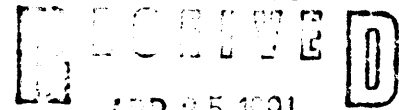


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



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

2. Location

street & number 600 Front Street
city, town Lynden
state Washington code WA county Whatcom code 073 zip code 98264

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

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 of certifying official Date 1-11-90 State or Federal agency and bureau U.S. Forest Service

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date 12/15/89 State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

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

roof Tar composition

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lynden Main Post Office is a one-story concrete building which rests upon a raised basement platform. The entire building, except the structural steel framing and roof, is reinforced poured-in-place concrete. The front elevation is flat, symmetrical, and Classically-proportioned. Five flat-arched bays divide the facade--two window bays flanking a centered entry bay. The nominal facade detailing was molded when the concrete was poured. The building is topped by a flat built-up tar composition roof.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (west-facing Front Street) is horizontal in orientation and symmetrically-arranged. Five bays divide the facade--a centered entry bay with two window bays on each side. The entry bay contains two aluminum-framed glass doors (originals replaced). Over the doors is a wooden door head with a wood sash, four-light transom window above. Flat concrete pilasters divide the entry bay and immediately flanking window bays. These windows bays, as does the entry bay, extend from the water table to a belt course articulated by grooves above and below. Above the three bays are bas-relief panels (also cast concrete) depicting a locomotive, an airplane, and a steamship. Beneath the window bays are plain concrete panels and a narrow groove in the concrete wall extending across the facade at the sill line. The sash is double-hung wood with three-over-three lights (vertically-oriented with narrow sidelights flanking a wider center light). The outside window bays rise to the tops of the sash of the interior bays. As with the interior windows, plain concrete panels lie beneath the sash, which is narrower but configured identically to the interior bays. Incised letters "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE" above and "LYNDEN WASHINGTON" below are centered over the entry. Eight concrete steps and a concrete landing flanked by square concrete buttresses provide access to the main entry. On the right side is a concrete handicap ramp.

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Both the north and south facades are solid concrete and are divided into four equally-spaced window bays. In the north facade, along Sixth Street, however, the second bay from the front is a recessed niche without a window. Plain concrete panels lie beneath the sash. The sash is identical to the outside windows of the front.

The rear facade is also solid concrete and consists of a centered, rearward projecting loading platform with two window bays flanking each side. The windows are detailed identically to those of the side facades. A square concrete chimney, which projects several feet above the building, is at the juncture of the loading platform and main building (northern corner). The platform is concrete and enclosed on the north and east sides by concrete walls. The south side of the platform contains the open loading bay and a single pedestrian door. A flat metal roof with projecting marquee covers the platform.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally  statewide  locally

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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  
Art  
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1940-1942

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1939

Const.-1940

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 Lynden Post Office is an unaltered example of a small town single-purpose post office. A modern building with Classical symmetry and proportion, the building is the only example of its type in Lynden. Although the same design and detailing was used for the Renton and Centralia post offices, the Lynden building is unusual as one of only two post offices in the state constructed totally of poured-in-place concrete. The building is locally significant for its mural and its legacy of the Federal public works programs of the Depression era. Both the building and mural symbolize the democratic process through which the local citizens were able to secure a Federal "gift" as well as the assistance given to communities by the Federal government during the Depression. The mural depicts "three ages" of one of the founders of Lynden and thus relates the history of the locality through visual presentation. It represents a significant period and type of American artistic expression. These factors contribute to the building's exceptional significance on the local level.

ARCHITECTURE

The design is standard and the front facade is identical to the post offices in Renton (1937) and Centralia (1937) except that these buildings are brick with stone detailing (there are also identical brick and stone examples in Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico). Only one other post office in the state and the entire Northwest (University Station in Seattle (1939)) is constructed entirely of poured-in-place concrete. The building was the first and only Federally-constructed post office in Lynden and is patterned after one of several standardized plans developed by the Department of the Treasury. Although the design of the building is not unique in the body of state-wide architecture, its method of

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

1. Lynden Tribune; various articles 1936 - 1941.
2. Original Building Plans; 1939.
3. Construction Progress Photographs; 2 February 1940 - 24 November 1940.
4. Gassner, Mordi. Correspondence (selected between 22 July 1941 and 13 August 1942; on file at the Lynden MPO).
5. Koert, Dorothy. Portrait of Lynden. Lynden, WA: Lynden Tribune, 1976.
6. Huestis, Phyllis A., ed. Gems From The Past. Lynden, WA: Lynden Tribune, 1984.

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 0.39

UTM References

A 1 0 | 5 4 0 | 0 1 0 | 5 4 2 | 1 0 1 0  
 Zone Easting Northing

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 Zone Easting Northing

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

E 20 feet of Lot 3, Lots 4 and 5, Block 9, Town of Lynden. The site is on the Northwest corner of Front Street and Sixth Street. Beginning at the southeast corner, thence W120', N140', E120', S140' 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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construction is rare and it is the only building of its particular style in Lynden. The Lynden Post Office, as most of the buildings constructed during the Depression era, utilizes Classical symmetry and proportion. The facade is flat and essentially stripped of architectural detail. The cast panels over the entry and immediately flanking window bays are the only embellishments provided to an otherwise stark facade. The design of the building can aptly be described as Starved Classical. The Lynden MPO is locally significant under Criterion C.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The building is locally significant under criterion A as a legacy of the federal government's aid to small communities during the Depression era through its massive public works programs. It is a symbol of that government and its presence in the community. The Lynden Businessman's Association was responsible on the home front, while Congressman Mon C. Wallgren worked in Washington to gain the appropriation for the city's first federal building. Although the rumors of a new federal building in 1936 turned from "Lynden May Get \$73,000 Post Office" on May 19, 1937 to "Lynden Will Get..." on July 7, 1938, the Lynden businessmen grew impatient. Their secretary mailed Wallgren a letter in April 1939 urging him to get construction started. Also, they advised Wallgren "to see that only 100% Lynden labor be used and Washington products be used." They added: "It has been brought to our attention that the federal postoffice project completed in other towns in the state are of almost obsolete design, and we do not wish to see this type of building erected in Lynden."

The requests were granted--Van Werven, Rossendaal, Boerhave & Van Anandel of Lynden got the construction contract (Lynden was settled by Dutch emigrants) and the building was of clean lines and modern design. As the building neared its opening date, two major local events featured the building. First, the "Inspiring, patriotic" cornerstone ceremony took place during Lynden's "Hog Wild" day of October 26, 1940. Mickey Mouse at the free matinee and exceptional bargains at the stores shared the day. The news of December 5, 1940 described the dedication of the new post office. Congressman Henry M. Jackson presided; Senator Wallgren, the man responsible for the building was unable to attend. Einar

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Simonarson, President of the Lynden Businessman's Assoc. pointed out, in his address, that "dedication of a new post office in Lynden was of particular significance as an expression of faith in the future of this community."

ART

In the lobby of the post office over the postmaster's door is a mural entitled "The Three Ages of Phoebe Goodell Judson." Executed in oil on canvas in 1942 by Mordi Gassner, the mural depicts three scenes in the life of Ms. Judson, a founder of the settlement that would become Lynden. (Of particular interest is correspondence from Gassner regarding the mural's evolution which is on file at the Lynden Post Office. Furthermore, a discussion of Gassner and his mural is included in Wall-To-Wall America (pp 201-204).)

Mordi Gassner was born in New York City in 1899. He was awarded with Guggenheim Fellowships in 1929-30 and 1930-31. Other examples of his mural work are at the Temple House and Granada Hotel in Brooklyn, New York and the Long Island Courthouse. He provided illustrations for the R.K.O. Yearbook, DuPont Monthly, and Eminent American Illustrators and is listed in Who's Who in American Art (Vol. I, II, and III).

The Lynden MPO was one of eighteen in the state of Washington to receive a mural under the auspices of the Federal Works Agency Section of Fine Arts. Thus, it is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the New Deal arts programs. The building is also significant under Criterion C in that the mural, as an integral part, represents a significant type, period and style of artistic expression.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Lynden is in Whatcom County in the State's northwest corner--eighteen miles north of Bellingham, the county seat, and four miles south of the Canadian border. With an 1987 estimated population of approximately 4,690, Lynden is the center of a rich agricultural area, with dairying, poultry

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raising, vegetables, and berry crops the major products.

Lynden was settled in the 1870s by Phoebe and Holden Judson. The first post office was established in the Judson cabin with Holden Judson appointed postmaster on March 17, 1873. When Lynden was incorporated on March 6, 1891 it had about 350 residents. The timber stands which were cleared to open the rich soils fueled the early economy. Early growth was slow and only 365 residents were counted in the 1900 census. By 1910, however, the population jumped to 1,148, but it increased only to 1,244 in 1920. Most of the downtown commercial buildings were constructed during the 1910s with a substantial number also constructed in the 1920s. By 1930 the population had increased to 1,564 and it continued to grow, to 1,696 in 1940. By this time the economy was based almost entirely on agriculture; dairy products, poultry, and fruit crops sustained the agricultural base. The later years of the 1930s were relatively bright for the city. Construction, both private and WPA, was strong. Sewer mains, sidewalks, an addition to the high school, and a new gymnasium were contributions made by the WPA. Bank deposits and post office receipts were increasing and the agricultural economy had stabilized. Lynden's population continued to climb, slowly but steadily, from 2,161 in 1950 to 2,542 in 1960 to 2,808 in 1970, though in 1980 it jumped to 4,022.

The Lynden MPO is on the northeast corner of Sixth and Front Streets, facing south on Front. Front is the primary downtown business street. Adjacent to the west of the post office is a one-story concrete building (1939) and to its west is a parking lot. To the rear and north of the post office is a one-story block office building and to its north the one-story concrete and stucco Lynden Tribune building.

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

On September 10th, 1936 the "Agriculture Progress" issue of the Lynden Tribune boasted of the area's fertile land, poultry, dairy products, lumber mills, and sugar beets. On October 8th the Tribune reported a planned \$115,000 sewer project; two-thirds of the cost would be paid by the federal government and it would employ 75 men. Other editions noted that there were relatively few foreclosures in Lynden, that



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Lynden had largest cheese factory in the state, and a new WPA-built school addition was being dedicated.

The new year of 1937 began with the news on January 14th that there was a "600% Increase Made in City Building"; between 1935 and 1936 the value of permits had increased from \$30,000 to \$161,605. Postal receipts had also increased, from \$13,073 to \$15,522.68 (July 28th article). An article of February 17th revealed that Postmaster W. A. Bauman had reported that the post office was seeking to lease new quarters for a period of two years. The paper noted that since a short term lease was requested, there was speculation that a federal building might come in the near future. "Lynden May Get \$73,000 PO" was the news of May 19th. Lynden was among 34 places in the State which the House Appropriations Committee had listed as eligible (other towns included Arlington, Edmonds, Monroe (all \$73,000), and Bothell (\$70,000). It was also reported that Lynden witnessed its first airmail flight.

"Lynden Will Get New PO" announced the Tribune on July 7th; Congressman Wallgren had announced the news at a county Democratic meeting but no details were given. The same issue also reported that bank deposits in Lynden had reached \$1,270,054.31 and Lynden was growing. In July voters okayed a \$20,000 bond issue for a new \$39,000 gymnasium (a \$19,000 PWA appropriation covered the rest) and post office site bids were called (July 28th). Sixteen sites, ranging from \$1,200 to \$15,000, were offered (August 11th). On November 24th it reported that a WPA sewer grant of \$38,968 would employ 50.

"Site Is Selected For PO" reported the Tribune on December 8th. A site offered by the Lynden Department Store costing \$8,050 had been selected. The existing post office in the Dyk Building was 1-1/2 blocks east of the new site at the corner of 6th and Front Streets.

On January 5, 1939, under the headline "City Progressed During Year 1938," the Tribune wrote "The biggest improvement to be announced for Lynden during the last year was the selection of this city for a new post office and federal building. Work on clearing the site was undertaken in the closing days of 1938." Also mentioned were construction of the new gym, excavation for a new church, and the construction of many new homes. On April 20th it was reported that

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work had started on the Tribune Building, next to the post office site. It was also reported that Lynden businessmen were urging Congressman Wallgren to get construction started on the post office. The Secretary of the Businessmen's Association had written Wallgren requesting that "only 100% Lynden Labor and Washington products be used" and noted that "It has also been brought to our attention that the Federal Post Office projects completed in other towns in the state are of almost obsolete design, and we not wish to see this type of building erected in Lynden."

"Bids Sought on New Post Office," reported the Tribune on November 9th. The article noted that the building would be of modern design and that a \$73,000 allotment had been made for the site, building and furnishings. On November 16th the paper featured a sketch of the building and noted that Postmaster Bauman advised local contractors to get in their bids. An article of December 14th revealed that 12 bids had been submitted, with John Johnson of Lynden submitting the low bid of \$49,800.

On January 4th the Tribune reviewed a "Year of Progress," noting the completed \$50,000 gym, improvements in the fairgrounds, the completion of the Tribune building, and three miles of new concrete sidewalks. A week later it was reported that 1939 postal receipts of \$15,506 set a new high, surpassing 1938 receipts by \$649 and beating the "boom years" of 1928 and 1929. On January 18th it was reported that brush had been cleared from the post office site and work would start on January 22nd. By February 15th it could be reported that cement would be poured the next day.

"Uncle Sam Has Half A Postoffice Here Now" reported the Tribune on June 27th. The finishing of the interior had started. Mr. Skilling, the U.S. Postal Inspector, was quoted as saying that a flagpole would be installed and a flag raised for Armistice Day, and that "If we can't hang the flag then, we'll hang the contractors!" In July it was reported that Postmaster Bauman had been reappointed, deposits in Lynden of \$1,315,454 had set a record that was far above the boom years of '28 and '29, and postal receipts had increased \$350.78 for the year to \$15,643.75 (articles of July 4th, 11th, and 18th). News of the post office appeared in October: Wallgren toured the post office with Mayor

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Ray H. Slade. Wallgren was pleased with its progress and hoped to attend the dedication ceremonies (October 10th article). On the 17th plans were announced for the cornerstone ceremony, which would be part of a "Hog Wild" day in Lynden on the 26th. A concert by the high school band, "exceptional bargains" offered at Lynden stores, and a free Mickey Mouse matinee at the Liberty Theatre were all planned as part of the festive day. A wild hog graced the front page of the Tribune on Thursday, October 24th, which listed the cornerstone ceremony as one of Saturday's special events. On the 31st it was reported that the "inspiring, patriotic" cornerstone-laying ceremony had been held before hundreds of Lynden residents. The president of the Lynden Business and Professional Men's Association had presided over the ceremony, which had included an "impressive flag-raising" by the American Legion.

"Speakers Named for Dedication" announced the Tribune on November 21st. Congressman-elect Henry M. Jackson would speak at the November 30th ceremony. Senator-elect Wallgren was also invited and the building would be open for public inspection. The November 28th issue contained a great deal of post office news. It was explained that the Boy Scouts would assist as guides and the band would play "The Star Spangled Banner" at the dedication. An editorial wrote that the new post office "marks a progressive step for the city" and "the fine new building will prove a stimulus for future improvements here. Lynden is going ahead--and its post office is now in keeping with this splendid modernization movement." A photograph of the log cabin that contained Lynden's first post office was also published along with a history of the local post office and the news that a special cachet would be used on Monday's mail. The issue also featured congratulatory advertisements and a large photograph and complete description of the "beautiful new post office."

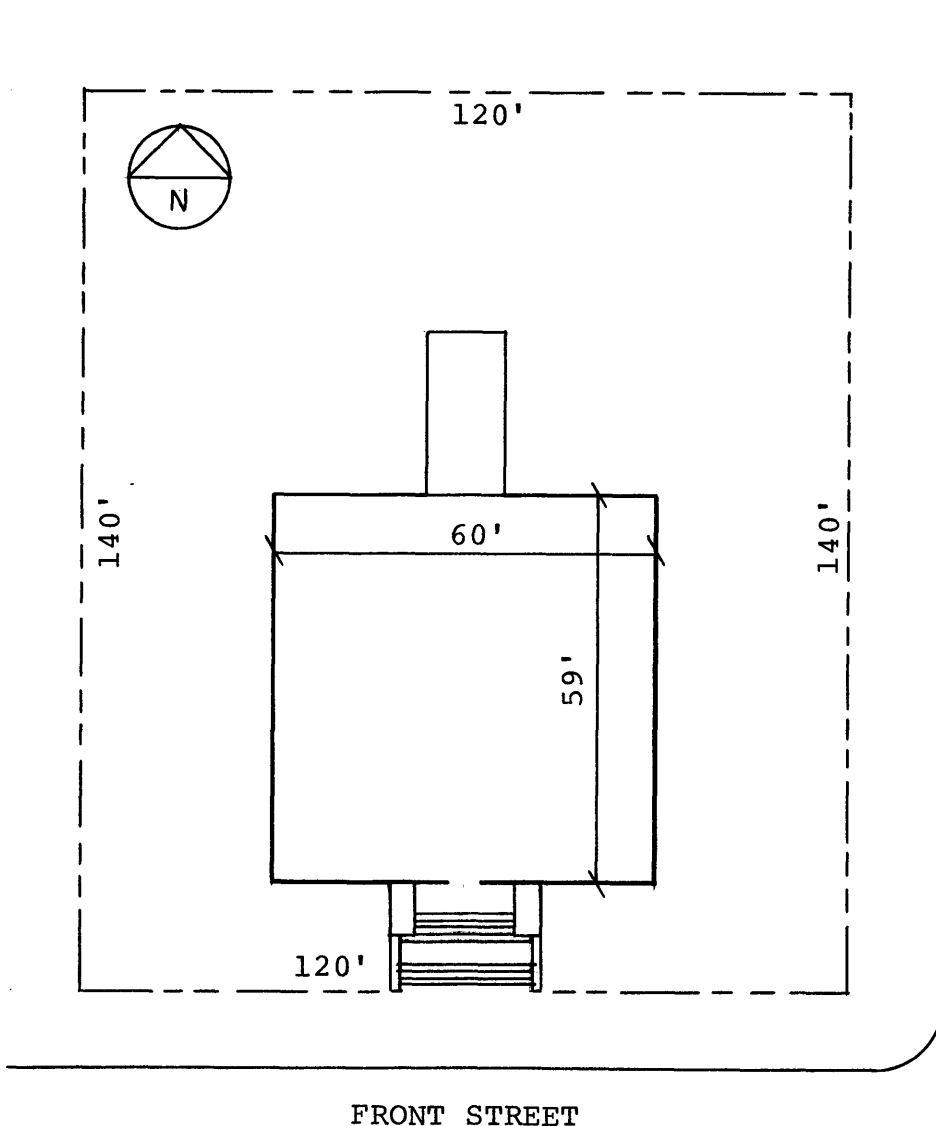
A week later the Tribune reported that hundreds had inspected the new post office. While Senator Wallgren had been unable to attend, Congressman Henry M. Jackson had given the main speech as planned. Mayor Slade expressed his gratitude to Wallgren for obtaining the appropriation while another speaker noted that the "dedication of a new post office in Lynden was of particular significance as an expression of faith in this community."

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

1. Lynden MPO
2. Lynden, Washington
3. Jim Kolva
4. August 1987
5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #9)  
6. View to northeast

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

Photo No. 3 (negative #11)  
6. View to northwest

Photo No. 4 (negative #4)  
6. Lobby mural