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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Montesano Main Post Office
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 211 Pioneer Avenue North not for publication
city, town Montesano vicinity
state Washington code WA county Grays Harbor code 027 zip code 98563

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic U.S. Post Offices In Washington, 1893 - 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] 11/90
Signature of certifying official Date

U.S. 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] 12/15/89
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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:)

[Signature] 5/30/91

fn 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)

Moderne

Other: Starved Classicism

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Tar composition

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Montesano Main Post Office is a one-story building on a raised basement. The entire building is constructed of poured-in-place reinforced concrete. Red brick faces the main floor. The symmetrical five-bay (all flat-arched) front facade consists of a projecting central salient with a wing flanking each side. Three bays--a centered entry bay and flanking window bays--are in the central section, and one window bay is in each of the wings. Aside from a cast concrete belt course and decorative brick-work, the plain flat facade is devoid of decoration. A flat built-up tar composition roof covers the building.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (north, facing Pioneer Avenue) is symmetrical and is divided into five bays. The slightly projecting (three feet) central salient contains three bays--a centered entry bay flanked by single window bays. Each of the wings contains a single window bay. The concrete basement wall rises above grade and is separated from the red brick facing of the main floor by water table courses--cast concrete along the central salient and a brick soldier course along the wings. Six concrete steps, flanked by concrete buttresses, provide access to a concrete entry landing. Single free-standing cast-iron light standards rest atop each of the buttresses.

The bays are slightly recessed and extend vertically from the water table course to a belt course--cast concrete across the salient and a brick soldier course across the wings. All of the bay openings/niches are identical in size and detail. Each is flanked by embedded brick pilasters. Set in the same common bond as the walls, the pilasters are created by coursing the bricks to establish a vertical line three-and-one-half brick lengths from the interior edge of the bays. Brick soldier courses form the capitals.

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The entry consists of double aluminum-framed (natural) glass doors. A fifteen-light, metal-sash transom window is above the doors. Framing the top of the bay is a brick soldier course which extends to the cast-concrete belt course. The sash of the windows flanking the main entry consists of thirty-five-light, metal sash (fixed with hinged panels). A plain brick panel lies below the cast-concrete sills. As with the entry bay, the tops of these bays are framed with brick soldier courses. "United States Post Office" with "Montesano Washington" beneath (both in raised metal letters) are centered in the frieze between the belt course and the cast-concrete coping course which tops the parapet. The coping course of the central section extends slightly above that of the wings, thus providing additional emphasis to the salient.

The single-bay end wings exhibit the same detailing as the central salient, except that brick soldier courses have been substituted for cast concrete in the water table and belt course. The bays are identical in size and detailing (embedded pilasters). The window sash, however, is smaller and is set within the larger brick niches. The sash are double-hung wood with eight-over-eight lights. A four-light transom window is set above. A simple cast-concrete coping course tops the wall.

The east facade is divided into four bays; its materials and detailing are the same as the front. The front corner contains a single window bay and projects slightly (about four inches) from the facade plane. It is configured identically to the end wings of the front facade. Three equally-spaced bays divide the rear two-thirds of the facade. The windows, which consist of fixed thirty-light, metal sash, are set flush with the facade line. Other than cast-concrete sills, the window openings are not differentiated from the common bond brick wall. A brick soldier course water table and cast-concrete coping course bracket the plain facade.

The west facade is similar to that of the east except for window treatment. The front corner is identical to the east facade. The rear section contains three windows on the first floor and four equally-spaced windows on the mezzanine level. The windows have replaced the originals and are metal

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sash. Two of the first floor windows are fixed single-light sash. The third is larger with a fixed upper light and a hinged lower section. Windows identical to this are used in the mezzanine floor.

The rear facade is also brick and concrete with the same detailing as described. The open concrete loading platform occupies the slightly-projecting western one-third of the facade. The platform is covered by a flat metal roof with projecting marquee. Two double loading doors provide access to the work area (metal with single-glass panel in each). The eastern two-thirds of the wall contains three equally-spaced window bays. The center bay contains a fixed thirty-light, metal sash window and the flanking bays contain fixed twenty-five-light, metal sash windows. A louvered panel is set beneath the two flanking windows.

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

Period of Significance

1935-1941

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1934

Const.-1935

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Louis A., Supervising Architect/Federal Government

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

The Montesano MPO is an unaltered example of a small town single-purpose post office. Although the building retains Classical symmetry and proportion, it is a modern building. It is one of the first examples of the use of Starved Classical design for a post office in the state. It is also the first and only federally-constructed post office in Montesano. It represents the federal presence, which was manifested in the form of a building constructed during the Depression era.

ARCHITECTURE

The design is modern with plain facades and nominal architectural ornamentation. It is obvious that the form of the building is the Classical box. Not so obviously articulated are the suggested Classical elements embedded in the brick facade. Pilasters and capitals are formed by the lines of brick edges and soldier courses, respectively. The entablature is a simple belt course, brick frieze, and concrete coping course. The treatment of these details is a precursor to the federal buildings of the later Depression years. This stripped Classical form exemplifies the beginnings of Starved Classicism. The building's plans are based on standardized plans developed by the Office of Supervising Architect to facilitate the construction of buildings during the New Deal Era. This particular facade arrangement and detailing is unique, however, among the thirty or so federal post offices that were erected in the state during the Depression. Thus, the building is locally significant under Criterion C.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- 1. Montesano Vidette; various articles 1931-1935.
- 2. Original Building Plans; 1934.

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 0.29

UTM References

A 110 454290 5202830
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

Quadrangle Name: Montesano
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

North 1/2 of Lot 4, Lots 5 & 6, Block 2 Byles & Dabney's Addition. The site is on the Southwest corner of Pioneer Avenue and Front Street. Beginning at the Northwest corner, thence S125', W100', N125', E100' to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property 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 March 1989

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

city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

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POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The Montesano MPO is a legacy of the Depression era federal building programs and is, therefore, locally-significant under Criterion A. The construction of public buildings during the Depression era represents the use of public building programs to aid local economies through a period of national economic emergency. The building is also the city's first and only federally-constructed post office. Uncle Sam's modern building symbolizes but one of three levels of government represented in the city. The domed Grays Harbor County Court-house (1912) exudes Beaux-Arts elegance, the city hall (1914) foregoes formality in its Spanish Mission design, and the Post Office is stark and solemn.

The stark, unadorned building is probably not what was pictured in February 1933 when the federal site inspector told local interests that in a county seat "the government will likely favor a building of a more ornamental type." By that time, however, government economy had reduced the \$85,000 allotment promised to Montesano in 1931 to \$76,500. In November 1933, the amount available for construction was dropped again, to \$56,000. In any case, Congressman Martin F. Smith was able to assure the local Chamber of Commerce in February 1935 that their long-awaited building would soon be built. As promised, construction began. On June 8th, the cornerstone was laid--the first such ceremony in the city since 1910 when County Courthouse was begun. Congressman Smith dedicated the new Post Office on November 16, 1935--the date of the 75th anniversary of Montesano's first post office. The building is a legacy of Smith's and the local Chamber's efforts for the community to receive not only federal aid, but, more importantly, federal recognition.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Located at the head of navigation on the Chehalis River, Montesano is the county seat of Grays Harbor County. Montesano (which means "healthy mountain" in Spanish) is supported by a local economy based on agriculture, timber products, and trade. In 1987 it had an estimated population of 3,130.

The area was first settled by Isaiah Scammon who filed a 640 acre land claim on January 15, 1853 it covered the

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area now known as South Montesano. In 1854, Chehalis County was formed by the territorial legislature and Montesano was named as county seat. On November 19, 1860 Scammon established the first post office in his home. Montesano grew slowly and when incorporated in 1883 had only 300 residents.

The entry of the Puget Sound and Grays Harbor Railroad to Montesano in 1889 finally provided efficient access to the Puget Sound and stimulated a boom. In that year some fifty new buildings were constructed, three miles of streets graded, two miles of sidewalks laid, and an incandescent lighting system supplied. The 1890 census indicated a population of 1,632. By 1910, the population reached 2,488. In the next decade the present county courthouse was completed (1912), the county's name was changed to Grays Harbor, and the city hall was constructed (1914). The lush forests and fertile farmlands surrounding Montesano continued to support the local economy. The population declined to 2,058 in 1920, rebounded to 2,460 in 1930, and then declined slightly in 1940, to 2,242. Since then Montesano has grown slowly but consistently, with agriculture, timber products, and trade as the primary sectors of its economy. In 1980 Montesano had a population of 3,247.

The Montesano MPO is on the southwest corner of Pioneer Avenue and First Street, one block west of Main Street, the city's primary business street. It is on the western fringe of the central business district. The uses within the post office block include a laundry/dry cleaners adjacent to the west and an automobile sales lot adjacent to the south. Two metal-clad commercial buildings and two single-family houses are on the southwest corner of the block. East of the MPO, across First Street, is a two-story wood frame structure (constructed in 1884) which houses a service station on the ground floor and Mason's Lodge on the second floor. South of this building is a concrete block garage and auto sales lot. Kitty-cornered from the MPO is a single-story automobile dealership. One- to two-story commercial structures are to its east and north. Pioneer Park occupies the entire block north (across Pioneer Avenue) of the MPO.

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LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MONTESANO MAIN POST OFFICE

The procurement and construction of the Montesano Post Office was reported in the Montesano Vidette between 1931 and 1936. The Vidette's recap of the activities of the year 1931 was included in the December 31st issue. In March of that year, Postmaster General Brown had recommended the allocation of \$85,000 for a new federal building in Montesano (may have been reported on March 5th but that issue was missing). It was not until November 10, 1932 that further news of the proposed federal building was reported. An article in that issue announced that bids for the post office site must be in by November 21st. The Treasury Department was requesting site offerings.

On February 16, 1933 the Vidette reported that government officials were in the city to select a site for the post office. In a meeting at the city hall, it was indicated that an early selection would be made from the twelve sites offered. The article also mentioned that the government's economy program had resulted in a reduction of the appropriation to \$76,500. In November it was announced by the federal government that \$56,000 was available for Montesano's new post office.

An article of January 25, 1934 announced that a site had finally been selected for the new federal building. The Watson-Carlile property on Pioneer Avenue was selected for a price of \$6,500. The "old K.P. Building" occupied the site. Congressman Martin F. Smith gave his assurances that plans would be rushed and construction hastened. On April 5th it was reported that the topographic and soils survey of the site was in process. Also, Postmaster Mrs. A. M. Robertson stated that local men would be given preference for the construction work. An article of June 7th reported that the plan drawings were underway. On September 6th, bids for construction were called; they would be awarded on September 25th. Orders to clear the post office site were announced in the October 12th issue. The major headline news of October 12th was the assurance that a \$200,000 pea cannery would be constructed in Montesano.

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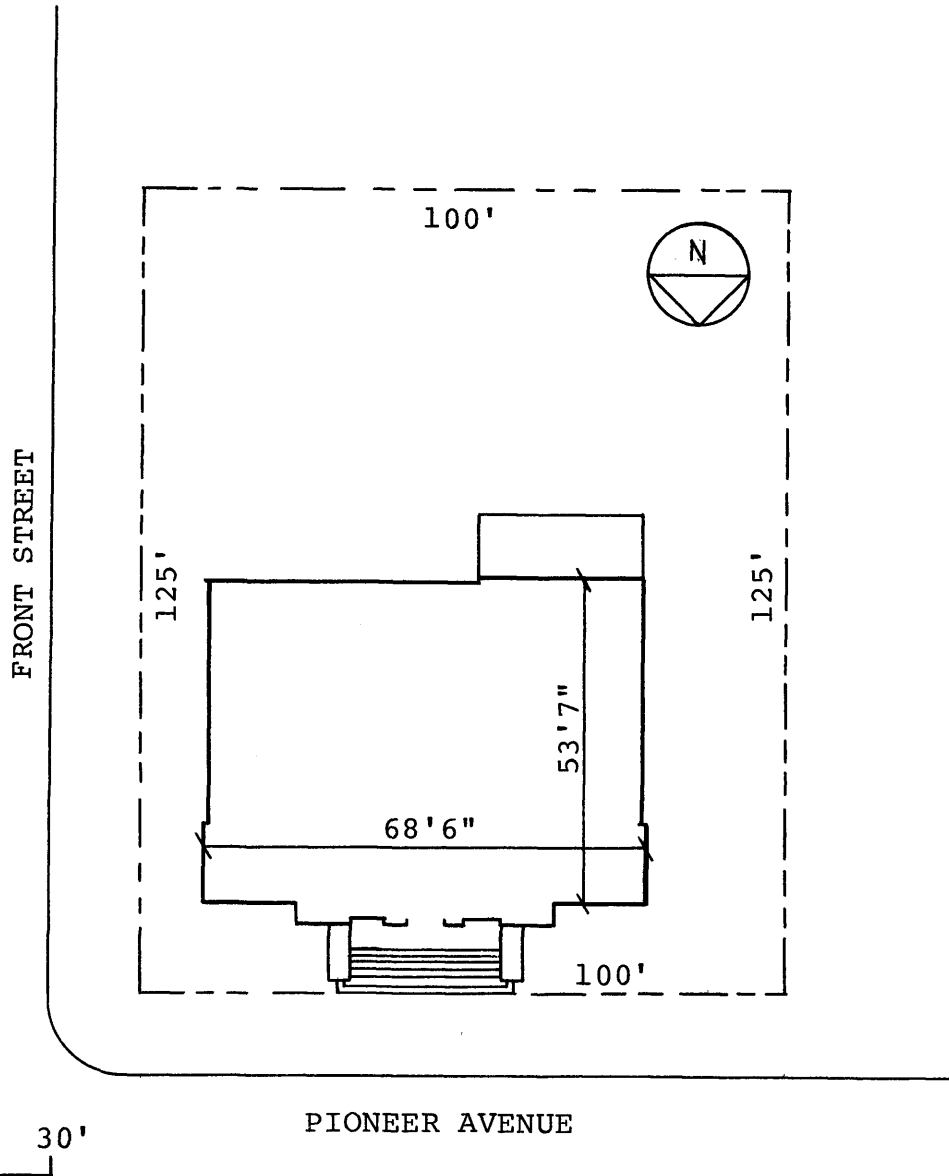
After a delay of several months, an article of February 14, 1935 reported that Congressman Smith had promised W. C. Carter of the Chamber of Commerce that action would be taken on the post office construction bids within the next ten days. Finally, on March 28th ground was broken for the new post office. The Standard Construction Company of Tacoma had been awarded the construction bid at a cost of \$39,214. A description of the brick-faced concrete building was included. Congressman Smith was given credit for making the building a reality. An article of May 16th reported the opening of the new cannery with Governor Martin in attendance. Several articles of late May and early June discussed the upcoming post office cornerstone ceremony. On July 11th, the Vidette reported that postal receipts had risen, indicating an increase in local trade. They were close to the peak year of 1929. A construction report was given on August 29th which indicated that the building was 75 percent complete and that it would open in late October or early November.

The dedication of the new post office was slated for November 16th which also marked the 75th anniversary of postal service in the city (October 24th article). On November 7th it was announced that the post office would move and be ready for business on Monday, November 11th. The dedication ceremony was reported on November 21st. Chapin Collins presided as master of ceremonies and Mayor Ed Napple introduced the guest speaker, Congressman Martin F. Smith. The 10th Field Artillery Band from Fort Lewis led a parade and played while the Boy Scouts raised the colors.

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

1. Montesano MPO
2. Montesano, Washington
3. Jim Kolva
4. December 1984
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #4)
6. View to southwest

Photo No. 2 (negative #3)
6. View to south

Photo No. 3 (negative #2)
6. View to southeast