

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 APR 17 1987

DATE ENTERED MAY 19 1987

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Buffalo Main Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Buffalo Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

193 South Main Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Buffalo

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Wyoming 82834

NA VICINITY OF
CODE

056

NA COUNTY

Johnson

CODE

019

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT
- Thematic Group

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED
- NA

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

United States Postal Service, Western Regional Headquarters

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

CA 94099

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Johnson County Assessor's Office

STREET & NUMBER

76 North Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Buffalo

STATE

Wyoming 82834

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 type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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 Buffalo Main Post Office is a two story buff-colored building on a raised basement. The five-bayed front facade is classically proportioned and symmetrically arranged. Characteristic of the designs which mark the transition from the Beaux Arts Classicism of the early 1900s to the modern movement of the mid- to late-1930s, the front facade is relatively flat. Broad entry stairs and landing provide a monumental approach to the slightly projecting central section of the front facade. Three semicircular-arched bays, over which are aligned the small paired and flat-arched window bays of the second floor, define the central salient. The centered entry bay, adorned by a pedimented frontispiece of limestone, is flanked by Palladian windows. Solid panels in a sunburst and scalloped fan motif are set into the arches above the window sash. Flat-arched windows mark the end wings of the building on both the first and second floors. The facade is terminated by a plain frieze, dentils, molded cornice and alternating solid and balustraded parapet. The roof is flat, built-up tar composition. Although the building received a rear addition in 1967, the design integrity of the original building has been maintained.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The footings and basement are constructed of reinforced concrete. Concrete and structural steel framing support the main and second floors. The exterior is faced with buff-colored brick with Indiana limestone for detailing. Granite is used for the entry stairs and landings. The roof is flat, built-up tar composition.

The front facade (west) is flat and symmetrical in elevation. The facade is divided into five bays. Three bays are located in the slightly projecting central section and one bay is in each of the flanking

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	Site Acquired	1911	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Federal Government/James A. Wetmore, OSA
	Building Completed	1928		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Buffalo Main Post Office is a well-preserved example of a combined post office and federal office building in the Neo-Classical style. Although similarly designed buildings can be found in numerous small towns throughout the nation, this example is unique in the City of Buffalo. The building is characterized by its quality materials and craftsmanship and its design execution. These qualities are marked by carved limestone in the arched entry bay, roundels and attic balustrade, Palladian windows, facade symmetry and monumental scale. The building is the city's first and only federally constructed post office and represents over a decade of effort on the part of local citizens and the Wyoming congressional delegation to secure a federal post office for the city. One of the few post offices constructed nationwide by the federal government during the 1920s, the building represents the first wave of the post offices completed under the Public Building Act of May 25, 1926.

ARCHITECTURE

Monumental scale, Classical symmetry, and quality of detail mark this Neo-Classical building as the best example of its design and one of the most imposing structures in the community. The use of buff-colored brick with detailing of carved limestone represent the quality of federal construction. As one of the first buildings constructed from appropriations of the Public Building Act of May 25, 1926, the design essentially bridges the Beaux Arts tradition of the early 1900s and the modern "efficient" designs of the mid- to late-1930s. This transition is characterized by the relatively flat facade which marked the later buildings but with a retention of the rich detailing of the earlier tradition. The elaborate entry bay with its molded limestone semicircular-arched framing and pedimented frontispiece, the Palladian windows with inset arched panels in a sunburst and scalloped fan

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Mooney, Molly and Christy Love, "Buffalo Main Street Historic District" (National Register Nomination), April 1983.
2. Zigweld, Cathy Campbell, "Buffalo Post Offices", Buffalo's First Century, Buffalo: Buffalo Bulletin, Inc., 1984, pp. 86-89.
3. Buffalo Bulletin, various articles, 1911, 1918, 1920-1928.
4. Site, Floor, miscellaneous construction plans- 1917 & 1927.
5. Sanborn Maps, Oct. 1896 & June, 1903 for Buffalo.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.51

UTM REFERENCES

A 13 364740 4911370
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The South 2 feet of Lot 21; Lots 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, Block 5, city addition.

The site is approximately rectangular with 140 feet of frontage along Main Street, a northern property line of 150 feet, and eastern property line of 154.40 feet and southern property line of 150.65 feet with frontage along Bennett St.

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, Senior Associate

ORGANIZATION

Institute for Urban & Local Studies

DATE

April 1986

STREET & NUMBER

W. 705 1st Avenue

TELEPHONE

(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

Spokane

STATE

WA

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

TITLE

Realty Acquisition Specialist, Principal

DATE

2-9-87

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

MAY 19 1987

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

APR 17 1987

date entered

Continuation sheet Buffalo Main Post Office

Item number

7

Page 1

wings. The basement wall is faced with brick and dressed limestone. A water table course of dressed limestone defines the juncture of the basement and main floor walls. The first and second floors are faced with brick. Limestone is used for the plain frieze and molded cornice which terminates the second floor wall. Atop the cornice rests a parapet of alternating balustraded (limestone) and solid sections (brick). The balustraded sections correspond in alignment with the window bays.

The entry bay is centered in the facade and is approached by five granite steps to a broad landing, then three steps to the approach landing. Square limestone buttresses, upon which rest cast iron lamp standards, flank the stairs. The entry consists of double glass-paneled metal doors (10 lights each). A horizontally oriented 6-light transom window rests above the doors. The entry bay is framed with cut and molded limestone. The architrave is flat molded limestone with a flat arch. A triangular pedimented frontispiece with dentils on the raking and horizontal cornices is set atop a flat molded panel above the lintel. This ensemble is framed by an outer arch of limestone. Flat pilasters support a molded semicircular arch with a pronounced scrolled keystone.

The window bays flanking each side of the entry are also defined by semicircular arches. The windows are wood sash and consist of a 6-over-6-light double-hung center section flanked by 2-over-4-light double-hung side lights. Thickened mullions in the form of flat pilasters divide the sections. The window head is molded and contains rosette panels at the extensions of the pilaster capitals. A wooden panel in a multiple sunburst pattern is set above the windowhead within the arch. The window and arch are framed in a single brick header course. A flat pronounced keystone of limestone completes the arch.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

APR 17 1987

date entered

Continuation sheet Buffalo Main Post Office

Item number

7

Page 2

The second floor windows of the central section are aligned over the bays of the first floor. The windows consist of paired 6-over-6-light double-hung wood sash. Flat brick arches and limestone sills frame the windows. Four decorative roundels are located between the window bays and corner.

The end wings are plain and contain single 8-over-12-light double-hung wood sash windows on the main floor and 6-over-6 light double-hung wood sash windows on the second floor. A slightly recessed brick panel is located above the first floor windows.

The south facade is flat and unadorned. The facade consists of two sections: the two-story original building and a single-story addition that extends to the rear (constructed in 1967). The facade of the original building is divided into three equally spaced bays and is treated in the same manner as the front facade. The windows are identical to those of the corresponding first and second stories of the end wings of the front facade. The rear addition terminates at the sill line of the second story windows of the original building. The design of the addition is consistent with that of the original in the use of materials and first floor detailing. However, the brick color is slightly different. Two equally spaced window bays divide the addition, with the sills aligned on the sill line of the original building. The windows are identical to those of the first floor.

The north facade is identical to that of the north side. However, the addition contains only a single window bay located toward the rear.

The rear facade is symmetrical with the loading platform extending from the rear of the addition. The rear elevation of the loading platform is square and faced with brick. A single overhead (metal) loading door provides access to the platform. The platform extension is centered on the rear facade of the addition. Paired 9-over-9-light double-hung wood sash windows flank either side of the platform. Single

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received APR 17 1987
date entered

Continuation sheet Buffalo Main Post Office Item number 7 Page 3

8-over-12-light double-hung wood sash windows are located in the corners. The second story of the original building is visible over the addition. The facade consists of a slightly projecting central section flanked by wings on each side. The central section contains three window bays. The bays consist of paired 6-over-6-light double-hung wood sash window. The end wings each contain a single 6-over-6-light double-hung wood sash window.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

APR 17 1987

date entered

Continuation sheet Buffalo Main Post Office Item number 8 Page 1

motif, and balustraded parapet exemplify this traditional detailing. These characteristics, in the context of the overall design, contribute to the building's local significance under Criterion C. It might also be noted that an identical building was constructed in Cody in 1927.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The Buffalo Post Office was the first federally constructed building in the city, and was awaited by local citizens for over a decade. From the first announcement in the Buffalo Bulletin on May 11, 1911 that Representative Frank W. Mondell had introduced a bill for a federal building in the city, to site acquisition in the same year, through World War I, the citizens of Buffalo waited expectantly for their federal building. Much local effort was expended in lobbying Washington and this effort was finally rewarded in a building that evoked pride and that was considered a credit to the community. In symbolizing the success of participatory democracy and the government's recognition of the importance of the community, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Buffalo, the county seat of Johnson County in northeastern Wyoming, had a 1980 population of approximately 3,800. The local economy is based on retail trade, tourism, agriculture, and oil. All of these sectors have contributed to the historical development of the city.

Buffalo was one of the first settlements in northeastern Wyoming and was incorporated in 1884. The first settlers came to the area via the Bozeman Trail in the 1860s and 1870s. However, it was not until the establishment of Fort McKinney in 1876 and the subsequent control of the local Indian tribes that substantial settlement by both homesteaders and

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

APR 17 1987

date entered

Continuation sheet

Buffalo Main Post Office

Item number

8

Page

2

ranchers occurred. These early settlers were followed by businessmen and entrepreneurs who began to invest in the area.

In 1880 Buffalo's first post office was established with Will Hart as postmaster. The town and Johnson County have a rich history associated with the Indian wars, cattle ranching, early tourism, and the Johnson County War of 1892 (between large cattle ranchers and small landholders). By 1890, the population of Buffalo had reached 1,087 but dropped sharply in 1900 to 710. However, the population continued to grow with further downtown development after the turn of the century. In 1910 the population showed a significant increase to 1,368 and by 1920 increased to 1,772. The population growth leveled during the 1920s and dropped slightly to 1,749 in 1930 and then continued through the 1930s to a population of 2,302 in 1940.

The downtown business district, located immediately north of the post office, retains many of the buildings that were constructed during Buffalo's initial growth which spanned 1880 to 1930. This area has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district. The post office is located on the northeast corner of the Bennett Street/Main Street intersection. Adjacent to the rear of the post office is a modern bank building (to the east). The two-story brick Masonic Lodge is located adjacent to the north. A parking lot and commercial building are located across Bennett Street to the south. Across Main Street to the west are offices, residential structures, and the Episcopal Church (National Register of Historic Places). The Congregational Church, located on the corner of Bennett Street and Lobban Avenue, is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places (one block east). Other prominent public buildings listed in the Register include the Johnson County Courthouse (two-story brick, 1884) and the Carnegie Library (Neo-Classical, one-story sandstone, 1909). Both of these buildings are located at the south end of the business district.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received APR 17 1987
date entered

Continuation sheet Buffalo Main Post Office Item number 8 Page 3

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

The first efforts to secure a federal building in Buffalo were reported in the May 11, 1911 issue of the Buffalo Bulletin. The Bulletin announced that Representative Frank W. Mondell had introduced a bill in the lower house for the authorization of site acquisition and building construction. A site was acquired on September 14, 1911, and even though appropriations were made in 1915-1916, no contract was let for the building. The efforts to secure the federal building appeared to be successful until sidetracked by the intervention of World War I.

Hopes were dashed when the Buffalo Bulletin reported a letter that had been received by Congressman Frank Mondell on January 24, 1918. The Secretary of the Treasury informed Mondell that the nation would be required to shift all of its resources to the war effort. "Unless this is done it will be impossible for the people of the United States to furnish the money which the Government must have to support our soldiers and sailors who are shedding their blood for us upon the battle fields. ... I am asking if you will be good enough to let the people of Buffalo understand the situation. ... This building will be progressed as rapidly as possible after the return of peace."

Eight years passed. Oil had been discovered in Johnson County in August of 1920. In January of 1923 a mammoth gas well was struck. It was hoped that another railroad would soon reach Buffalo. On May 6, 1926, the Bulletin ran the headline "Buffalo to have federal building - Senator Kendrick telegrams Buffalo Community Club". On June 10th, a major article again announced that a federal building was finally nearing reality. According to the article, Congress, on June 5th, had approved the immediate construction of 38 federal buildings throughout the nation. An appropriation of \$12.5 million had been made for a major federal public buildings program which would begin in the summer. Buffalo and Cody were both included in the program. The determination and influence of Senator Kendrick,

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received APR 17 1987
date entered

Continuation sheet Buffalo Main Post Office Item number 8 Page 4

who was a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, was cited as the reason for Buffalo's selection. An article of December 2nd reported that construction bids for the post office would be opened on December 15th.

On February 17, 1927, the Bulletin announced that C.A. Randall of the Supervising Architect's Office in Kansas City had arrived to supervise the construction of Buffalo's two-story brick and stone post office. Charles Weiss and Son of Des Moines had received the construction contract. Local labor would be used where appropriate. An article of April 14th reported that the excavation for the building was complete and that the concrete foundations and basement wall were in place. The walls of the building would be faced with gray brick from Dickenson, North Dakota, and Bedford stone from Indiana.

The article also reported that efforts of the Commercial Club had resulted in a more elaborate main entrance (of cut and molded Bedford stone) than had originally been planned. "The people of Buffalo have waited a good many years for a federal building, and now that the time has come for its erection, we can all feel proud of the fact that we are getting a building that will be a credit to the community and one that will compare favorably with any building erected by the government." The October 20th edition of the Bulletin included a photograph of the "Buffalo Post Office Building". Construction was rapidly progressing.

Finally, on February 1, 1928, the Buffalo Federal Building was opened for business (as reported on February 2nd). The new building was considered to be a distinct addition to the city's business district. It was also reported that the upper floor of the building would house the offices of the U.S. Land Office.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received APR 17 1987
date entered

Continuation sheet Buffalo MPO

Item number 10

Page 1

