

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	JAN 18 1985
DATE ENTERED	MAR 4 1985

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

U.S. Post Office (St. John's Station)

AND/OR COMMON

U.S. Post Office (St. John's Station)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

8720 N. Ivanhoe Street

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Portland

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

NA VICINITY OF

3

STATE

Oregon

41 CODE

COUNTY

Multnomah

CODE

051

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Postal Service

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

California 94099

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Department of Assessment and Taxation

STREET & NUMBER

319 SW Washington

CITY, TOWN

Portland

STATE

Oregon 97204

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic Resource Inventory

DATE

1983

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

City of Portland

CITY, TOWN

Portland

STATE

Oregon 97204

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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 St. Johns Station is a rectangular single story structure on a raised basement. The front facade is symmetrical with two window bays (Palladian) flanking each side of the double-doored entry. The buff brick facade is capped by terra cotta frieze, cornice and coping. A flat built-up tar composition roof, below the parapet wall, tops the building. The building is unaltered from its original construction.

### Physical Appearance

The basement and above grade walls are constructed of reinforced concrete. The exterior above grade portion of the basement is faced with cut granite and the exterior walls are faced with a buff-colored high fire brick. The front of the building is symmetrical in design with a flat facade without major architectural projections. Two Palladian arched windows flank each side of the arched entryway. Unadorned granite panels are located beneath each window and extend to the basement facing. The windows are wood sash. The main portion is single hung with 15 lights and is flanked by narrow panels. The window arch is round with the lights set in a fan pattern. A detailed molding (fluted) separates the arch into two coincentric sections. The wood sash of the arch is framed by brick (headers) resting on a simple terra cotta springer. The pronounced keystone is also terra cotta.

The entryway consists of double aluminum framed glass doors (originals replaced) flanked by narrow recessed wooden panels. The transom above the door consists of two dark metal bas relief panels. The lower is in an eagle motif (with outstretched wings) and the upper is in a draped wreath motif. A double arched window of wood sash tops the transom panels. The arch windows are in a fan pattern with three lights in the interior arch and seven lights in the outer arch. The entryway is framed by a molded terra cotta arch with a pronounced terra cotta keystone. A brick header course frames the terra cotta arch. Wrought iron lanterns flank the entryway. A wrought iron grill in a fanned design fronts the arched window over the entry door. Wrought iron railings are used along the entry stairs as well as over the front basement window wells. Four terra cotta bas relief medallions in a rosette motif are located above and centered between the arched bays.

The exterior wall on all four facades is topped by a molded terra cotta cornice which projects slightly from the face. A fluted frieze lies below the cornice molding and is raised slightly from the brick surface of the walls. "United States Post Office" is carved in the portion of the frieze above the entryway.

The southeast facade consists of brick with three evenly spaced Palladian windows identical to those on the front (northeast) facade. Wrought iron grated basement window wells lie below the first story windows. Two terra cotta bas relief rosettes are located above the windows.

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The rear facade is also brick faced. Four Palladian windows identical to the front facade are located on the facade. The granite panels beneath the side and front facade windows are absent, however. Four basement window wells with steel pipe railing are located below the first story windows. A brick chimney projects from the facade at the southwest corner of the building. Two rectangular windows (first floor and mezzanine floor) are aligned vertically and are located to the left of the chimney.

The rear facade is also brick and is dominated by the dock area. A flat roof projects out over the loading dock approximately five feet. A concrete ramp with steel handrails provides access to the rear door. A single Palladian window (identical to those previously described) with basement window well beneath is located to the left of the dock area.

The roof of the building is hidden behind the exterior walls and consists of built-up tar and gravel composition. Several skylights are located in the roof to provide natural lighting for the work areas.

The interior consists of the following: the basement floors, walls, and ceiling are concrete; the lobby has quarry tile floors, plaster walls with 7-foot marble wainscoting, and decorative plaster ceilings; the work room to the rear of the lobby consists of hardwood parquet flooring, plaster walls with 5-foot tongue and groove wood wainscoting, and acoustical tile ceilings; and the postmaster's office has hardwood floors with plaster walls and ceiling. The lobby contains two murals, one at each end.

With the exception of the replacement of the original doors and minor (reversible) changes to the interior, the building is unaltered. (No date is available for these changes.)

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES See Below BUILDER/ARCHITECT F. Marion Stokes, Architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Site acquired in 1931; building completed in 1933.

The St. Johns Station post office is an unaltered and well preserved example of a small community post office constructed in the 20th Century Georgian style typical of Depression Era federal architecture. Although patterned from a standardized design and simplified in its form and detailing, it conveys an elegance in its overall design character. The St. Johns Station is also identified by both the City of Portland and the State of Oregon as having local significance and as being one of the pivotal buildings in the potential St. Johns historic district.

The lobby also contains two murals, entitled "Development of St. Johns", which were completed in 1936 by John Ballator under the auspices of the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture.

### Architecture

The St. Johns Station is a representative small community post office of the early Depression Era. The building exhibits classical symmetry and proportion, yet is a transitional building in that it lacks the archaeological detail of the classically inspired federal architecture of the Beaux Arts tradition. The building is modern in its flat facade and simplified form but suggests the Georgian style in the detailing of the arched Palladian windows and termination of the facade with a molded frieze and cornice. Although the building was developed from standardized plans, it imparts a feeling of dignity in its detailing and materials that manifests the federal presence in the community.

The building is also unique among small Oregon post offices in that it was designed by a local architect, F. Marion Stokes. Stokes was a Portland architect who designed several architecturally prominent buildings in the Portland area in the 1920s and 1930s. Several buildings of his design are included on the city's historic resource inventory.

### Art

The two murals located at opposite ends of the lobby are significant on the state and local level. Completed under the auspices of the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture, the murals are good examples of the idealized and representational style utilized in small communities throughout the nation during the Depression Era. The murals depict the development of St. Johns, with significant historical events (including the laying of the post office cornerstone) and prominent citizens.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) Blueprints and construction photographs.
- 2) St. John's Review, various articles from 1929 to 1933.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.46 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	51,908,0	5,04,836,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 3 and 4, Block 37 James Johns Addition to the City of Portland.  
The site is rectangular with 200 feet of frontage along Ivanhoe Street and a depth of 100 feet along Alta and Baltimore streets.

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. Kolva, Senior Associate

ORGANIZATION Haworth and Anderson, Inc.

DATE

Institute for Urban and Local Studies

August 31, 1984

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

West 705 First Avenue

(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Spokane

Washington 99204

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ NONE\_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*See Continuation Sheet for listing* DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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On March 24th it was reported that Stokes had completed his plans and that they had been sent off to Washington. The article also reported that the Business Men had made a request to Congressman Charles Martin to "do all he can to have the work speeded up." An article of April 14th reported that the work on the building might start earlier. Additionally, the federal building and incinerator would represent a total of \$197,000 to be spent on public buildings in this district this year.

Bad news was received, as reported on July 21st. Construction would be delayed. Congressman Martin advised the Review that the bids had run over the amount available for construction. In an effort to reduce governmental expenditures, Congress had directed the revision downward of all construction costs under the Economy Program. Anderson Construction Company of Portland had been the low bidder with a cost of \$54,200 for sandstone and \$51,700 for terra cotta. It was also reported that the building would contain one story with full basement and mezzanine floor. The following week (July 28th) it was reported that the plans would be modified so that the costs could be reduced by \$5,000 to \$6,000. As reported on October 13th, Anderson Construction retained the right to construct the new building by offering the low bid of \$49,000 to complete the federal building.

The start of excavation was reported on November 10th. An article of November 17th reported that "... as much local labor as possible will be employed and local subcontractors will be favored" in the construction of the new building. An event that occurred during the excavation of the site caused minor amusement in the city as reported by the Review on November 24th. Several ceramic jugs had been exhumed at the post office excavation site. It was conjectured that they had been associated with a Chinese laundry that had long ago occupied the site.

After several articles reporting progress on the site, the dedication ceremonies for the new building were announced in the April 13, 1933 issue of the Review. The paper expected a large crowd and previewed the Saturday, April 15th, event. The Business Men's Club would preside, the Boy Scouts escorted by the Roosevelt band would bear the colors, an address would be delivered by Dr. W.J. Gilstrap, various others would speak, and a copper time capsule would be set with the cornerstone. The upcoming opening of the new post office was announced on August 17th. It was reported that D.S. Duff, postmaster, was preparing to move to the new building and open for business the following Monday.

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Local News Coverage of the St. Johns Station Construction

The procurement and construction of the St. Johns Station was reported in the St. Johns Review between 1929 and 1933. Major news of the period (1929-1931) was the construction of the St. Johns Bridge (\$4.25 million, 3,800-foot suspension bridge), which opened a new era for the St. Johns district. On December 20th, 1929 the Review reported that a new federal building looms as a prospect for the community. Representative Franklin Korell had discussed the project with the Supervising Architect, James A. Wetmore, and it appeared that the outlook was favorable pending authorization by the House. The city was more than willing to accept this Christmas present from the federal government.

On March 30, 1930 it was reported that the Business Men Club had formed a committee to inquire about the federal building project after the question had been raised "what has become of the federal building contemplated for St. Johns by the U.S. Congress?" An article of April 11th reported that the Business Men were "electrified" at their Thursday meeting by the reading of a message received from Congressman Franklin Korell which conveyed the word that the federal building was "an absolute certainty". The public building bill had been signed by the President and authorized construction. Aggregate costs were estimated at \$100,000. An article of April 25th provided more details on the federal building progress. According to Congressman Korell, there was a provision in the Public Buildings Act, passed by the 71st Congress that gave St. Johns preferred status in the list of buildings authorized under the Act. It was anticipated that request for specific authorization would be submitted to the next session of Congress.

In its February 6, 1931 issue, the Review announced that \$65,000 had been appropriated by the House for the new St. Johns federal building. Although the news was welcome, the Business Men immediately set to work in contacting the Senate to secure an additional \$20,000. On February 27th, it was reported in a message from Senator Frederick Steiwer that the request for an increased appropriation had been denied by the Senate. An article of May 22nd reported a meeting attended by federal officials and local citizens in which nine sites were offered for the new federal building. Selection of the site was announced in the July 3rd issue of the Review. A 200- by 100-foot site, offered by J.F. Gillmore and the Vogel Investment Company, had been selected at a cost of \$5,500. On October 22nd, it was reported that Francis Marion Stokes of Portland had been selected as the architect for the building.

An article of January 22, 1932 brought the news that the new post office would be two stories in height which was a departure from the original plan. The additional space would be used to house other governmental offices, including customs officials. this project was included in the "large campaign of federal construction work planned to open in the spring."

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John Ballator was born in 1909 in Portland and studied at the University of Oregon, then completed his bachelor's degree in fine arts from Yale University. After completing the St. Johns murals, Ballator moved to the east coast and later became head of the art department at Hollins College in Roanoke, Virginia. He also completed murals for the Department of Justice Building in Washington, D.C., and for Franklin High School in Portland.

Community Planning

The St. Johns Station is locally significant as one of the pivotal buildings in the potential St. Johns conservation district. It is one of five historical public buildings and schools in St. Johns which are clearly outstanding in terms of their siting, scale, workmanship, and design based upon classical architecture.

Local Context

St. Johns was established in 1852 by James John who was attracted by its natural harbor and proximity to abundant stands of timber. Although St. Johns was adequately served by river-borne transportation, significant growth did not occur until rail service was extended from Portland. Milling (wool, lumber, flour, etc.) ship building, and other industries formed the economic base of the community. St. Johns was annexed to Portland in 1891, but succeeded in 1895. In 1915 St. Johns was annexed back into the City of Portland. As an independent town, the commercial district along Lombard Street (one block north of the post office) played a dominant role in the community, and the city hall (three blocks from the post office) was constructed. After reannexation to Portland, the role of the business district declined and the major retail growth shifted to Portland. Today, St. Johns maintains a strong position in the maritime trades and as a residential suburb of the City of Portland.

The St. Johns neighborhood is presently designated as a potential historic conservation district. The post office is located in the tier of blocks forming the southwestern boundary of the district. The surrounding land uses include a restaurant to the east, the fire station to the south (same block), the commercial district to the north (across Ivanhoe Street), and apartment structures to the west and southwest. None of the structures listed by the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission as having historical or architectural significance are located adjacent to the post office. Several structures are listed along North Lombard Street, which lies a block northeast of the post office. The proximity of the post office to the St. Johns City Hall, constructed in 1907, as well as the commercial district includes it as an element of the civic core of the community.



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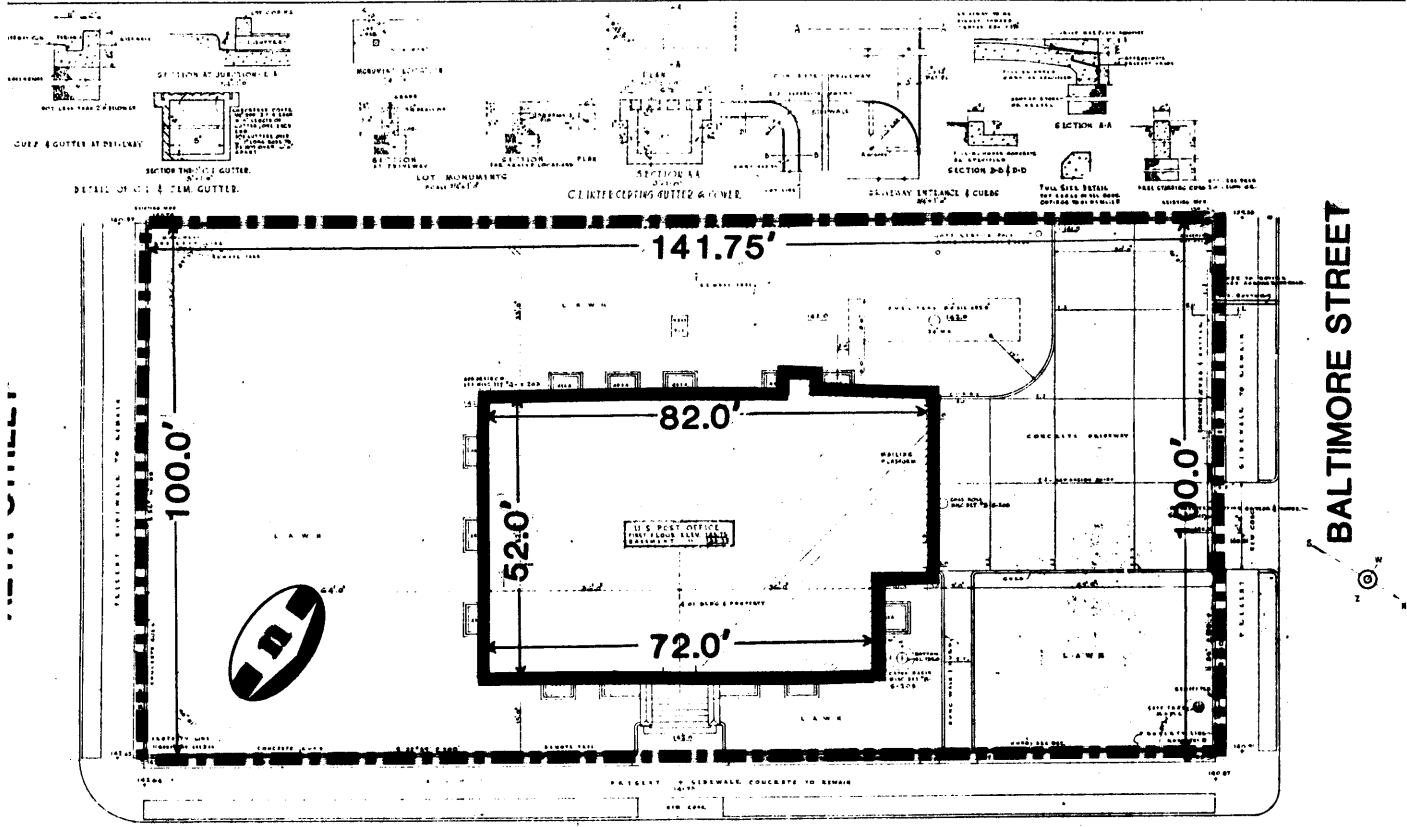
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IVANHOE STREET

APPROACH PLAN

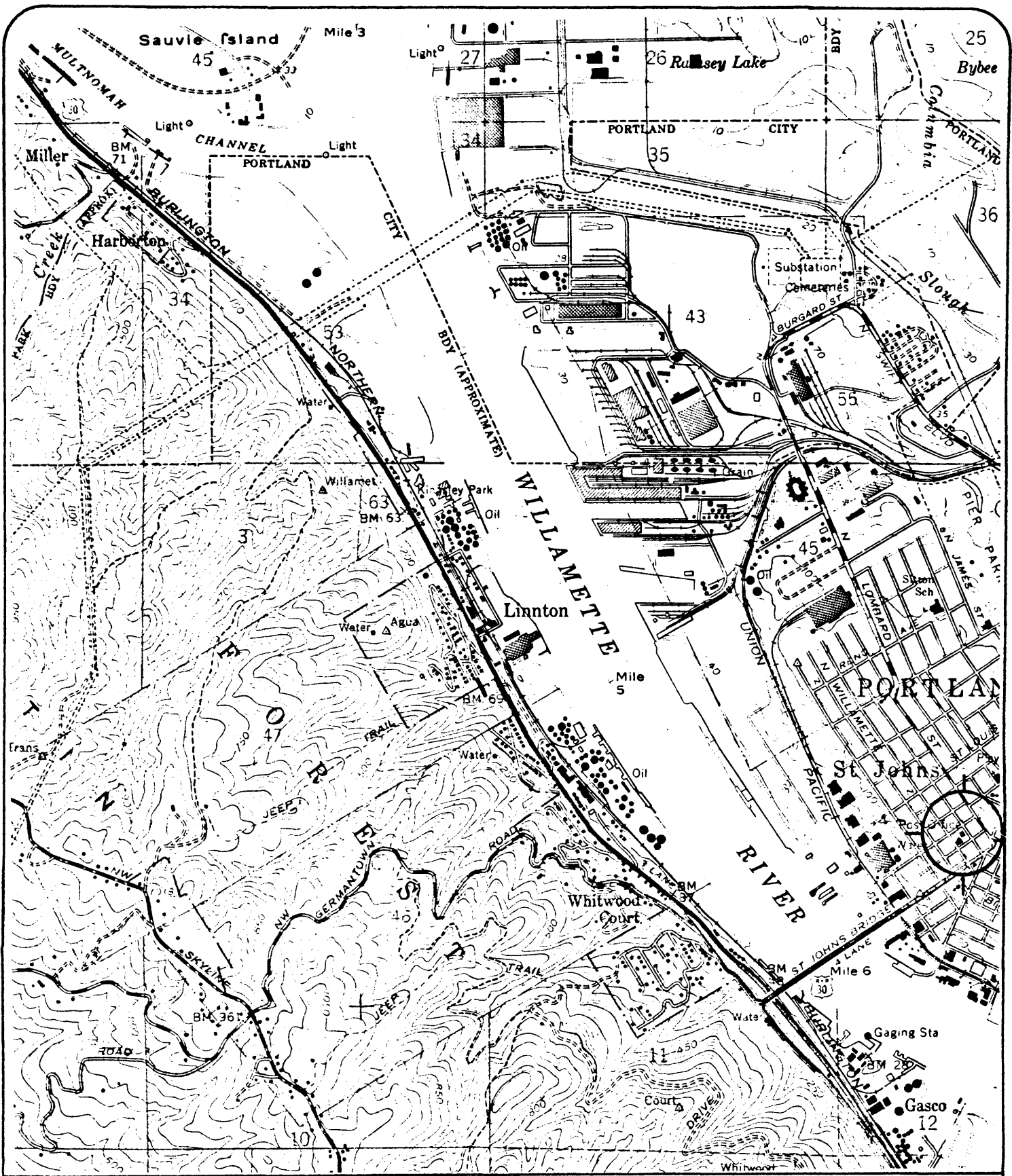
SCALE 1/8"=10'-0"

ESTABLISHED LEGAL TRAIL  
NEW  
PROJECT

NOTE: ALL L&M AREAS TO BE MAINTAINED  
ALONG THE SIDEWALK TO REMAIN  
RELOCATED AND RECONSTRUCTED TO REMAIN  
RELOCATED AND RECONSTRUCTED TO REMAIN  
RELOCATED AND RECONSTRUCTED TO REMAIN

*Tom Schae*

U.S. POST OFFICE  
ST. JOHNS, ORE.  
JAMES W. STUBBS, ARCHITECT  
1000 1/2 AVENUE  
ST. JOHNS, ORE.  
No. 5-1



St. Johns Station  
 Portland, Oregon  
 UTM Reference:  
 10/519080/5048360

