

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000129 Date Listed: 3/16/89

<u>US Post Office--Bonners Ferry Main</u>	<u>Boundry</u>	<u>ID</u>
<u>Property Name</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>State</u>

US Post Offices in Idaho 1900-1941 MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Bruce J. Noble, Jr.
for Signature of the Keeper

3/14/89
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The period of significance defined for this property is 1900-1941. This period pre-dates the property's date of construction and also extends into the less-than-fifty-year-old range without addressing criterion exception G. To resolve this issue, this property will be listed with a period of significance defined as 1938-1939. Also, 1935 will not be entered as a significant date because this date corresponds with the acquisition of the site and pre-dates the construction of the property. These changes were discussed with Steven S. Stielstra of the United States Postal Service during a 3/14/89 telephone conversation.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JAN 30 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bonners Ferry Main Post Office
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 215 First
city, town Bonners Ferry
state Idaho code ID county Boundary code 021 zip code 83805

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal
Category of Property: building(s), district, site, structure, object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing, Noncontributing, Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic U.S. Post Offices in Idaho 1900-1941
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: [Signature]
Date: 1-15-89
United States Postal Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official: [Signature]
Date: 12/14/88
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[checked] entered in the National Register.
[] See continuation sheet.
[] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet.
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[] removed from the National Register.
[] other, (explain):

Druce J. Noble, Jr. 3/16/89

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Brick

roof Tar compositionother Sandstone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bonners Ferry Post Office is a two-story building resting on a raised basement platform. Divided into seven bays, the front facade is flat and symmetrically-arranged. The elevation is horizontally-emphasized with vertical elements provided by flat sandstone pilasters which rise from the water table to the facade's terminating entablature. Dividing the five central bays, the pilasters also define the apparent division of the central section and the flanking end bays. The footings, basement walls, and floor slabs are reinforced concrete; steel framing provides structural support. Sandstone is used for detailing (water table, belt course between the first and second stories, window sills, pilasters, architrave and frieze, and cornice) on the red brick facade. Granite is used for the main entry steps, landing, and buttresses. The free-standing lanterns flanking the entry are made of wrought iron. A flat built-up tar composition roof covers the building.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fronting on First Street, the front facade faces west. The elevation is horizontally-emphasized with vertical elements provided by the arrangement of the window bays and sandstone pilasters. The exposed basement wall is concrete. Sandstone is used for the watertable, a belt course which divides the first and second stories, an unembellished architrave and frieze, and slightly projecting molded cornice. The letters "United States Post Office" "Bonners Ferry, Idaho" are incised in the frieze.

Seven bays divide the facade: five central bays (with centered entry) and one bay in each of the end wings. Flat sandstone pilasters, rising from the basement wall to the entablature, divide and delineate the bays of the central section. A slight articulation of the end wings is achieved by a slightly recessed brick channel between the exterior pilasters of the central section and the interior corners of the wings.

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Seven granite steps and a granite landing provide access to the main entry. Square granite buttresses, upon which rest free-standing wrought-iron lanterns, flank the entry steps. The entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors (originals replaced). Set above the doors is a fixed six-light wood-sash transom window. Brick surrounds flank the door frame and a sandstone lintel rests atop the transom window.

The first-floor window bays of the central section are framed similarly to the entry bay--flanking brick surrounds and sandstone lintels. Beneath the window sash are sandstone sills, extending between the pilasters, and molded sandstone panels. The panels are slightly recessed relative to the sills and flanking brickwork. The sash is wood, double-hung, with six-over-six lights. The windows in the end wings are configured identically to those of the central section except for the omission of the panels beneath the sills.

The second-floor window bays, aligned over those of the first floor, are also double-hung wood sash with six-over-six lights. The vertical dimension, however, has been reduced. The bays of the central section are recessed slightly with brickwork between the sash and pilasters. Molded wooden panels are set beneath the wooden sills. Wrought-iron balconettes front the windows. The sash of the end wing windows are set into the facade without delineation of framing except for sandstone sills.

The south facade, along Kootenai Street, is divided into six equally-spaced window bays and, except for the omission of the pilasters, is detailed similarly to the front facade. The first-floor window bays are detailed identically to those of the front central bays. The second-floor windows are identical to those of the front end wings.

The north facade reflects the asymmetry of the floor plan, essentially "L"-shaped for the first story and "U"-shaped with a shortened north leg for the second story. Divided into three equally-spaced window bays, the north wing is slightly greater than half the length of the south wing. The detailing and window treatment is identical to that of the south facade. The rear portion of the work room extends slightly beyond the north wing and displays a blank brick wall which rises slightly in height above the sandstone belt

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course. Extending rearward (east) from and lower in height than the work room is the enclosed loading dock. A single wood pedestrian door with six-light glass panel is in the interior corner. Concrete steps provide approach access. Double wooden doors (swinging), with a single glass panel in each, provide loading access. A flat metal marquee projects northward over the loading area. The south wing extends eastward beyond the dock. An enclosed fire escape was added to the end of the north wing in the early 1960s. A metal door at grade level opens to the north.

The south wing and shortened north wing of the rear facade carry essentially the same design detailing as the side facades. The original design of the south wing consisted of two window bays on each of the first and second stories with a square brick chimney in between. The stair well covers the interior corner and a portion of the chimney; matching window bays, however, have been incorporated into the well. The window configuration of the north wing is identical to the south, except that the northern first story window has been omitted.

The central portion consists of the slightly rearward projecting workroom with a single window in the northern corner (same as other first-floor windows) and, projecting from the workroom, the loading vestibule and dock. Abutting the south wing, the vestibule rises in height to the belt course and contains a single window (identical to second floor windows). The roof of the loading dock is stepped down in height from the vestibule (aligned with the top of the vestibule window). The second story is recessed (to form the "U" of the second-floor plan) and contains two window bays--one at each end. The windows are identical to those of the other second story bays. Set on the roof above the workroom is the square structure housing the skylights which consist of hinged ten-light metal sash.

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to the modern styles represented by the courthouse. These attributes make the building locally significant under Criterion C.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The Bonners Ferry Post Office is of local significance in its representation of the federal government's efforts, through its public building programs, to aid communities during the Depression era. In addition, the Post Office symbolizes the presence of the Federal government and the recognition by the government that Bonners Ferry was an important regional center. The construction of the building was the culmination of many years of effort on the part of the local community and represents their success, through the lobbying efforts of their elected officials in Washington, to obtain a federal building. Thus, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Bonners Ferry, the county seat of Boundary County in northern Idaho, had a 1980 population of 1,906. Agriculture, timber, and local retail trade serve as the base for its economy.

The history of Bonners Ferry is linked with the story of the Kootenai River. The first recorded visit of the white man in the area is that of David Thompson, an English immigrant employee of the Northwest Fur Company (a rival of the Hudson Bay Company). In 1808 Thompson, an explorer and surveyor, came to the area along the Kootenai River where Bonners Ferry now stands. He returned to the area in 1809 and 1810; in 1811 the first trading post was established near the present site of Bonners Ferry by the Northwest Fur Company.

In 1863 prospectors from all over the west came to the area after the discovery of the Wild Horse mines in British Columbia. In 1887 the first post office was established in the small town, then called Fry. Richard Fry was the first postmaster. The town began to grow with the coming of the Great Northern Railroad in 1892; in 1894, was incorporated. Originally known as Fry, then Bonnerport and Eatonville, the town became Bonners Ferry in 1899.

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In 1900 Bonners Ferry had a population of 349. From 1910 to 1920 its population grew from 1,071 to 1,236. In 1922 the area's first drainage district was formed to utilize the rich, fertile soils of the region's flood areas. By the mid-1930s there were 13 drainage districts with a total acreage of 35,000 acres. From 1930 to 1940 Bonners Ferry's population dropped slightly, from 1,418 to 1,345. Its population climbed to 1,776 in 1950 and to 1,921 in 1960 and reached a peak of 2,796 in 1970 before dropping to 1,906 in 1980.

The Post Office is in the central business district, one block west of Main Street, the downtown's primary business street. On the northeast corner of the Kootenai and First streets intersection, the building faces the west. Adjacent to the north is the J.C. Penney's building (one-story, concrete block). Across the alley to the east is the rear of the one- and two-story brick commercial block which fronts along Main Street. Across Kootenai to the south are commercial uses consisting of one- and two-story brick buildings. West of the post office, across First Street is a parking lot and Safeway store. The Boundary County Sheriff's Office occupies the southwest corner of the intersection, and to its west is the WPA-constructed Boundary County Courthouse. This building is of concrete in the PWA Moderne style. Constructed in 1940, the building's front facade is distinguished by three bas relief panels depicting local industry (executed in sandstone by Fletcher Martin).

LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BONNERS FERRY MAIN POST OFFICE

"Bonners Ferry Is Rapidly Becoming Shopping Center of Great Fertile Area" reported the Bonners Ferry Herald on August 18th, 1932, adding that "Strangers in our midst marvel at the business conducted by our stores ... Truly, the pessimist has a hard lot in Bonners Ferry." On December 15th the paper reported that the federal government was to begin construction of a \$180,000 bridge to cross the Kootenai River at Bonners Ferry. In 1933 it was reported that local teachers salaries were cut to reduce that year's school levy (April 6th article), federal money was allocated for a four mile long road project in Boundary County (October 5th article) and that 350 local men were to work on a 90-day, \$38,918.50 civil works administration project to repair dikes

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and make other local improvements (November 30th article).

The year 1934 brought the news that 300 more men had been added to the CWA payroll on three new road projects. In August a crowd of 3,000 saw President Roosevelt as his train stopped in Bonners Ferry for six minutes. The President addressed the crowd and "expressed satisfaction that his policy of utilizing federal funds for the relief of stricken districts had resulted in much benefit to this section of the country" (August 9th article).

"Borah Sponsor of Bill For New Federal Bldg." declared a Bonners Ferry Herald headline of January 24th, 1935. Senator Wm. E. Borah was seeking a \$100,000 appropriation for a new Bonners Ferry federal building; the Kootenai Valley Commercial Club had been trying for the past year to secure an appropriation and had sought the help of Senator Borah and Congressman Compton I. White. A week later it was reported that Sen. Borah had wired for an estimate of site cost (a lot 100' x 150' was needed) and that Cong. White had been in communication with the Commercial Club investigating the government's needs in Bonners Ferry (January 31st article). A possible "building boom" was predicted for Bonners Ferry on February 28th: the proposed federal building was mentioned along with a new Main Street building; in addition, many homeowners were interested in federal housing loans.

On October 17th it was reported that the Treasury Department was calling for bids for the post office building (Senator Borah was given credit for securing the project). A month later a postal inspector examined the three sites that had been offered (November 14th article). It was also reported that WPA road and sewer projects were continuing in the county (November 28th article). A site at the corner of 1st and Kootenai Streets containing six lots was selected. The lots were owned by F. E. Lenhart (3 lots), J. W. Reid (2 lots) and George R. Gray (1 lot); the total purchase price was \$3,400 (December 19th article). On January 2nd, 1936 it was reported that the site had been purchased by the federal government; it was also noted that the location, across from the Courthouse, would help "build up" that section of town. (The Herald reported additional good news that day when it noted that local bank deposits had increased by approximately \$100,000 during the previous year.)

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By mid summer 1936 the site was being cleared of an old dwelling and street grades were being filled (July 23rd article). Construction bids were called in the August 20th Herald. The building would contain two stories and would require 300 timber pilings for foundation support. Local labor would be given preference in hiring. The results of the bid opening were reported on September 10th. They were rejected as being too high: the low bid of \$115,000 was \$8,000 higher than the total appropriation of \$107,000.

The new year of 1937 brought encouraging news. An article of January 7th reported that postal receipts were at an all time high, there were four major building projects scheduled (the federal building, a \$72,400 high school addition, a new business block, and a federal inspection station at Port-hill), farm prices were better, 100 to 200 families would be resettled on Valley farmland, and two irrigation projects and \$100,000 of road improvement projects were planned. On March 4th the Herald reported news from Senator Borah, who relayed that new bids would soon be requested for the federal building. Borah promised to "keep in touch with the matter and urge it as fast as possible." On March 25th it was reported that the new bids were being requested. Once again, the bids exceeded the appropriation: the new low bid was \$125,000--\$25,000 over the authorized appropriation (May 6th article). On May 13th, however, it was reported that "after numerous delays and disappointments" the contract had been awarded to L. H. Hoffman, the low bidder. To avoid further delay, Cong. White and the procurement division had met and "decided to draw on reserve funds and let the contract." White declared he was "very much gratified at the action of the procurement division . . . the excess was much greater than they are in the habit of taking care of in such matters."

On June 24th the Herald reported that excavation for the federal building had begun that morning; the paper noted that 300 pilings would be used and that a "great deal" of materials would be purchased locally. On July 29th it was reported that concrete was being poured and that local labor was being used as far as possible. (A month later, on August 26th, it was reported that Bonners Ferry would also receive a \$33,545 PWA grant for an addition to its high school.) An article of November 18th reported that "A spirited race with Old Man Winter has been staged at the local Federal building, and indications today are that the workmen have won out." Only

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three more days of favorable weather were needed to complete the major exterior work.

An article of January 27th, 1938 reported that construction was on schedule (most exterior work was finished and the interior work was underway) and described some of the building's features: the building would have a "spacious lobby" measuring 20' x 70', tile floors with marble base and wainscoting (the marble coming from Minnesota, Utah, and Alaska) and an inspector's lookout station "commanding a full view of the workroom."

On April 21st it was announced that the Kootenai Valley Commercial Club was planning a dedication ceremony for April 30th. Work had "progressed at a steady pace, all phases of the construction, it is said, being completed on schedule time." A banner headline of April 28th announced "Dedicate Federal Building Saturday." An elaborate ceremony was planned: the high school band and American Legion were to participate and local postmasters and state politicians had been invited to attend. Afterwards the new building, with "interior furnishing of the most approved type," would be "thrown open" to the public. It was noted that the post office would move from the First National Bank Building, the border patrol from the Interstate Telephone Company's building, and the Farm Security Offices from the Estlund building. Credit was given to Sen. Borah and Cong. White, who "went to bat" for the building.

A week later, on May 5th, the Herald published a photograph of the new federal building and reported that more than 1,000 people had attended the ceremony, which was conducted as planned. A history of the Bonners Ferry post office was also published. The post office had moved on Sunday and was open for business on Monday. The second floor was occupied by the U.S. immigration service and border patrol, the U.S. customs patrol, the U.S.G.S., and the Farm Security Administration.

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

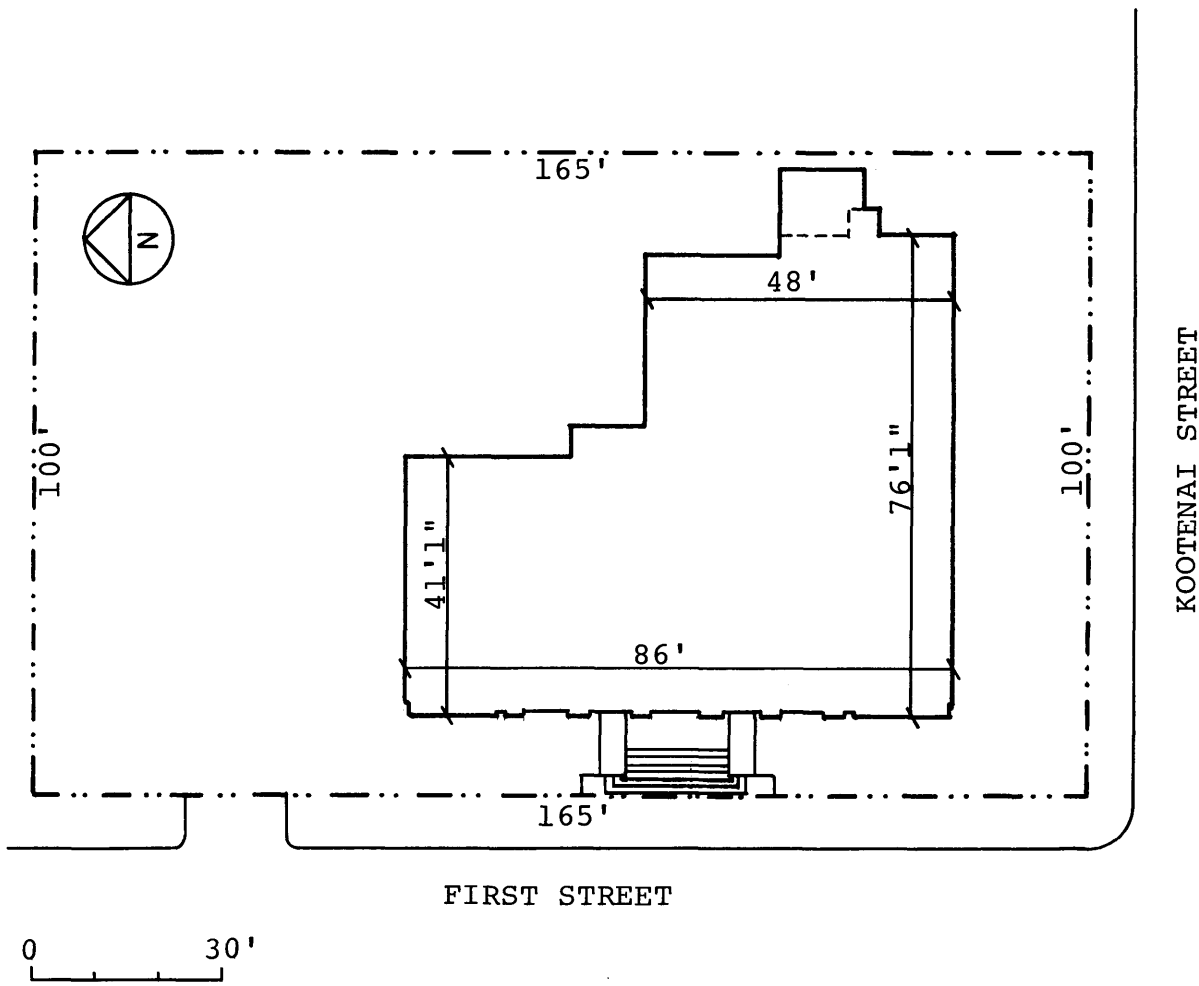
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date entered

Continuation sheet

BONNERS FERRY MPO

Item number 10

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The following information is the same for all the photographs listed:

1. Bonners Ferry MPO
2. Bonners Ferry, Idaho
3. Jim Kolva
4. July 1987
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #7)
6. View to southeast

Photo No. 2 (negative #8)
6. View to east

Photo No. 3 (negative #13)
6. View to northeast

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Significant Person

N/A

Period of Significance

1900-1941

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1935

Const.-1938

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Louis A. Simon, Supervising Archi-

tect/Federal Government

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Bonners Ferry MPO is a well-preserved and essentially unaltered example of a small-town combined post office and federal office building. Classical in its symmetry and proportions, the modern influence is exhibited in the building's flat facade and simplification of historical architectural detailing. Even though the building is a product of the late-1930s, its front facade is more richly detailed--with extensive use of sandstone detailing--than its typical counterpart from the same period. One of the city's most imposing buildings, it is also one of two public buildings (the other being the concrete PWA Moderne County Courthouse (WPA-1940)) that were constructed during the late Depression. The building was the city's first and only post office constructed by the federal government. It symbolizes not only the link to the federal government, but also the recognition by that government of the city's regional importance.

ARCHITECTURE

Well-preserved and essentially unaltered from its original design (the addition of the rear enclosed fire escape does not affect the building's integrity), the Post Office is one of the most imposing buildings in Bonners Ferry. It exhibits a quality of design and use of materials not otherwise represented in local construction. In addition, its relationship with the Moderne-style Boundary County Courthouse (WPA-1940) creates an ensemble of public buildings, constructed in two different styles and under two different federal public buildings programs. The two buildings, sited diagonally across the block, provide an example of the transition of federal architectural styles of the period. The Post Office exemplifies the transition from the Beaux-Arts Classicism which ruled Federal design in the early 1900s to

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Bonnors Ferry Herald, various articles 1932-1938.
2. Original Floor Plans, 1937.
3. Construction Progress Photographs, September 24, 1937-March 22, 1938.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

USPS Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.38

UTM References

A

1	1	5	5	0	6	4	0	5	3	9	3	7	1	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing				

C

Zone			Easting				Northing				

D

Zone			Easting				Northing				

Quadrangle name: Bonnors Ferry

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, Block 5, First Addition to the Town of Bonnerport, Now Bonnors Ferry.

Northeast corner of First Street and Kootenai Street. Beginning at the Southwest corner, thence N165', E100', S165', W100' to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the site originally purchased by the federal government for the post office site.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant

organization Institute for Urban & Local Studies date August 1988

street & number West 705 1st Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219

city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204