American West (Samuels, 1976) and is deceased (February 11, 1983 in Great Falls.)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| SPECIFIC DATES | Constructed 1914 Addition 1934 | BUILDER/ARCHITECT | Oscar Wenderoth, Supervising Architect |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---|

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Billings Downtown Station is a well-preserved example of a combination post office and federal court house in the Beaux-Arts tradition of the early 1900s. Although altered in 1932, when two additional stories were added to the single story end wings and the building was extended to the rear, the design of the three story Second Renaissance Revival building was completed. Other than by comparison to original photographs and design drawings the addition is indiscernible. The building is well-crafted, monumental in character and one of the city's significant buildings from its major growth period. It is also the city's first federally constructed post office and manifestation of the federal presence. The construction of the building was a major civic event and was seen by local citizens as a substantial monument to the faith of the federal government in the growth and stability of Billings.

ARCHITECTURE

The building is an excellent example of Second Renaissance Revival design and is typical federal design between 1900 and 1920. The design has close similarities with the Second Renaissance Revival designs of the Missoula and Butte federal buildings (both listed in the National Historic Register and the Great Falls MPO (included in this nomination). The design is well executed and monumental in character. The entire facade is excellently crafted in buff-colored limestone. It might be noted that the use of stone for the entire facade is relatively rare, particularly in smaller cities. Typically stone was used only for trim, or at most the first story. The rusticated horizontal bands of the first story, rusticated voussoirs of the first bay arches, bracketed cornices over the second story windows of the end wings, two-story semi-circular arched windows of the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Lutz, Dennis. "Origins of Billings P.O." Montana Postal Cache, May 1975. pp. 3-7.
2. Sanborn Map, November 1912, sheet 23 and 1923, sheet 12.
3. Floor Plans 1939.
4. "Local Postal Institution Supplies Many Valued Services to Residents", Billings Post Office Marks 59th Year of Continuous Service on August 4", The Billings Gazette, May 25, 1941, Section 2, pg. 1.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.964 acres

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|------|------|-------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1, 2 | 6 94 | 1, 2, 0 | 5, 0 | 7, 2 | 73, 0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | | | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1-6 and 19-24, Block 110, original town of Billings.
 The site is rectangular and contains 140 feet of frontage along First Avenue North, and Montana Street, with a depth and frontage along Twenty-Sixth Street North of 300 feet.
 Site Size = 42,000 sq. ft.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| NA | NA | NA | NA |
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
| NA | NA | NA | NA |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

H. J. "Jim" Kolva

ORGANIZATION

Institute for Urban and Local Studies

DATE

September 1985

STREET & NUMBER

W. 705 1st Avenue

TELEPHONE

(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

Spokane

STATE

Washington

99204

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES___ NO___ NONE___

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

James T. Cor

TITLE

Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE

02/06/86

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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second and third stories, and balustraded terra cotta parapet enrichen front facade and convey an image of quality. The quality of design and craftsmanship provide statewide significance under Criterion C.

The Billings post office is one of several fine buildings which grace the city's downtown area that were constructed between 1900 and 1920. It represents the only use of the Second Renaissance Revival design among these major buildings and the only remaining governmental buildings from that era. The predominant style was Neo-Classical, particularly with the Greek influence. The most significant of these buildings which remain in use include the Masonic Temple (1909); Montana National Bank (1920); Montana Power Building (1916, Gothic); Acme Hotel (1916); Billings Commercial Club (1909); Kress Building (1920, Art Deco); and Kate Pratt School (1918). The Billings City Hall, although constructed in the 1930s is also notable in its imposing P.W.A. Modern design.

GOVERNMENT/POLITICS

The post office was constructed at the time of the city's most significant growth period and, as the city's first federally-constructed post office, is associated with this era. The building is not only symbolic of the federal presence, but also symbolizes the faith of the federal government in the stability of a frontier town. As stated in the dedication of the building: "Here are to be the officers of the nation whose presence is the pledge of the interest of the nation in our territory which lies all about us. It is ours because we are part of the government." The building marks the metamorphosis of Billings from a booming frontier town to major regional center. As providing this symbol of government and the city's growth, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Billings, with a 1980 population of 69,742, is a major

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commercial center serving eastern Montana, the western Dakotas, and northern Wyoming. The Billings area was visited in the early 1700s by French fur trappers and later by the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Billings was founded in the early 1880s by Frederick Billings, president of the Northern Pacific Railroad and, Heman Clark of the Minnesota and Montana Land and Improvement Company as a settlement for railroad workers. In 1882 the townsite was platted and the Northern Pacific began shipments of livestock, grain, and mineral products to the east. May of 1882 marked the beginning of a boom--within six months over 2,000 residents had moved to the area and over 5,000 lots had been sold.

Mail service to the newly founded community of Billings was initially provided by the Coulson Post Office (located two miles east of the original site of Billings), established on November 16, 1877 with Samuel Alexander as the first postmaster. Although the Billings Post Office was officially designated on June 13, 1882, it was not until two months later that service began with Lucius Whitney as postmaster. Until August 4, 1882, when the first Saulsbury & Company coach arrived in Billings, the mail has first been delivered to Coulson, then to Billings.

By 1890 the population was 3,226. The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad established service through Billings in 1894, further establishing the transportation base and stimulating growth. Federal and private irrigation projects resulted in increased acreage for grain and sugar beet production and by 1906 a sugar beet refinery was established. A 1916 anniversary issue of the Billings Gazette extolled the virtues of the city as a banking, transportation, agricultural, and minerals production center. Many fine new buildings had been constructed (including the post office) and growth was expected to boom--to a city of 200,000 in a few years (the population at that time was 14,500).

The Billings downtown station is located at the corner of North 26th Street and 1st Avenue North, and occupies

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the eastern half of the block. The building faces 1st Avenue North with the parking area to the south (to Montana Avenue). The post office is located one block east of North 27th Street, the main north/south street through the central business district. A new 22-story Sheraton Hotel (red brick and glass curtain-wall) is located adjacent to the west of the post office, a new five-story concrete parking garage is located across 1st Avenue North to the north, the Ponderosa Motel is on the opposite corner to the northeast, commercial and residential buildings across North 26th Street to the east, and commercial/warehouse buildings across Montana Avenue to the south.

The four-block area to the east of the post office, bounded by North 26th and 22nd streets and Montana Avenue and 1st Avenue North, is denoted as the Billings Townsite Historic District (included on National Register of Historic Places on March 13, 1979). This area includes a portion of the original commercial district of the city and consists of masonry structures (primarily red brick) ranging from one to four stories in height. The buildings across North 26th Street from the post office include the Lincoln Hotel (circa 1920-1930, three-story red brick, modern unembellished facade); Johnson Building (pre-1920, two-story red brick, partial facade rehabilitation); a three-story brick building (pre-1920, presently under renovation); and a one-story brick building (post 1930). Although not included within the historic district, the buildings to the south of the post office, along the south side of Montana Avenue, are also early 1900s vintage. They consist of two- to three-story brick masonry with flat, utilitarian facade design. They most probably served as warehousing and distribution facilities to serve the railroad to their rear.

The post office building, while not included within the historic district, is located immediately adjacent to the district and is a more imposing architectural entity than those structures across the street (North

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26th). As such, its proximity lends support to the district. The post office also corresponds to the period in Billings early growth when most of the buildings within the district were constructed.

LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
BILLINGS MAIN POST OFFICE

The acquisition of the post office was reported in The Billings Daily Gazette. As mentioned above, the era in which the post office was constructed was of significant expansion and growth for the city. On March 9, 1909, it was reported that a site for the Billings Federal Building has been selected. The vacant land was purchased from P.H. Smith, owner of the Smith Block, for a sum of \$9,000. The choice of this location was seen as a wise one since it was located in the heart of the business district and one block from the railroad.

Articles throughout the year reported the growth and enthusiasm in Billings. A March 28th article reported the "enthusiastic gathering of boosters for Montana at the dryland farming congress in Billings"; a July 25th article spoke of the many new buildings and improvements along Montana Avenue including the new Union Railroad Depot and McCormick Building; on August 22nd, Billings was slated for five miles of new concrete sidewalks. Billings was at the crossroads of the railway systems and the year was a banner one for Montana farmers; August 29th: "Half Million Dollars of Fine New Buildings" (Masonic Temple (\$100,000), Elks Club (\$75,000), Morse Block, Keiser Building, Russel-Miller Elevator Building (flour mill)). Other articles predicted the future growth of Billings (to 50,000 by 1915) and discussed the importance of Billings as a regional commercial center.

It was not until 1913 that activity on the post office was again reported. On January 24th, bids from nine submitting construction firms were opened, with J.H.

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Weiss of Omaha the winning bidder for the project at \$109,748. An article of February 18th suggested that an additional \$50,000 might be available for the new federal building. On the 22nd on February, the appropriation was practically assured when the \$113,000 sundry civil appropriation bill was approved by the House. The start of site excavation was reported on April 1st. An article of May 25th reported that the Hart-Albin Co., a major dry goods retailer, would build a new store in Billings. Other news of early 1913 included Woodrow Wilson's inauguration and civil war in Mexico.

The new post office was dedicated on Flag Day, June 14, 1914, and was reported in the Gazette on June 16th. A parade including Billings police, the Billings band, Boy Scouts, and many others preceded the dedication ceremony. Postmaster T.C. Armitage presided and was accompanied by Mayor Leavens, the county commissioners, and various other local dignitaries. An address by Reverend Walter H. North expressed the symbolic importance of the new building and the following excerpts were reported:

It is a substantial monument of the government's faith in us. This is no boom town building. The government is a business institution which is represented in our life. It is a beautiful building. The city shall never have occasion to apologize for it. It stands as a monument of beauty and character as well as a building of strength.

In the days to come when the taller temples, which shall be erected upon these adjacent corners and opposite lots, dedicated to trade and society and religion, shall overthrow it, this building will continue to be the pride and satisfaction of the people because it is our federal building, as good

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as the best and as beautiful as the most attractive.

It is our building. Ours to use. It is designed for the service and the convenience of the people. Here are to be housed those who life of the country. Here are to be the officers of the nation whose presence is the pledge of the interest of the nation in our territory which lies all about us. It is ours because we are part of the government.

In 1932 the post office received a major expansion and renovation. The size of the building was doubled by the addition of second and third floors to the side wings and extension of the building to the south. The post office and federal courtroom were expanded and new federal offices were added. Funding in the amount of \$240,000 was allocated for the expansion on March of 1931 after active support from Congressman Scott Leavitt to the second deficiency bill which was signed by President Hoover in March. On May 29th, the property to the south of the post office, along Montana Avenue, was purchased from David Kohn of Twin Realty for \$80,000. On July 28th the architectural firm of McIver and Cohagen of Billings was selected to prepare the architectural work for the expansion.

On May 21, 1932, it was reported that Rosen and Fischel had been awarded the construction contract with a low bid of \$169,000 (out of 22 bids received). Temporary quarters for the post office were leased from the Mulvaney Motor Company Building and the Babcock-Selvide Building for other agencies. The buildings located on the site would be cleared soon. On May 29th, Mr. Cohagen went west to meet with Treasury officials regarding the project. On June 7th new bids were let and the specifications were changed to bring cost within the budget. On July 9th, it was reported that a Jamestown, N.D. contractor, F.A. Moline, was selected

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to complete the post office at a cost of \$143,925. However, a November 29th article reported that the engineer from the W.S. Lovell Construction firm was visiting the site and work would begin soon. W.D. Lovell had replaced F.A. Moline.

The 1940 expansion of the post office, which resulted in the addition of new third floor offices, was first reported on June 23, 1935. Chandler C. Cohagen was selected as the architect for the \$200,000 expansion project. Several other Montana cities were included in the appropriation: Deer Lodge, Great Falls (expansion of existing facility), Whitefish, Bozeman, Havre, Hamilton, Livingston, Sidney, Shelby, Plentywood, and Wolf Point. John Berntson of Salt Lake City completed the construction work in 1940.

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5. "Federal Building Addition Doubles Present Quarters" The Billings Gazette, April 3, 1932, Section 2, pg. 1.
6. "Federal Building Completion Rejoiced City Flag Day 1914", The Billings Gazette, June 15, 1932, pg. 11.
7. "Larger Federal Building May Be Erected in City", The Billings Gazette, June 23, 1935, pg. 1.
8. Construction photos 1940.
9. Construction photo 1913.
10. The Billings Gazette, various articles 1909-1914.

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