

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 30 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. 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. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic U.S. Post Offices in Idaho 1900-1941

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Appropriations for and construction of U.S. post offices/federal buildings by the federal government in Idaho from 1900 to World War II (1941).

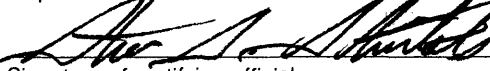
C. Geographical Data

State of Idaho

☐ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

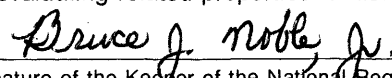

Signature of certifying official

United States Postal Service

1-18-89
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.


Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

3/16/89
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

The theme of this nomination concerns the federal building programs in Idaho as manifested in the construction of post offices in the first four decades of the 20th Century. The buildings included also record the evolution of both the political/economic philosophies and the design philosophies of the federal government through its building programs.

As selected through initial field surveys and preliminary significance evaluations, the buildings in this group represent outstanding and well-preserved architectural examples of the progression of federal architecture from the first two decades of the century through the transition of style which ended with the onset of World War II. The buildings completed in this era represent a discrete body of federal architecture.

With the War's end the federal government turned again to its construction programs, but modernization and efficiency became the new symbols of America's post-war philosophy. The use of design to provide a symbol of the monumental presence of the federal government in its post offices had ended with the beginning of the War.

This thematic nomination includes ten post offices owned and administered by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) throughout the state of Idaho. The buildings included in this nomination represent a portion of the continuum of federally-constructed post offices allocated to the state between the turn of the century and 1941. The nominated buildings exhibit a variety of styles and sizes but maintain a common demeanor representative of the federal presence. Although five of the nominated buildings have received additions, all maintain high integrity and have been well-preserved.

While the buildings specifically included in this nomination cover only the span of years between 1931 and 1941, they, along with other federally-constructed post offices in Idaho currently listed in the National Register, represent the two major eras of federal construction between 1900 and the onset of World War II. Imbedded in these construction periods are transitions in federal design philosophy, changes in funding programs, and changing economic conditions of the state and nation. The purpose of this nomination is to provide an overview of these various factors within the thematic period with which to establish a context for the evaluation of the individually nominated buildings.

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All of the buildings included in this nomination were constructed from standardized plans developed from guidelines provided by the Office of the Supervising Architect in the Treasury Department. Variations in design styles reflect both the transition in the design philosophies of the Supervising Architect and the requirements developed in response to the Depression. These variations in design, as well as functions, are also somewhat related to the communities in which they were placed and reflect the economic/political/-governmental context of those communities.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS NOMINATION

This nomination consists of two parts: the theme (or cover) document and ten individual nomination forms, one for each of the buildings included in the theme.

The cover document lists the properties to be nominated as well as federally-constructed post offices listed in the National Register, defines the theme, discusses the criteria used in determining the significance of the nominated buildings, and examines the historical context in which the buildings were constructed. The purpose of this discussion is to establish a broad overview to which the significance of the individual properties can be related. The nominated properties were selected by consultation between the USPS and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office.

The individual nomination forms are included to provide more complete information on each of the properties. The information provided in these forms includes: physical descriptions of the properties, discussions of their significance and relationship within the theme, a brief historical overview of the community in which they are located, and a summary of local newspaper coverage during the construction period.

The following list includes the ten USPS properties included in this nomination. This list is followed by federally-constructed post offices currently listed in the National Register.

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PROPERTIES NOMINATED AND OWNED BY THE USPS

<u>Office</u> ¹	<u>Date Occupied</u>	<u>Architect</u>
Nampa MPO ¹	1931	James A. Wetmore ² /OSA ³
Caldwell MPO	1932	James A. Wetmore/OSA
Blackfoot MPO	1936	Gilbert S. Underwood ⁴
Wallace MPO (HD) ⁵	1936	Harry B. Carter ⁶ Louis A. Simon/OSA
Payette MPO	1937	Louis A. Simon ⁷ /OSA
Bonnars Ferry MPO	1938	Louis A. Simon/OSA
St. Anthony MPO	1938	Louis A. Simon/OSA
Buhl MPO	1940	Louis A. Simon/OSA
Orofino MPO	1940	Louis A. Simon/OSA
Preston MPO	1940	Louis A. Simon/OSA

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REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

<u>Office</u>	<u>Date Occupied</u>	<u>Administered By</u>
Boise FB ⁸	1905	GSA ⁹
Moscow FB	1911	City of Moscow
Idaho Falls FB	1916	GSA
Pocatello FB	1916	Private
Coeur d 'Alene FB	1928	GSA
Weiser MPO	1934	USPS
Wallace MPO	1936	USPS

Notes:

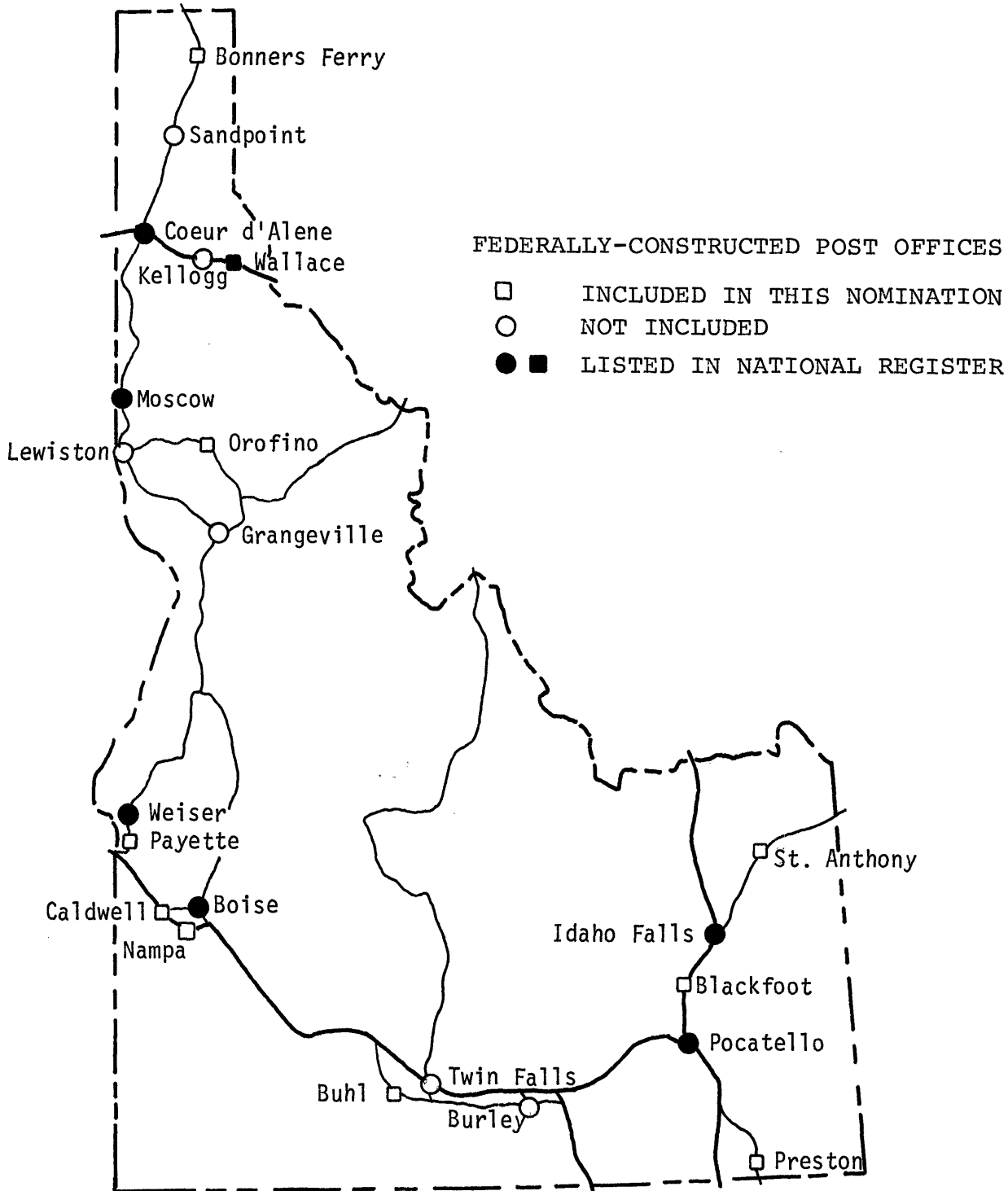
¹MPO: Main Post Office²James A. Wetmore: Acting Supervising Architect, was an attorney who administered the office, but was not involved in design work.³OSA: Office of Supervising Architect⁴Gilbert S. Underwood: Consulting Architect, worked on numerous federal construction projects.⁵HD: Historic District⁶Harry B. Carter: Consulting Architect (no biographical information available)⁷Louis A. Simon: Supervising Architect.⁸FB: Federal Building⁹GSA: General Services Administration

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According to Postal Service records, public building appropriations, and local newspaper accounts, there were 22 post offices constructed in Idaho between 1900 and 1941. Six were constructed between 1900 and 1920. None remain under USPS ownership; two, Boise (1905) and Idaho Falls (1916), are administered by GSA; two, Moscow (1911) and Lewiston (1912), are owned by their respective cities; one, Pocatello (1916), is under private ownership; and one, Twin Falls (1919), is owned by the local school district.

Two post offices were constructed in the late 1920s. One, Coeur d 'Alene (1928), is administered by GSA and the other, Sandpoint (1928), is used as a public library.

Fourteen post offices were constructed between 1931 and 1941. All, Nampa (1931), Caldwell (1932), Weiser (1934), Burley (1935), Blackfoot (1936), Wallace (1936), Payette (1937), St. Anthony (1938), Kellogg (1938), Bonners Ferry (1938), Preston (1940), Buhl (1940), Orofino (1940), and Grangeville (1941), are owned by the USPS.

FEDERAL PUBLIC BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

This section will provide a discussion of national building programs. A following section will be devoted to the relationship of these programs in the context of the buildings constructed in Idaho.

The history of post office construction before WWII can be divided into three distinct phases. From 1893 to 1914, under the provisions of the Tarsney Act, buildings could be designed within the Treasury Department or submitted to competitive bids among private architects. From 1915 to 1930, the Secretary of the Treasury implemented policies that standardized the design of public buildings, in contrast to the previous practice of preparing an individual design for each structure. From the onset of the Depression (1929 to 1930) a new era of government buildings was initiated with the development of public works programs designed to stimulate local economies.

Prior to 1902, when the first "Public Buildings Omnibus Act" was passed, federal buildings were funded on an ad hoc basis. Appropriations bills rarely contained allocations for

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more than three buildings at one time. Acquisition of sites and construction occurred only with Congressional authorization.

The Public Buildings Omnibus Act of 1902 authorized 150 new projects. Since it provided for a large body of projects rather than requiring individual authorization, it saved a considerable amount of time in Congress. However, the omnibus bills created the opportunity for political abuse in that Congressmen were eager to please their constituents by distributing "federal presents." Political influence, rather than operational requirements, seemed to dictate size, ornamentation, and location. The omnibus legislation provoked allegations of waste and cries of "pork barrel" from the press.

The utilization of the omnibus buildings approach greatly increased the number of buildings under the control of the Treasury Department. In 1899 there were 391 federal buildings under the Department of the Treasury; this number increased to 1,126 by 1912 (Craig, 1979, p. 213). Many of the new buildings went to smaller cities and developing towns, which received their first federal buildings.

After experimenting in 1903-04 with submitting smaller projects (less than \$500,000) to competing architects in the project vicinity, it was decided that these projects would be designed "in-house" by the Supervising Architect's office. A return to the "classical style of architecture" for government buildings was also announced during this period. Stylistic elements were drawn from the French Beaux-Arts and Neo-Classical traditions. In addition, America's architectural heritage was reflected in Colonial Revival design.

During the tenure of Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor (1898-1912), buildings were individually designed. Toward the end of his tenure (1912), concern was expressed that the costs of federal construction in comparison to privately-constructed commercial buildings was too high. It was felt that designs should be standardized. Taylor felt, however, that government buildings could not be designed and constructed as standardized units.

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After Taylor resigned as Supervising Architect, James Wetmore served as Acting Supervising Architect from 1912 to 1913. Oscar Wenderoth followed Wetmore from 1913 to 1915. During Wenderoth's tenure, legislative changes took place that profoundly affected government architecture, particularly small-scale projects. The designs of 1913 and 1914, however, differed little from Taylor's. Post offices designed during Wenderoth's administration, through the use of ornamentation, symmetry, and fine materials (using Renaissance Revival details), brought the idea of the Beaux-Arts movement to small cities and towns. "They [small town post offices] are generally the most important of local buildings, and taken together, are seen daily by thousands, who have little opportunity to feel the influence of the great architectural works in the large cities" (The Architect, Vol. XV, No. 23, March 1918, p. 188).

The Omnibus Public Buildings Act of 1913 set the stage for a change in federal construction policy. Although the Act authorized a large number of construction projects, it also stipulated that no new post office buildings would be authorized for communities with postal receipts totaling less than \$10,000. Pressure to control "wasteful spending" on unneeded public buildings also led to the establishment of the Public Buildings Commission in the 1913 Act.

In his annual report for fiscal year 1913, the Supervising Architect seemed somewhat skeptical of the commission's ability to render assistance. He hoped, however, that the commission would discuss thoroughly:

"... the two mooted questions of the so-called 'standardization of buildings' and the claim that the public buildings erected under the direction of the Supervising Architect cost appreciably more than similar buildings erected by municipalities, by county and state governments, and by private individuals. The reports of the debates in the House and Senate show that there is great

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diversity of opinion among members of Congress on these two subjects, and that they are matters of frequent discussion. It is believed that it is due this office that Congress be authoritatively informed of the limitations of the scheme of 'standardization' and, also, whether the Supervising Architect is actually to be charged with fostering extravagant methods of building construction." [Annual Report of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, for Fiscal Year Ending 30 June 1913", Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914]

The Public Buildings Commission, chaired by Secretary of the Treasury William McAdoo, presented its report to Congress in 1914. The report strongly recommended that buildings be standardized in order to reduce cost. It was followed by the establishment of four building classes and building criteria in McAdoo's annual report of 1915. The purpose of the classification scheme was "to provide a rational system of uniformity and business economy in designing and constructing public buildings, so that buildings suitable to the public needs may be built without waste of government money." [Ibid., p. 9] The result of this report was the complete reshaping of post office construction policies after 1915. Buildings were to be less costly but durable, simple, and architecturally desirable. The policies of standardizing plans and constructing cost-efficient public buildings continued throughout the 1920s. An effort was made to use the same design as frequently as possible, with variation in floor plans only if an unusual, specific need arose.

The classification scheme developed by the committee is as follows:

- * **CLASS A:**
Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the first class with annual receipts of \$800,000 or over; the site forming part of a city development plan or situated on an important thoroughfare of a great city; improvement on an adjoining property reaching the higher valuation of metropolitan real estate.

Character of Building: Marble or granite facing; fireproof throughout; metal frames, sashes, and doors,

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interior finish to include the finer grade of marble, ornamental bronze work, mahogany, etc. Public spaces to have monumental treatment, mural decorations; special interior lighting fixtures.

* CLASS B:

Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the first class with receipts from \$60,000 to \$800,000; valuation of adjoining property somewhat below the higher valuation of metropolitan real estate.

Character of Building: Limestone or sandstone facing; exterior frames and sash metal; interior frames, sash and doors wood; interior finish to exclude the more expensive woods and marbles; ornamental metal to be used only where iron is suitable. Restricted ornament in public spaces.

* CLASS C:

Definition: Buildings that include a post office of the second class with receipts of \$15,000 or over, and of the first class to \$60,000 receipts; valuation of surrounding property that of a second class city.

Character of Building: Brick facing with stone or terra cotta trimmings; fireproof floors; non-fireproof roof; frames, sashes and doors wood; interior finish to exclude the more expensive woods and marbles; the latter used only where sanitary conditions demand; public spaces restricted to very simple forms of ornament.

* CLASS D:

Definition: Buildings that include a post office having annual receipts of less than \$15,000; real estate values justifying only a limited investment for improvements.

Character of Building: Brick facing, little stone or terra cotta used; only first floor fireproof; stock sash frames, doors, etc., where advisable; ordinary class of building, such as any business man would consider a reasonable investment in a small town.

James A. Wetmore resumed the reins of the Supervising Architect in 1915 and retained the title of Acting Supervis-

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ing Architect. Wetmore was a lawyer by training and was concerned more with administration than the design of buildings. During his administration the Superintendent of the Architectural Division, Louis A. Simon, exercised considerable influence on the design of federal buildings. After 1914, designs became standardized and ornament less lavish.

Construction of public buildings had tapered off with the onset of WWI and came to a halt during the war. After the war ended, construction of previously authorized buildings resumed slowly. For example, 20 buildings were constructed in 1919, 10 in 1920, 3 each in 1921 and 1922, 9 in 1923, and 13 in 1924. No new construction laws were enacted until the Public Buildings Act of 1926. This Act contrasted with previous omnibus acts which had authorized appropriations for specific buildings. Two public buildings commissions--one for the District of Columbia and the other for the rest of the country--recommended a new building program which would base building location and size on a business approach rather than Congressional logrolling. The 1926 Act ordered the Treasury Department to implement a "business considerations" policy in response to protests over unneeded projects that were merely a means for a Congressman to win local favor. The standardization of plans for small post offices was also carried forward from the policies of the Public Buildings Commission's report of 1914. A survey report completed under the direction of the 1926 Act identified over 2,300 towns and cities with postal receipts over \$10,000 that were without federal buildings. The estimated cost of constructing these buildings was \$170,420,000. [Ibid., p. 13]

The policies of standardizing plans and constructing cost-efficient buildings continued throughout the 1920s. Post offices, particularly those in small communities, were constructed in so far as possible according to plans established in conformance with conditions and community needs. Stylistically, the majority retained the basic elements of Beaux-Arts massing and plan. Classical details were minimized (to reduce costs) and floor plans did not vary unless a specific need arose.

The crash of 1929 and the subsequent Depression delayed the full implementation of the building program outlined in the 1926 Act. In 1930, Congress authorized increased funding

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for public building by amending the 1926 Act. This legislation established a trend in public works projects that arose in direct response to the Depression. It served as a precedent for subsequent policies and acts that would attempt to reduce unemployment and stabilize the economy.

The Federal Employment Stabilization Act of 1931 was a major step in the government's efforts to aid the national economy through building programs. The Act established the Federal Employment Stabilization Board, which was charged with advising the President as to the trend of the economic and employment situation. [46 Stat 1086] The President would then transmit to Congress "such supplemental estimates as he deems advisable for emergency appropriations to be expended during such period upon authorized construction in order to aid in preventing unemployment and permit the Government to avail itself of the opportunity for speedy, efficient, and economical construction during any such period." Emergency appropriations were to be used, among other things, for carrying into effect the provision of the Public Buildings Act of 1926. The Act also provided for acceleration of emergency construction, advanced planning, and increased appropriations by \$100,000,000.

Design policies also continued to stress standardization. A set of "Cabinet Sketches" were produced by the Treasury Department which provided standard floor plans for post offices of different sizes. Where practicable, individual treatment was given to exterior details. In order to achieve rapid construction, emphasis was placed on minimizing the number of individual drawings.

In 1933 the Treasury Department was reorganized and the Supervising Architect's office was placed within the Procurement Branch in the Division of Public Works. Also in 1933 the Public Works Administration (PWA) was created under the National Industrial Recovery Act and additional legislation was passed for funding new projects through emergency construction programs. The funds appropriated under the 1926 Act became unavailable, except for those projects under contract. In 1934 Louis A. Simon became the Supervising Architect, a position he held until 1941. He became responsible, therefore, for carrying out the bulk of federal construction through the balance of the Depression era.

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The proliferation of federal building programs increased the bureaucratic complexity of federal construction. The Treasury Department's annual report of 1935, for example, listed construction projects under the following programs: the original Public Buildings Program under the 1926 Act; Public Works Administration projects; the Emergency Relief Construction Program; and the Building Program for the District of Columbia under the 1926 Act. [Ibid., p. 17]

The number of post offices constructed under these programs grew rapidly. There was a push to provide post offices in those communities that had been identified in the survey report resulting from the 1926 Act, as well as in towns that had not been included in the report or subsequent amendments. As indicated below, the emphasis on economic revival was reflected in the distribution expansion of the building programs.

...[W]ith a view to relieving countrywide unemployment the Secretary of the Treasury and Postmaster General, in the selection of towns or cities in which buildings are to be constructed, shall endeavor to distribute the projects equitably throughout the country so far as may be consistent with the needs of the public service; and the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General may also select for the prosecution under this appropriation such projects not included in such report as in their judgment are economically sound and advantageous to the public service. [48 Stat 1062].

Emphasis on standardization and the allocation of economic benefits of federal construction programs to the various producing industries was indicated in the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury (Fiscal Year ended 30 June 1935). An advisory committee on engineering was formed and was charged with the task of developing a Manual of Design to serve as a guide in the development of plans and specifications for new structures. A directive board was established to study the requirements of each project in its preliminary stage, taking into consideration the best utilization of the site selected, the general character of the design in its broad sense, the selection of the most appropriate materials for the construction and finish, the availability of local materials, the relationship of the proposed building to its

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surroundings, and the development of an equitable balance in the use of materials that would spread the benefits of the public building program as much as possible among all the producing industries.

The Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury for 1937 reported that standardization had been successful in achieving its goals of efficiency and stimulating employment. It is also interesting to note the reference to 11 standard designs to meet the sectional architectural traditions.

A large portion of the program has consisted of small post office buildings spread over the entire United States. Type designs were developed and, in order to meet the varying requirements of the Post Office Department and the sectional architectural traditions, eleven designs were required. By thus standardizing the designs, there resulted a great saving in time and cost of production of the drawings and specifications and the placing of these projects on the market was greatly expedited. The buildings which have been constructed from these type designs have proved economical and satisfactory.

The policy of preparing drawings and specifications permitting to the greatest practicable extent the use of materials and products native to the localities has resulted in stimulating employment and spreading the benefits of the building program.

In 1935, 185 post offices were constructed by the federal government. This number was followed by 260 in 1936, 303 in 1937, and 259 in 1938.

Under Government Reorganization in 1939, the Public Buildings Branch of the Procurement Division was placed under the administration of the Federal Works Agency. The Supervising Architect was also consolidated under the FWA. The Public Buildings Administration, headed by a commissioner of public buildings, was charged with the responsibility of administering these functions. It appears that the post office construction policies remained substantially the same as under the previous organization.

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The architectural styles of the Depression Era, particularly after 1933, tended toward modernized, simplified buildings. The buildings retained the symmetry and proportions of their predecessors but were stripped of the architectural ornamentation that characterized the pre-1920 buildings and even those of the first three years of the 1930's. The design was a basic rectangular box with flat facade; and detailing suggested Classical elements, but in rudimentary form. In addition to the various Revival influences, Art Deco was used but even this motif worked with stylized Classical elements. However, these buildings were still of quality construction, using brick, stone, and terra cotta, and they continued to symbolize the stability of the federal government.

The quest for efficiency of plan preparation and rapid construction, and the influence of the international or modern design movement created a building that is termed "starved classical". The end of the Depression Era also brought the end to this building type. Construction essentially stopped during World War II and the post offices which followed were designed to meet the changing operational functions of modern postal facilities.

FEDERAL ARTS PROJECTS

Like the accelerated post office construction of the Depression Era, the New Deal Federal Art Projects were developed to alleviate unemployment in the arts and to decorate federal architecture. Three programs were administered through the Treasury Department and one through the Works Progress Administration. [The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology of Memoirs, O'Connor, 1972, p. 12]. These programs were as follows:

Treasury Department Programs

1. The Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), which lasted from December of 1933 to June of 1934. This was an emergency relief program applied without a strict relief test. It employed roughly 3,700 artists and cost \$1,313,000.
2. The Section of Painting and Sculpture, later the

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Section of Fine Arts. This was the program primarily responsible for murals and sculpture found in post office buildings throughout the country. Commissions were awarded based on anonymous competitions without reference to the artists' economic need, i.e., it was not, strictly speaking, a relief program. The program began in October of 1934, the final commission was completed in 1943. There were 1,400 contracts awarded at a total cost of about \$2,571,000.

3. Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) was created in July of 1935 by a funding allocation from the WPA to the Treasury Department. TRAP was administered by the Section of Fine Arts, applying the same relief rules that governed WPA employment. The project employed 446 persons at a cost of \$833,784; it was discontinued in 1939. The project's primary output was painting and sculpture used to decorate federal buildings.

Work Progress Administration

4. Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP) was a large relief project devoted to the plastic arts. The WPA/FAP was part of a larger program called Federal Project No. 1, which included the WPA drama, music, and writing projects. The over-all project began in August of 1935, employed over 4,000 persons, cost \$35 million, and was terminated in 1943.

In decorating its new public buildings, the Treasury Department supported the arts in the manner of the traditional patron. The Department selected both artists and subject matter in the process of conveying the ideals of the New Deal to the public users of its facilities. In accomplishing that task, the Section of Fine Arts made it clear what was considered as appropriate style and subject matter for its programs. Literal interpretation of the American scene, particularly events that were representative of the communities in which they were located, was the essence of that appropriate style. Though some artists felt that this standard was repressive, many critics praised the Section for bringing art out of the studios and museums and into public

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buildings, some in towns where people had never seen original works of art.

The themes portrayed in the local buildings expressed the experiences, history, and ideals of the local communities, so their artistic significance varied with the local context. The style was conservative and realistic, one that was identifiable and did not require the interpretation of an art critic to be appreciated by the local populace. It was a style that it could relate to. The mural art and the public buildings in which it was located provided the link between the federal government in its New Deal programs, and the local citizen.

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MAIL SERVICE IN IDAHO

Prior to the settlement of Franklin, Idaho's first permanent white community, by Mormon settlers in 1860, the area's inhabitants consisted of several native American tribal groups, fur traders and missionaries. The first recorded exploration of the region was completed by the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805. Four years later, the first fur post was established by David Thompson of the Northwest Company on the shore of Lake Pend d'Oreille. A year later, Fort Henry became the first fur post in southern Idaho. Fort Hall on the Snake and Fort Boise on the Boise River were established as competing trading posts in 1834. Missions were founded at Lapwai in 1836 and Coeur d'Alene in 1846.

Until the Mormon settlement at Fort Lemhi in the Lemhi Valley in 1855 (abandoned in 1858 during the Utah War), the white settlers had merely passed through Idaho on their trek to the farmlands of the Willamette Valley in Oregon and the gold fields of California. Fort Hall, on the Oregon Trail, served as a major provisioning and rest point for these western emigrants. Although they passed along the Snake River Valley, the arid landscape that would become an agricultural heartland did not disclose its potential.

Gold and its illusory promise of vast wealth provided the springboard for Idaho's settlement. Although rumors of gold in the mountains of Idaho (then Washington Territory) had existed for several years, it was not until 1860 that Captain E.D. Pierce struck rich gold deposits on Oro Fino

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Creek. The following year, a group of cabins became Pierce City and the rush to the Clearwater mining district was on. Mining camps at Oro Fino, Elk City, and Florence City followed. By late-1863 a dozen or so towns and post offices were sprouting from the gold-rich tributaries of the Clearwater and Salmon rivers.

Lewiston, at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers and with access to the Columbia River steamers from Portland, Oregon, became the supply and jump-off point to the mining regions. A post office was established here on July 25, 1862. In the next year, Lewiston became the seat of the Idaho Territory which was partitioned from Washington Territory on March 4, 1863. At its organization, the territory had four counties, ten mining towns and 20,000 inhabitants.

Lewiston's position as the territorial capital was, however, short-lived. With the discovery of gold in the Boise Basin, the southern portion of the Territory soon became the center of population. The establishment of Fort Boise, by the army in July 1863 to protect the miners, was followed immediately by the founding of the adjacent Boise City. In just over a year, Boise City had a post office (June 18, 1864), had greeted its first Overland Stage (August 11, 1864) and had wrested the Territorial capital from Lewiston (December 24, 1864).

The first mail and express service into present-day Idaho was provided to the emerging gold camps of the Clearwater District. Ira V. Mossman organized an express company in April, 1861 and probably began service to the district in the summer of that year. On June 2, 1862, Congress approved an act to establish the following post roads in Washington Territory: from Walla Walla to Pierce City and Orifino [sic], via Lewiston; from Walla Walla to Pierce City to Elk City; and from Lewiston to Florence City. Mossman & Co.'s Express carried the U.S. mail as well as supplies to the mining camps. Also providing service to the area was E.W. Tracy & Co., an agent for Wells Fargo & Co. Wells Fargo established express offices in Lewiston in 1861, and Orofino and Florence City in 1862.

It might be noted that the first post road which would pass through present-day Idaho was authorized on August 3,

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1859. Listed under Washington Territory, the road was from Wailepta (Walla Walla), by Craig's, Coeur D'Aleine [sic] Mission, and St. Mary's Valley, to Fort Benton, in Nebraska Territory. The route followed the military road constructed by Captain John Mullan in 1859-1860 between Fort Benton and Fort Walla Walla. The road failed to gain popularity, however, and was never a factor in the 19th Century development of Idaho.

The mails, supplies and 'treasure' that flowed through Lewiston between the mines and Walla Walla were shipped on the Columbia River by steamers. Portland, Oregon became the major transshipment point for this river traffic. Mail from California was carried overland by stage from Sacramento or along with mail from the east coast by ocean steamer. San Francisco, California and Astoria, Oregon received these mails via the Isthmus of Panama.

As discussed, the discovery of gold in the Boise Basin and the founding of towns of Placerville, Centerville, Ban-nock City (later Idaho City), and Pioneer shifted the focus of settlement to southern Idaho. Tracy & Co. and Wells Fargo located express offices in these towns in early 1863. W.H. Rockefeller initiated a pony express service between Walla Walla and the Basin and by September of 1863 four express companies were serving the area. Included in this group was a pony express service to Salt Lake City operated by Davis, Patterson and Company. The Basin was linked to two major communications routes: the Columbia River via Walla Walla and the Overland Trail Route via Salt Lake City. Although attempts were made to establish supply and postal routes between Lewiston and the Boise Basin, they were thwarted by the difficult terrain of the north-south route.

By the end of 1863, Wells Fargo & Company had purchased Mossman & Co. (serving the Clearwater and Salmon districts), Rockefeller & Co. and Tracy & Co.'s Portland and Boise Express. They now owned the major lines between the Columbia River depots and Idaho gold fields. Meanwhile, Charles Woodward was carrying the U.S. mails and express between Walla Walla and Lewiston. This service was the only official U.S. mail service to the Idaho gold camps. In June, 1864, Woodward's service was replaced by Hill Beachey's Walla Walla and Lewiston Stage Line.

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Although the U.S. mails were being conveyed to the Boise Basin through Wells Fargo by contract carriers, it was not until the Post Roads Act of June 30, 1864 that official U.S. mail service was extended to the area. The Act, under a Utah listing, created two routes, both from Fort Bridger. The first, via Richville, Soda Springs, the Upper Crossing of the Snake River and Virginia City extended to Hellgate in Idaho Territory. (Both Virginia City and Hellgate were later included in the Montana Territory division.) The other route, via Boise City and Grand Ronde Valley, Oregon, extended to Walla Walla.

Ben Holladay and his Overland Stage Line won the first contract to serve the routes. For an amount of \$156,000 per year Holladay would provide tri-weekly service between Salt Lake City and Walla Walla. Holladay carried the U.S. mail between Salt Lake and Boise City, and his subcontractor, Thomas & Co., connected Boise City and Walla Walla. By the end of July, 1864, Boise City was becoming the transportation hub of Idaho Territory. Eighteen or so stages per week were arriving and departing by the end of the summer.

Other post roads in the June, 1864 act included under Oregon--from Dallas City, Oregon via Canyon City and Independence to Boise City; and under Idaho--from Boise City via Bannock City, Centreville, Pioneer City, and Placerville to Lewiston; from Placerville to Fayetteville; from Boise City to Esmeraldo in Alturas County; and from Boise City via Owyhee, to Humboldt in Nevada Territory. Finally, under California, a post route from Susanville to Boise City was authorized.

Even though mail service had been established from the east via the Overland Mail Route, Boise Basin inhabitants were still dissatisfied with the California mail and freight service through Portland and up the Columbia River. It was charged that the Oregon Steam Navigation Co., which held a monopoly on the route, was charging excessive rates. Furthermore, the winter freeze of the Columbia caused long delays, sporadic service, and massive frustration. Attempts had been made since early 1864 to establish routes directly from California. Red Bluff and Chico, both served by the California Steam Navigation Co. on the Sacramento River, vied as supply points. A route from Humboldt, Nevada with links to the Central Pacific Railroad was also explored. In May,

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1864 a pony express service was established between Star City, Nevada, via Ruby City to Boise City. In August the Humboldt Express Co. was formed and provided seven-day service between Idaho City and San Francisco. A route from Chico was established through the Owyhee mining District to Boise City in March, 1865 by the newly formed Idaho Stage Co. (owned by J.B. Francis, E.D. Pierce, G.C Robbins, and Hill Beachey). The route consisted of stages between Susanville and Chico and north to Deep Hole Springs, and from there by saddle train north to Ruby City, then by stage to Boise City.

These early attempts to establish California routes were fraught with difficulty. Winter weather, unimproved trails (it was not until 1866 that a stage could run the full length of the Chico route), and Indian unrest made consistent and reliable service impossible. Additionally, mail contracts were being secured at unrealistically low prices by carriers who could not perform, and other stage companies that were carrying the mail were uncompensated by Uncle Sam. Ruby City and the Owyhee mining district continually complained of the lack of reliable service.

Finally, late in 1866, reliable mail service was established to the Owyhee district. Jesse D. Carr received a contract on June 30th to carry the mail three times per week from Virginia City, Nevada, via the Humboldt route to Boise City. Initially run as a pony express between Star City, Nevada and Silver City/Ruby City, a stage route was completed in September. The Railroad Stage Line, organized in September by Hill Beachey, George and Henry Greathouse, John Hailey, and Sam Kelley, took over the route. Also, the Chico to Boise City route, via Ruby City was finally established. John Mullan took over the contract of L.T. Williamson and the first run of the California and Idaho Stage and Fast Freight Co. began on July 1st.

The year 1867 brought more changes in the Idaho mail and freight service. Wells Fargo & Co. was now the major force in western transportation; in November, 1866 the great consolidation of mail, express and stage companies was accomplished and Wells Fargo gained control of the Holladay Overland Mail and the Pioneer Stage Co.. Stage companies in Idaho were also competing fiercely and several major changes

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in ownership took place. Hill Beachey, John Hailey, Henry Greathouse, Ed Pinkham, and Sam Kelly staved off competition and their lines controlled local service. Also, the Chico route was cancelled by the Post Office Department in May and all overland California mails were carried from Virginia City via the Humboldt route.

On May 10, 1869 the joining of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads at Promontory, Utah revolutionized overland communications; the transcontinental railroad was now complete. Although it would be several years before the rails would enter Idaho and bring about major changes in mail and freight service, restructuring of stage routes had been taking place as the rails rushed to their historic rendezvous. John Hailey shifted the rail terminus of his Idaho and Oregon Stage Line (also known as the Overland & Oregon State Line) to Indian Creek. He now offered two-day service from the railroad to Boise City and five-day service to Portland. While Hailey was providing the link to the eastern mails, Hill Beachey was carrying the California mails to Boise City from terminal points at Winnemucca and Elko.

In mid-1870 the North Western Stage Line obtained the U.S. mail contracts and began establishing an integrated network of stage services in the Northwest. They were able to maintain control of the mail contract until July 1, 1878. On this date John Hailey won the government mail contract. Hailey, in partnership with Gilmer & Salisbury of Salt Lake, formed the Utah, Idaho and Oregon Stage Company which would operate until competition from the expanding railroads in Idaho forced their liquidation in 1886. Although stage-coaches would continue to carry passengers and the mails into the early 1900s, their era of U.S. mail transport was essentially over.

Idaho's first railroad was initiated by Mormon investors who formed the Utah Northern Railroad to link the northern Utah communities and the mining districts of Montana Territory with the transcontinental line at Ogden. In May of 1874 the narrow gauge line crossed the Idaho border and reached the Mormon community of Franklin. Efforts to extend the line stalled, and it was not until 1878 that Union Pacific officials acquired ownership and the extension toward Montana began. By the winter of 1878 the rails reached

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Central Ferry, which was renamed Blackfoot and granted a post office on March 20, 1879. In the spring of 1879 Eagle Rock (renamed Idaho Falls in 1890) became the northern terminal of the line and in December of 1881 the rails finally reached Butte and the Montana mines.

Though the Utah & Northern was important to the development of the eastern portion of Idaho, it did little for the Territory as a whole. Idaho was still sparsely settled with only 32,610 residents in 1880. Mining was the economic mainstay. Agriculture was limited to the benchlands accessible to streams and supplied only local needs. Likewise, timber production consisted of only a few small mills meeting the demands of the mining towns. The development of cattle and sheep raising was limited by lack of transportation to the major markets. Manufacturing was virtually nonexistent.

The decade of the 1880s provided Idaho Territory with the transportation network upon which it based its future growth. In July of 1881, the rails of the Oregon Short Line began their extension along a route that would follow the Oregon Trail through southern Idaho to Huntington, Oregon where they would link with the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company. At its completion in 1885, Idaho was linked by a transcontinental line between Portland, Oregon and the east coast. Pocatello, which would become Idaho's rail center, was founded as a division point on the Oregon Short Line in 1882. (Shoshone had been the first choice for the division point, but problems with the townsite resulted in the shift to Pocatello.) In 1884, a branch line was extended from Shoshone to the mining towns of Hailey and Ketchum. Caldwell and Payette (with post offices established in 1883) and Nampa (1884) also owe their origins to the railroad. New Weiser, which was platted by the railroad in 1884, quickly passed out of existence when it was connected by bridge to 'old' Weiser (1871) across the Snake River. To Boise City, the capital of the Territory, the construction of the railroad was almost the city's death knell; the route by-passed the city by 20 miles. The death was avoided, however, by the completion of a branch line between Boise City and Nampa in 1887. (It was not until 1925 that the main line of the Union Pacific was routed through Boise.)

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As the Oregon Short Line was extending across southern Idaho, a second transcontinental route was crossing Idaho. The Northern Pacific, which linked St. Paul, Minnesota and Portland, Oregon, was finally opened with the driving of a golden spike at Gold Creek, Montana on September 8, 1883. Hope, Kootenai, Sandpoint, Cocalalla, and Rathdrum, mere dots on the map, were connected by the short segment across the north Idaho panhandle. All but Sandpoint, which awaited the timber boom of the early 1900s, would remain as small villages.

With the discovery of rich silver and lead deposits in the Coeur d'Alenes a new rush for instant wealth took place in 1884. As they had in the Clearwater, Salmon, and Boise Basin districts, miners flocked to the new camps which blossomed from rugged canyon floors: Kingston, Osborn, Murray, Wallace, Burke, Ryan, and Kellogg. In 1886, the Spokane Falls & Idaho Railroad branched from the NP line at Hauser Lake to Coeur d'Alene, now growing from a mere trading post adjacent to Fort Sherman to a busy commercial center. From Coeur d'Alene, lake steamers paddled to Cataldo, then transferred cargo to a narrow gauge railroad (Coeur d'Alene Railway & Navigation Co.) which linked the mining camps.

The farming trade center of Moscow (and future home of the University of Idaho) received a branch line of the Oregon Railway & Navigation Co. in the fall of 1885. The line had been extended from Winoa, Washington and provided access to Portland, Oregon. The same company, under the name of the Washington & Idaho Railroad Co., completed a branch line from Farmington, Washington through the Coeur d'Alene mining district to the Montana border 1889.

By 1889, according to the Annual Report of the Postmaster General, Idaho had 203.74 miles of its total 3,029.24 mail route miles served by railroad. Four rail routes were listed under Idaho. These included: Shoshone and Ketchum via the Oregon Short Line (70.01 miles); Hauser and Coeur d'Alene via the Spokane Falls and Idaho (13.88 miles); Coeur d'Alene and Burke via the Coeur d'Alene Rwy. & Navigation Co. (99.16 miles); and Nampa and Boise City via the Idaho Central Railway (20.60 miles). In addition, routes serving Idaho

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cities were listed under Utah, Wyoming Territory, and Washington Territory. The Utah route, via the Utah Northern Rwy, extended between Ogden, Utah and Silver Bow, Montana (409.07 miles; 206.36 miles in Idaho). As Idaho's first rail line, it served the towns of Preston, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, and Blackfoot. The Wyoming listing included the Oregon Short Line between Granger, Wyoming and Hunnington, Oregon (541.58 miles; 434.06 in Idaho). This line served Pocatello, Shoshone, Nampa, Caldwell, Payette, and Weiser. The Washington lines included: Connell, Washington and Moscow via the Columbia and Palouse R.R. (117.30 miles); Wallula, Washington and Missoula, Montana via the Northern Pacific R.R. (419.51 miles); and Marshall, Washington and Genesee, Idaho via the Spokane and Palouse Rwy. (104.31 miles).

By 1900, 420.92 railroad route miles of a total 4,488.77 mail route miles were listed under Idaho. The Great Northern Railroad, which linked St. Paul, Minnesota and Everett, Washington and crossed the northern Idaho panhandle through Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint, was now complete. Lewiston finally realized its long-awaited rail link with the completion of a Northern Pacific branch from Palouse, Washington in 1898. Two years later, St. Anthony was listed on the route from Idaho Falls via the St. Anthony Railroad Company (38 miles).

The railroads carried the mails between the major rail terminals while the stage lines, for another two decades, would continue to link these points and the towns off the rail system. Most of the rail network which would carry Idaho's soon-to-blossom agricultural and timber production was now in place.

FEDERAL POST OFFICE CONSTRUCTION IN IDAHO

At the turn of the century, Idaho had survived ten years of statehood and claimed 161,722 residents. Only nine towns had populations of greater than 1,000. Boise City, the state capital and largest city, had only 5,957 residents. Only four other cities had populations greater than 2,000: Pocatello (4,046), Moscow (2,484), Lewiston (2,425), and Wallace (2,265). The decade of the 1890s had been one of turbulence in the state's major industry; battles with the railroads over freight rates, unstable metals prices, and labor unrest

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plagued the mining regions. In 1890, the state enacted legislation permitting the organization of local irrigation districts. In 1894, the Carey Act made possible the reclamation projects which would lead to the development of the Snake River and Idaho's agricultural industry after 1900. The lumber industry was now shifting from local production to supplying a national market. Through the next two decades, agriculture and timber would grow to supplant mining as the state's major industries. Boisterous mining towns would fade and be replaced by stable farming communities.

Boise, by virtue of its position as the territorial capital and proximity to the southern Idaho mining region, received the territory's first federal building in 1870: the Boise Assay Office (NHR; two-story sandstone). Although the Assay Office and the various army forts throughout the territory were evidence of the federal presence, they did not establish the formal link with the federal government. The first step toward establishment of this link was taken on March 2, 1895 when Congress authorized \$150,000 for the acquisition of a site and construction of a federal building in Boise [15 Stat. 271]. The same legislation appropriated \$17,747.11 (which was used to acquire the site on January 6, 1897). In the next year, an Act of June 11, 1896 increased the cost limit of the building by \$50,000 and provided a \$50,000 building appropriation [29 Stat. 414]. Another year passed without a building, but on June 4, 1897 an additional \$100,000 was appropriated for construction [30 Stat. 11]. On July 1, 1898, \$32,252.89 was added to the list of appropriations. Three more years (and a century) passed. On March 3, 1901 an additional \$50,000 was authorized for the building [31 Stat. 1097], bringing the total authorization to \$250,000, of which \$200,000 had actually been appropriated. The final appropriation for the building was made on June 28, 1902, but two more years would elapse before the promised monies began to take the form of a building. Finally completed in 1905, the four-story Beaux-Arts edifice of stone and brick took over a decade to become reality.

Moscow, the home of the University of Idaho, was the next Idaho city to receive the promise of a federal building. The Omnibus Public Buildings Act of June 30, 1906 authorized an amount of \$100,000 to purchase a site and construct a post office and courthouse in Moscow [34 Stat. 778]. In addition

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to providing an appropriation of \$30,000 for that building, the Act authorized and appropriated \$10,000 for acquisition of a site in Lewiston. Sites were acquired in both cities the following year. As in the case of Boise and future buildings in Pocatello, Idaho Falls and Twin Falls, both cities would receive piecemeal appropriations before their buildings were finally constructed. Moscow would receive appropriations of \$30,000 in 1907, \$15,000 in 1909, \$5,000 in 1910 and \$20,000 in 1911 before finally being completed in 1911. Although not as grand as the Boise building, Moscow's three-story, red brick federal courthouse in the Neo-Classical mode was certainly a tribute to the city's growing business district.

Lewiston, only thirty miles south of Moscow, was third in line to receive its federal gift. Nearly twice the size of Moscow, the site of the territory's first post office, and once the territorial capital, Lewiston and its boosters had to stand behind its rival to the north. Although a site had been purchased in 1907, it was not until May 30, 1908 that \$85,000 was authorized for a building [35 Stat. 526]. The same legislation provided authorizations for a \$125,000 extension of the Boise Federal Building and \$10,000 for a site in Pocatello [35 Stat. 524 and 533]. While the citizens of Lewiston waited for the final appropriation necessary to start construction, the boosters of three more Idaho cities had reason to celebrate. The Public Buildings Omnibus Act of June 25, 1910 authorized \$100,000 each for sites and buildings in Coeur d'Alene and Idaho Falls, and \$10,000 for a site in Twin Falls. The same act provided \$100,000 for a building in Pocatello where a site had been donated in 1909. Lewiston received its final appropriation of \$20,000 on March 4, 1911 and its citizens witnessed the completion of their post office in 1912. With a front facade of eight engaged limestone columns, the two-story Neo-Classical building was a credit to the city's attractive civic center.

On March 13, 1913, Congress gifted Twin Falls an \$85,000 building authorization to go with the site that had been purchased in 1912 [37 Stat. 781]. In addition, Sandpoint was authorized \$70,000 for a site and building, and Caldwell and Nampa were each authorized \$10,000 for site acquisition [37 Stat. 874 and 877].

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Pocatello, Idaho's railroad gateway, and Idaho Falls, which had been dispossessed by Pocatello as a rail center and was now realizing its agricultural potential, had new federal buildings in 1916. Pocatello's three-story brick building was larger, but was somewhat austere when compared to the two-story Georgian Revival building in Idaho Falls. Twin Falls, nearly a decade after its first authorization, finally had its post office in 1919. A young and booming city, which had been founded in 1904, was another city that rose to prominence from the irrigated desert floor. As in Idaho Falls, the Twin Falls Federal Building was of brick; but, limestone columns rather than brick arches pronounced the dignity of the federal presence.

By 1920, Idaho had experienced three decades of statehood. The population had risen from 161,772 in 1900 to 325,594 in 1910 and reached 431,866 by 1920. Nine cities had populations greater than 5,000. Only two, Boise and Pocatello, had populations greater than 10,000. Five cities--Boise, Lewiston, Moscow, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, and Pocatello--had received federally-constructed post offices. Coeur d'Alene which had been granted a building in 1910 (after growing from a population of 508 in 1900 to over 7,000 in 1910) and in which a site had been owned by the federal government since 1912, was still waiting. The logging town of Sandpoint, the smallest Idaho community to receive authorization of a federal post office (with only 2,876 residents in 1920), was also waiting for a building to materialize. Post office sites were also under Uncle Sam's custodianship in Nampa and Caldwell, but no funds had yet been authorized for buildings. World War I had taken its toll on not only appropriated domestic federal construction, but also on authorization for additional buildings.

Few new federal buildings had been authorized after the mid-teens and the construction of those that were authorized proceeded slowly. In Idaho, no new buildings had been authorized since 1913. Nationwide, only 56 buildings were completed from 1920 to 1925 (compared to 52 in 1918 alone). The federal government was reassessing its approach to the construction of public buildings and until the Public Buildings Act of 1926, which established the foundation for federal construction in the decade of the 1930s, economy prevailed.

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The growth that Idaho had experienced in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century came to an abrupt end in the 1920s. Economic downturn and stagnation characterized the following two decades. The crops cultivated from reclaimed desert, the minerals extracted from hard rock canyons, and the timber logged from mountain slopes had fueled Idaho's growth through World War I. The war-engendered over-expansion followed by postwar inflation ravaged the farming economy. The price of potatoes, at \$1.51/bushel in 1919 dropped to \$.30 in 1922, climbed back to nearly the 1919 level by 1929, then dropped to \$.25 in 1932. Wheat, at \$2.50/bushel at the end of WWI, dropped to \$.90 in 1922, then partially recovered to \$1.30 in 1929. Sugar beets during the War were \$22/ton, declined to \$6 in 1922, and rose to \$15 in 1929. Farmland which had sold for \$150/acre at the end of the War sold for \$50 five years later. Livestock, lumber and metals suffered the same fate. From 1929 to 1932 the average income in Idaho was reduced by 49.3% and the cash income dropped from \$116 million in 1929 to \$41 million in 1932. Foreclosures increased dramatically, bank deposits plunged, and banks closed.

Thus, the depression in Idaho, as in Montana next door, came early. The public building program outlined in the Act of May 25, 1926 would establish the foundation for new federal buildings in the state and future programs that were specifically designed to provide economic recovery. As previously mentioned, no new federal buildings/post offices were authorized in Idaho after the Public Buildings Omnibus Act of 1913. This was true of the nation as a whole: between 1921 and 1930 only 122 post offices were constructed by the federal government. Most of the 1920s buildings followed the Public Buildings Act of May 25, 1926 (also known as the Keyes-Elliott Act). This act expanded the scope and consolidated the funding of post office construction. It set the groundwork for the massive federal building programs of the 1930s. Between 1931 and 1939, 1,584 post offices were constructed across the nation--three times as many as had been constructed in the previous fifty years.

In response to the duties imposed by the 1926 Act, the House of Representatives issued House Document 710 (February 14, 1927) to identify potential projects under the

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\$100,000,000 allocation provided by the Act. The report recommended 278 projects, including 118 new buildings in towns which had not previously received federal buildings. In addition, the committee estimated a need for 2,311 public buildings across the nation and recommended another \$100,000,000 to expand the program. The report listed five projects in Idaho. Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint were included under section 3 of the 1926 Act, for which \$15,000,000 was authorized to render the old appropriations adequate. Under the \$100,000,000 authorization, \$445,000 was allocated to Boise for expansion of its federal building and \$95,000 each was allocated to Nampa and Caldwell for new post offices.

Finally, after nearly two decades of waiting, the completion of the Coeur d'Alene Federal Building was heralded with pride by its boosters when its doors opened to the public in 1928. Attempts to secure additional monies, the intervention of World War I, and the reassessment of federal building programs had resulted in the long delay. The three-story brick and terra cotta Adamesque-style building was a tangible symbol of the recognition by the federal government of Idaho's seventh largest city as an important and growing regional center. Sandpoint, only thirteenth in size, bypassed several larger cities in obtaining its initial building authorization, and suffering a delay similar to Coeur d'Alene's, also received its building in 1928. Isolated in the northern panhandle, Sandpoint had boomed with the development of the timber industry. Its exquisitely-detailed two-story brick and granite building departed from the Neo-Classical norm of Idaho's federal architecture. Instead, a Mediterranean form was transplanted to northern Idaho, the only example in the Northwest.

House Document 613, issued on February 26, 1929, again reinforced the hopes of the citizens of Nampa and Caldwell. Included in Statement A--Projects proposed under the \$200,000,000 authorization contained in the public buildings acts of May 25, 1926, and February 24, 1928--the Caldwell building was estimated at \$95,000 and the Nampa building was increased to an estimated \$110,000. The list also continued to carry an estimated \$440,000 for expansion of the Boise Federal Building. Finally, it included a new post office for Weiser; at an estimated cost of \$75,000. Statement C--First-class post offices not included in the allocations of the

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\$248,000,000 program--proposed a post office in Wallace. The Document also revised individual cost estimates and increased the total projection in Idaho from \$635,000 to \$720,000. Nationally, the amount allocated to public buildings programs was increased from the original \$100,000,000 to \$200,000,000 plus an estimated additional \$48,000,000 from the sales of existing excess facilities. The number of buildings to be constructed was also increased to 571.

Nampa and Caldwell, founded as the Oregon Short Line pushed its rails through southwestern Idaho and thriving as agricultural centers west of Boise, were the next cities to receive federally-constructed post offices. Nampa, the largest of the competing neighbors (population of 8,206 in 1930), received its building in 1931. It too, had waited since 1913 for its initial authorization to evolve into a building. It was with a tone of sarcasm that the Idaho Free Press reported the typically ceremonious cornerstone laying on October 30, 1930.

After wasting and battling for years for a federal building, the cornerstone was laid Saturday without ceremony. ... The bang of a sledge, chipping away the concrete that the stone might be fitted into place, was the only applause. ... In the cornerstone was a hole in which might be placed present day history in order that future generations might know how their great grand dads lived, when the building is torn down. The receptacle is empty.

According to J.O. Jordan, building contractor, the informal laying proceeded as follows:

Ordinarily, I see a dozen politicians and lawyers every day. On Saturday I looked everywhere for a politician or a lawyer but could find neither. We laid the cornerstone according to specifications, but in doing so we had to chip away the concrete with a sledge hammer. A workman hit his finger. The resultant language was the only speech made. It is unprintable.

In spite of this, when it finally opened in June of 1931, Nampa citizens appreciated their "attractively arranged two-

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story brick structure" to which was attached an entry portico of sandstone (four columns of Ionic order supporting a triangular pediment).

Caldwell, the seat of Canyon County, had also been waiting since 1913 for its building. While the building in Nampa was being constructed, hopes for a building in Caldwell began to rise. In April 1930, a telegram from Congressman Burton French (R) indicated that the Budget Bureau had recommended an appropriation of \$110,000 for the building. The building would be included in President Hoover's program to stimulate local economies in response to the 1929 Wall Street collapse and resultant depression. In April of the following year, the lot that had become a "favored" downtown parking spot was fenced and ready for construction. Another year passed as the building rose to completion. At last, on May 30, 1932, the Caldwell News Tribune reported the dedication of "Caldwell's beautiful new post office." Thousands viewed the Classically-inspired building of brick and stone. According to City Attorney Stewart S. Maxey: "New buildings such as this are not erected by the federal government unless and until the town has proven itself worthy thereof and until the postal service has reached a high state of perfection." Now Caldwell had a new post office and unlike the dedication at neighboring Nampa, had present the lawyers, politicians and glowing speeches.

House Document 788, dated February 27, 1931, further expanded the list of potential post office construction projects in Idaho. In addition to Caldwell, under the \$415,000,000 authorization were the Boise addition (\$440,000 and under construction), Nampa (\$110,000 and under construction), Pocatello addition (\$220,000) and Weiser (\$110,000). The following buildings were allocated but not yet appropriated: Blackfoot (\$125,000), Burley (\$100,000), Payette (\$75,000), and Wallace (\$105,000).

Weiser, the seat of Washington County and in the heart of a rich agricultural and fruit growing district, became the home of the state's next federal building. Having been hard hit by the agricultural depression of the 1920s, Weiser's population had declined from 3,154 in 1920 to 2,724 in 1930. In spite of this downturn, Weiser received a building equivalent in size to those of Nampa and Caldwell. Designed by

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the prominent Idaho architectural firm of Tourtellotte and Hummel, the two-story brick Georgian-revival building was completed in 1934. A monumental gift of faith--faith in the city's future--had been bestowed upon the citizens by Uncle Sam.

The Idaho post offices constructed between 1935 and 1941 represent those authorized under various emergency appropriations that were enacted "with a view to relieving country-wide unemployment." The Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General were directed to distribute projects equitably throughout the country so far as may be consistent with the needs of the public services. They also had the latitude to select projects not included in the report promulgated by the direction of the 1926 Act. The Federal Employment Stabilization Act (February 10, 1931) had addressed the use of planned and accelerated emergency construction to aid in preventing unemployment. This Act, along with several federal programs designed to provide economic relief, provided a foundation for the next wave of post offices built in Idaho.

Idaho received eleven post offices between 1935 and 1941, all in communities which had not previously had a federally-constructed post office. House Report 1879 of June 2, 1934 listed four projects in Idaho under the Deficiency Appropriation Bill of Fiscal Year 1934 and the Emergency Appropriation Bill of Fiscal Year 1935. The cities and proposed cost limits included Blackfoot (\$145,000), Burley (\$77,000), Payette (\$71,000), and Wallace (\$101,000). Added to this list of buildings was St. Anthony (\$74,000) which had not been included in House Document 788.

This final group of Idaho post offices, those constructed after 1935, exhibit the simplified facades of the modern design movement. Although they continue to exhibit the Classical influence in symmetry and proportion, these buildings, with two exceptions, are devoid of the historical detailing of their earlier counterparts. They are typical, in some cases identical, to numerous other small town post offices constructed throughout the West and nation during the later years of the 1930s. Typically, round arches for window and entry bays have been replaced by flat arches; architraves and

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friezes have become suggested by belt courses or all the elements of the entablature are combined into a broad contrasting stone or terra-cotta band; and cornices have become flush with the facade or replaced by a simple coping course. Articulation is minimized, columns or pilasters are either suggested or no longer used and the facades are flat. As stated by Lois Craig in The Federal Presence:

...the facades became simplified, their classical ornaments turning angular and disappearing into the opening shallow and anonymous. What resulted was a gaunt, underfed, "starved" classicism, denoted as much by white masonry and the rhythm of wall and window as by vestigial columns.

Burley, the seat of Cassia County and a thriving agricultural center, received the first of these "starved classical" buildings in 1935. Wallace, in Idaho's rich Coeur d'Alene mining district, and Blackfoot received their post offices in 1936. The Burley and Wallace buildings display similarities that differ from their subsequent counterparts. Both have center sections that are raised relative to their flanking wings. Further, both integrate classical-order architraves into the facade to frame the bays of the central section. Although these decorative elements are flat and imbedded, they distinctly allude to their historical origins.

Blackfoot, although smaller in population than both Burley and Wallace, received a building that was substantially larger than their federal post offices. An agricultural center and county seat, Blackfoot was the recipient of one of the finest Art Deco buildings in the entire state. According to the Daily Bulletin news of the pending post office was "the best news that has been here for some time." The Bulletin reported that "Blackfoot has been led to believe many times that she was about to have a new post office, but the many delays in completion of the negotiations which have occurred had discouraged many people to the point of disbelief that any such project would ever be completed." The many years of "falsely raised hopes" and frustration were rewarded by a building that was matched by only "one other in the west that is of the same class as to excellence of materials and architectural designs." The exquisitely detailed two-story brick building was designed by Gilbert

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Stanley Underwood who had also designed the Sun Valley resort and several other major federal buildings throughout the West.

Payette, in the rich agricultural area at the confluence of the Payette and Snake rivers near Idaho's boundary with Oregon, received the next federally-constructed post office. As early as 1932 the Payette Independent had raised local hopes that the city would receive a federal gift. As in other cities, however, several years would elapse while funds were allocated, sites bantered about, and contractors selected. Finally, in 1937 construction began, since "government officials desired to start the work as soon as possible, to furnish work and assist in relieving the unemployed situation." Within the year the citizens of Payette could take pride in their modern one-story building of red brick, concrete and stone. The Independent described the city's showcase and its "special limestone decorations" which depicted, in bas relief above the entry and window bays, the three principal modes of mail transportation--train, ship, and airplane. Aside from its symmetry and proportion, the rather plain building had severed all links with the classical tradition.

The year 1938 brought post offices to three more Idaho cities--Saint Anthony, Kellogg and Bonners Ferry. Saint Anthony, the seat of eastern Idaho's Fremont County, a gateway to Yellowstone National Park, and the supply point for a large agricultural district, celebrated the completion of its new building in January. Nearly identical in size to the post office in Payette, the red-brick building also displayed the economy of detailing that dominated federal architecture of the period. Thick lintels over the window bays and a classical-order architrave surrounding the main entry opening was all the ornamentation that was given. Kellogg, a few miles west of Wallace in the Coeur d'Alene mining district, received a building that duplicated the one in St. Anthony. As the building was being completed, the Kellogg Evening News also carried the good news that the mines of the Coeur d'Alene district had set a world record for net profits; years of the worst depression in history seemed to be ending.

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Bonnors Ferry, sitting atop the north Idaho panhandle and the seat of Boundary County, received news in January of 1935 that Senator Borah was sponsoring a bill for a \$100,000 federal building. With several construction projects, including WPA road and sewer projects, a WPA-sponsored high school addition, a new federal inspection station at Porthill and a new building block pending, a "building boom was predicted for the city. Farm prices were also up and a couple of hundred families would be resettled on Valley farmland. Plans for the new federal building received a setback in 1936 when construction bids were rejected as being too high. Senator William E. Borah (R) and Congressman Compton White (D) "went to bat" for Bonners Ferry and monies were drawn from reserve funds so that the contract could be let. It was with much fanfare that the building was dedicated in April, 1938 with the high school band and American Legion participating in the celebration. Although much smaller in size than the cities of Kellogg and Saint Anthony, Bonners Ferry received a building that rivaled the buildings of Weiser and Blackfoot in size and quality. Two stories in height and of red brick, the building is abundantly detailed with sandstone. Although the historical elements have been simplified and modernized, the character of the facade, with its flat pilasters of colossal order, is classical. Without doubt, the monumental building served notice in the minds of local residents that Bonners Ferry was an important city.

House Document 177 of February 2, 1939 listed all the Idaho post offices that had been constructed after 1935, those yet to be completed, and those never funded. The completed buildings included Blackfoot (\$115,000), Bonners Ferry (\$155,000), Burley (\$77,000), Idaho Falls expansion and remodel (\$108,000), Kellogg (\$79,300), Payette (\$71,000), Porthill border station (\$21,700), St. Anthony (\$75,000), and Wallace (\$100,000). Buhl, Grangeville, and Preston were slated for \$80,000 post offices, and Orofino was slated for a \$160,000 post office and federal office building; all would be completed by 1941. That last group of communities, those whose dreams of a federal present were defeated by WWII, include the following: Emmett, Gooding, Jerome, Montpelier, Parma, Rexburg, Rigby, Rupert, St. Maries, and Salmon.

Orofino, Preston and Buhl would receive their buildings in 1940. Orofino was, next to Bonners Ferry, the smallest

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Idaho city to receive a federal building. Situated forty miles east of Lewiston and Moscow, Orofino had evolved from a bustling collection of miners shacks to the seat of Clearwater County and a commercial center for the local timber industry. Here began the settlement of Idaho; in local streams was found the gold that promised instant wealth. Orofino was again experiencing a boom of sorts; the 1930 population of 1,078 was on its way to booming to 1,602 in 1940. The Orofino Commercial Club had been working diligently to gain a public building for their city. Plans seemed to be moving forward until May 13, 1937 when the Clearwater Tribune reported a delay. Apparently the original plans were being redrafted because the forest service would need more space. Another delay was reported on September 13th: a third floor was being considered and an additional \$80,000 would be needed since the original \$80,000 was not adequate for the contemplated building. In contrast to the delays that had frustrated so many other communities, those that plagued Orofino had been profitable. The three-story reinforced-concrete building with an exterior of terra cotta is Idaho's best example of the "starved classicism" in a federal building. In size and scale, it is Orofino's most dominant and impressive building.

Preston, in the state's southeast corner, occupies the fertile Bear River Valley. Founded by Mormon settlers, the town was the local commercial and governmental center with a population of just over 4,000 in 1940. Various civic organizations and individuals had been working for several years to obtain a federal building when a telegram was received from Congressman D. Worth Clark (D) that such a building had been granted. As reported by the Franklin County Citizen on September 1, 1937, the site that had been donated by the county would soon have a building. An editorial of the same day stated:

Every heart in northern Cache valley was thrilled this week when the unexpected news was released that its center would receive a new federal structure.

Whether the heart belongs to a rugged rancher in the rolling hills about us, or to an nergetic [sic] city merchant, it went deep into a feeling of appreciation for the center city.

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Local news was good as the promised federal building neared reality; PWA grants and bond issues had been passed for a new county courthouse and a new high school; a new Ward-Stake House was planned; and a record sugar beet yield had been harvested. The \$80,000 post office was finally completed in April, 1940. In his dedicatory address, U.S. Attorney John A. Carver noted that Franklin County's diversified industry had helped it to largely escape the depression. The building was described: "...Colonial designed building with brick exterior walls has a pitched metal roof cover and generally the construction is fire proof." The one-story building was identical to those of Kellogg and St. Anthony except for the addition of a hipped copper roof.

Buhl also received what can be termed a Colonial-designed building. In size and proportion, the Buhl Post Office was nearly identical to the aforementioned buildings. It, however, is in the "starved classical" design mode: window and entry bays rise between broad brick piers to a wide sandstone band and narrow cornice. A hipped copper roof, topped by a modern copper cupola, lend the term of Colonial. It was in January of 1937 that Buhl, a town that had blossomed from the desert floor as a result of the Snake River irrigation, saw renewed efforts to raise a federal building. Buhl's Chamber of Commerce had written Senators Borah and Pope (D) and Congressman Clark "asking them to use their good offices to see that the long-promised Buhl Federal building is not forgotten." The following year, Congressman Clark was given credit by the Buhl Herald as having succeeded in getting an \$80,000 building for the city. On September 7, 1939 the Herald had a 'scoop' for its readers--a photograph of the new Buhl federal building (for which construction had not yet started). "The secret of this Herald 'scoop' is that the office is to look almost exactly like the new building in Deer Lodge, Montana, so we merely print the Deer Lodge picture to show you how Buhl's building will look." Two months later excavation for the building began. It was reported that "by yesterday the hole in the ground actually looked as big as that one in your mouth felt right after the wisdom tooth had been pulled." The construction progressed and finally in July of 1940 a "Gala event" ushered in a new era for the post office in Buhl.

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Before World War II ended the federal government's depression-era construction program, Idaho would receive one more post office. Grangeville would receive that building. From its beginning as a Grange Hall to serve the farmers of the Camas Prairie area, Grangeville was now the commercial and governmental center of Idaho County. As a milling center, supply point for the Buffalo Hump gold claims, and served by the Northern Pacific Railroad, Grangeville grew to 1,534 residents by 1910. With the end of the mining boom, Grangeville's population declined to 1,360 in 1930. Despite the Depression, farming and the expansion of the timber industry fueled a period of substantial growth and Grangeville's population reached nearly 2,000 in 1940. It was December 4, 1941 when the Idaho County Free Press reported the dedication of the federal building that the Chamber of Commerce had been tirelessly working to acquire for the past fifteen years. The Honorable Chase A. Clark, governor of Idaho, delivered his dedicatory address to the hundreds of county citizens who attended the festivities. The raising of the nation's flag, the playing of the "Star Spangled Banner", and the making of patriotic speeches gave celebration to Uncle Sam's first post office in Grangeville. It would also be Uncle Sam's last post office in Idaho. The Depression would end in three days.

In summary, Idaho received 22 federally-constructed post offices between 1900 and 1941. Five are no longer used as post offices. These include the Moscow Federal Building (1911 - NHR), now a community center; the Lewiston Post Office (1912), a city hall; the Pocatello Courthouse and Post Office (1916 - NHR), private use; the Twin Falls Post Office (1919), public school administration; and the Sandpoint Post Office (1928), public library. Two, Boise Courthouse and Post Office (1905 - NHD) and the Idaho Falls Court house and Post Office (1916 - NHR), retain postal functions but are administered by GSA. Finally, fourteen of these buildings continue to function as main post offices under the control of the U.S. Postal Service.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type Federally-constructed Post Offices/Federal Buildings

II. Description

CHARACTERISTICS OF POST OFFICE FUNCTION, DESIGN, AND PLANS

The design characteristics of federally-owned post offices are based on functional considerations, although to some degree political considerations entered into site location, building size, and materials. As mentioned, plans were standardized with some consideration given to special conditions of the local area and the attempt to provide some degree of individuality to the buildings of individual communities. In most all cases, however, the dimensions and

III. Significance

The significance of the properties included in this nomination lies in the following areas: architecture, politics/government, and art. Two other areas--community planning and economics--also have some relevance to the properties included in the nomination. The significance within these latter categories, however, are less clearly defined and relate not to the major influences of specific buildings within a community but to general trends. For example, the initial appropriations for the Nampa and Caldwell MPOs, even though they were not constructed until the early 1930s, are associated with the major growth periods of their cities in the same way that the Depression Era buildings are associated with the broad economic patterns of the nation, rather than with identifiable economic impacts to the community resulting from a building's construction.

IV. Registration Requirements

The threshold factor for consideration in this group is that the building had been constructed by the federal government as a post office or federal building in which the post office was a major element. These buildings are significant to a community, particularly a smaller community, as a symbolic link to the federal government. They represent the recognition by the federal government, in the form of a public building, that a community had achieved stability and permanence. Architecturally, through the use of traditional design forms and quality materials, the buildings were intended to convey the appropriate image of the federal government. Thus, only in rare cases did local tastes influence the design that Uncle Sam felt appropriate for a community.

☒ See continuation sheet

☐ See continuation sheet for additional property types

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building envelope were set with variations limited to minor interior arrangement of functional areas, use of lobby materials, facade treatment, and use of exterior materials.

1. Functional Categories

Functional categories cannot always be clearly defined. But generally, post offices/federal buildings can be placed in the following broadly descriptive divisions. The funding appropriated for construction, design, and use of building materials were influenced by these categories. The categories, based upon the size and annual postal receipts of the respective communities, determined the type of post office a town might hope to receive. The broad categories that would apply to Idaho post offices are discussed below.

a. Small, Single-purpose Post Offices

These buildings were constructed in small towns and, in the case of metropolitan areas, neighborhood areas within the service area of the main post office. The Payette, St. Anthony, Preston, Buhl, and Caldwell MPOs are examples of this functional category.

b. Small, Combined Post Office and Federal Building

These facilities were also located primarily in small communities, usually in communities somewhat isolated from the larger cities that served as regional centers. These buildings typically covered the same ground area as the single-purpose buildings but carried an additional one or two floors to provide office space for Federal agencies. The primary function of the building was to provide postal service to the community. Examples of this building type include the Nampa, Wallace, Bonners Ferry, Blackfoot, and Orofino MPOs.

c. Combined Post Office, Federal Offices, and Federal Court

Constructed in major regional centers, the post office, Federal courts, and often various federal agencies were also housed in these structures. Although no buildings in this category are presently USPS-owned, examples include the federal buildings in Boise and Idaho Falls.

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2. Design

Design styles of the Idaho post offices during this period vary, although they are all rooted in Classical design principles and, therefore, display common characteristics. The ten post offices included in this nomination (including Wallace which is in an historic district) and the six other federally-constructed buildings already listed in the National Register represent the spectrum of federal design styles used in Idaho and are thus representative of the state as a whole.

The typical post office is a rectangular box, ranging from one to three stories in height with the first floor set on a raised platform (basement) three to five feet above grade. The facades are flat with nominal articulation, usually less than one to two feet. Articulation is provided by either projecting the central section of the front facade slightly beyond the corners or by recessing the central section relative to the corners. The facades are symmetrical and well-proportioned, with the principal entry centered on the long axis in all but rare cases. The entry is flanked by lamps, either free standing on buttresses flanking the entry platform or affixed to the wall. Windows are also symmetrically arranged. The roof is either flat or hipped and in most cases terminates behind a low parapet.

Variations in facade treatment are provided by the inclusion of historical architectural elements and by use of materials. Brick is the most used facing material. Stone is rarely used for the entire facade and is generally limited, as is terra cotta, for use on detailing (sills, belt courses, cornices, etc.). The evolution of the modern influence can be traced by the change from distinct facade treatment such as columns or pilasters, full capitals, full entablatures, and cornices to piers dividing bays, stylized capitals or none at all, belt courses to suggest entablatures, and coping to replace cornices. Roofs also provided stylistic variation but are limited to flat or hipped.

The stylistic variations of the facade treatment, or design types, are discussed in the following section, titled "Glossary of Stylistic Terms."

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3. Plan

The plan is based on functional considerations and displays the same general characteristics for both large and small buildings. The first floor plan is rectangular with the public area oriented to the primary entrance. The main entry provides access to the lobby via an entry vestibule. The approaches from the vestibule to the lobby are, in most cases, lateral, one at each end of the vestibule. The lobby is elongated, running along the front side of the building, with the postmaster's office at one end. Service counters along the lobby face the entry and post office boxes are arrayed to the sides of the counter area. The opposite end often contained the registry/money order office, though this room has been typically replaced by lobby expansion in the demand to provide additional post office boxes. The postmaster's office contains a restroom. The vault is located adjacent to the postmaster's office, typically opening to the workroom area. In larger post offices, additional offices are provided for the assistant postmaster and administrative personnel. These offices are also located adjacent to the postmaster's office or at the opposite end of the lobby.

The workroom, where the mail sorting takes place, is located behind the lobby and counter area and occupies the entire rear of the building. Restrooms and swing rooms for personnel are located immediately off the workroom, on a mezzanine level if provided, or in the basement. The loading vestibule, which provides access to the loading platform, is located to the side or rear of the building. If additional floors are provided, the stairs are located at the end of the lobby. The additional floors, are, in most cases, U-shaped and open to the rear. The central court is open so as to allow the provision of skylights (which in most cases have been covered over). In buildings with a federal court, the courtroom was placed in the open area of the "U", thereby creating a rectangular plan. Offices and activities associated with the court occupied the perimeter of the building in a "U" configuration.

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GLOSSARY OF STYLISTIC TERMS

This glossary discusses the terms used to identify architectural styles in this report. The process is complicated by a lack of consensus among architectural historians on what to call various styles, and by some confusion on the part of the buildings' architects themselves. Most of the architects discussed in this report adhered to the decorated shed concept; that is, the shape of a building was predefined as a classical box, and the style was determined by adding the appropriate ornamentation. The dates given for the styles are somewhat later than for their eastern counterparts. As a final note, federal design was often eclectic. In other words, various styles and stylistic periods might be interwoven in the design of a single building. Thus, a building design may not clearly fit into a specific stylistic category, but instead cross into other closely related styles.

Beaux-Arts Classicism (1890-1920)

This term is used rather loosely to describe buildings derivative of the design ideology taught at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the leading architecture and art school in France during the 19th and early 20th centuries. In this nomination, only the American interpretation of this school is relevant.

Beaux-Arts Classicism is characterized by its grandiose compositions with an exuberance of detail and variety of stone finishes. Highlights of the style are projecting facades or pavilions with colossal columns, sometimes grouped in pairs with enriched moldings and statuary. Windows may be enframed by free-standing columns, balustraded sills, and pedimented entablatures. Pronounced cornices and enriched entablatures are topped with a tall parapet, balustrade, or attic story.

The following two classifications (Neo-Classicism and Second Renaissance Revival) can also be categorized under the

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heading of Beaux-Arts Classicism since they derived from the Classic Greek and Roman forms.

Neo-Classicism (1900-1920)

Neo-Classical style is based primarily on the Greek and, to a lesser extent, the Roman architectural orders. It can be distinguished by symmetrically arranged buildings of monumental proportions finished with a smooth or polished stone surface. Colossal pedimented porticos may highlight the facade flanked by a series of large pilasters. Windows are predominantly large single-light sashes. Parapets and attic stories are popular but roof lines are devoid of statuary ornamentation. Arches or archways are generally not employed and enriched moldings are rare.

Second Renaissance Revival (1890-1920)

This refers to an academic style not at all incompatible with the Beaux-Arts style. The inspiration for this style is derived from the Northern Italian Renaissance. The term refers not to a Second Renaissance, but to the Revival; the Renaissance enjoyed popularity earlier in the 19th Century (1840-1890).

Scale and size distinguish the later Revival from the earlier Renaissance Revival. Larger buildings (usually three stories high) are organized into distinct horizontal divisions by pronounced belt or string courses. Each floor is articulated differently. For example, if the Doric Order or rustication is used on the first floor, the upper floor will be treated with a different order and finish. The window trim usually changes from floor to floor. Enriched and projecting cornices are supported with large modillions or consoles. The roof often is highlighted with a balustrade.

Starved Classicism (1930-1942)

Also referred to as PWA Moderne by some writers, Starved Classicism was the dominant mode of government construction during the 1930s and it is a direct descendant of the Supervising Architect's earlier Beaux-Arts-inspired buildings.

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The facade and plan of these buildings remain symmetrical; the primary shift is in the ornament. Starved Classicism, in an effort to reduce costs and speed construction, eliminated or reduced ornament to a minimum. The ornament that was used often owed a stylistic debt to the Art Deco style of the twenties.

The term Starved Classicism was used by Lois Craig, Director of the Federal Architecture Project for the National Endowment of the Arts, in describing the "modern" architectural style that was derived from the Classical but stripped and simplified to provide in her terms: ". . . a gaunt, underfed, "starved" classicism, denoted as much by white masonry and the rhythm of wall and window as by vestigial columns" (The Federal Presence, p. 282).

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All but two of the nominated buildings were selected for their architectural significance, as being well-crafted and well-maintained or notable examples of their style. They represent the evolution of federal design philosophy and public building programs as influenced by international design movements and federal funding policies. Essentially, the buildings constructed prior to 1926 represent the first of the comprehensive federal building programs (although greatly curtailed between WWI and 1926), while those constructed in the 1930s represent the transition of design and construction programs in response to the national economic emergency. The buildings constructed in the early 1900s typically represent their communities' early period of development, whereas those of the mid-to late-1930s stand as monuments to the massive federal building programs of the Depression.

In all cases, the various construction programs under which these buildings were constructed linked local communities to the federal government. In smaller communities, these properties were the first federally-constructed buildings and the sole representation of the federal presence. Most remain the community's only federal building. As such, the construction of a federal building/post office was a major community event which not only involved local politics (involving economics and community development) but also the interaction with national elected officials. As a result, these buildings in their architectural form exhibit an important symbol of the federal government and its relationship to the local community.

Four Depression era post offices, Blackfoot, Buhl, Preston, and St. Anthony, are exceptional in the category of art, as they house murals from the New Deal arts programs.

Specific areas of significance are addressed below. The following criteria explain the ways in which National Register Criteria A, C, and D relate to Idaho post offices. They are divided by areas of significance, level of significance (national, state, or local), and level of integrity needed to qualify as significant. The headings also indicate which of the three National Register criteria was judged to be most relevant for each area of significance.

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A. ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Local Level

a. Criterion C

The post office is of local importance as one of the most monumental, imposing or sophisticated buildings in a town. For example, this is true of the Orofino MPO which is one of the city's most imposing buildings. All of the post offices included in this nomination are locally important and, in most cases, locally unique examples of a given architectural style. The Beaux-Arts-design buildings represent locally unique examples of a style common to government and certain commercial buildings, especially banks, in larger cities throughout the country.

It is doubtful that post office design discernibly affected the designs of subsequent buildings or a town's architectural history. Analysis of other buildings in communities receiving post offices indicate that there was little or no influence. The post office is a unique type. Though it plays an essentially commercial role in terms of land use, post office design did not follow design practices for commercial development, nor did subsequent development tend to imitate the style of the post office. There is a reason for this: post offices were designed to look like post offices; that is, certain symbols or signifiers were included as subliminal messages of the building's function.

b. Criterion A

The architectural signifiers and symbols also carry meaning and associative values beyond their mere physical appearance. A post office design is a record of the post office's and the federal government's self image, and of the image which the federal government wished to project to those it governed. A post office in a small town may provide one of the few, perhaps the only, such record of the demeanor of the federal government -- that of the monumental and the solidity. This is true for essentially all of the small town post offices considered in this nomination. The use of

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strong classical forms, such as those incorporated in the design of the Nampa and Caldwell MPOs, reinforces the idea of a strong and stable federal government.

2. State Level

a. Criterion C

A post office may be aesthetically important on the state as well as the local levels, as an example of particularly fine craftsmanship, or as a sophisticated, imposing, and well-articulated example of its style or type. The Supervising Architect's office used standard designs for most post offices, but many have been altered in the process of modernization and expansion. As per National Register guidelines, a post office may have statewide significance because it is a first, an excellent example, or a prototype of a standardized design. The Buhl and Payette MPOs are good examples of standard designs found in the Western United States. None of the post offices in Idaho are thought to be the earliest of prototype examples of standard design.

b. Criterion A

A group of post offices from different periods can, by the associative values contained in their architecture, act as a record of the federal government's self and projected images. Post offices in such a group would not have to be individually significant; the significance would lie in the relation of one building to another. In this nomination, all of the buildings have Beaux-Arts derived ornamental motifs although two represent the Starved Classicism style in which these motifs were substantially reduced and simplified.

B. POLITICS/GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

1. Local Level

a. Criterion A

Research could not quantify the economic impact a post office had on a particular town and this may not be possible. An individual post office may, however, be an important local example of national economic trends and the

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federal government's policies in dealing with those trends. In particular, those post offices built during the 1930s as part of the accelerated public works programs under the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations are concrete examples of the New Deal and the Depression. In many cases, the employment provided by post office construction was an important local event. Also, the site selection process within a community was, in most cases, an event that brought into play the political and economic forces of the community. A post office may qualify as locally significant if it is the only, or one of the few, surviving examples of New Deal public works projects. Finally, the federal building/post office represents the presence of the federal government in the community and the recognition of the stability of that community. The efforts of a community to procure a federal gift involved local cooperation and involvement with national elected officials. This would apply to all of the nominated properties.

C. COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Local Level

a. Criterion A

A post office may have been constructed in a significant period in a town's development and, thus, act as a passive record of that development. A post office can be significant as an active participant in a town's evolution if it can be demonstrated that the building's siting played a role in the direction, shape, and nature of a town's growth or in the siting of other public buildings.

A post office may also act as an important document of a town's past, even if it did not have a particularly strong effect on its development. A post office may also be sited in a distinct district within a community and make a significant contribution when associated with the other buildings within that district.

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D. ART

1. Local Level

a. Criterion A

Murals in post office lobbies were, in many towns, the only examples of the Treasury Department's fine arts program. More so than even the architecture of the building, these murals represent the only example of trained artist's work easily and publicly accessible. These examples represent the federal commitment to public art in a form understandable to the common citizen. As such they have an historic association with the government's New Deal arts programs which were intended to bring art to small communities and provide relief to artists.

b. Criterion C

The murals, as an integral part of the decor of the post office lobby, represent a significant type, period, and style of artistic expression. The expression of the American Scene or the American Regionalism through public mural art represents a specific period in American art as promoted through the New Deal arts programs of the Depression era. The depiction of events or scenes that were representative of the local area was accomplished in a straight-forward style that could be enjoyed without possessing the interpretative capability of an art critic.

c. Criterion D

The symbolic content of a mural may have local significance in that it reflects a period in the community's history and the social or economic values of the community. As such, they are valuable documents of a region's local history and economy. This fact means that the murals derive much of their meaning from the context, not only of the post office lobby, but also of the town or county in which the post office is located.

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2. State Level

These murals, in the case of Idaho, would have statewide as well as local significance for essentially the same reasons discussed above. The murals contained within the Blackfoot, St. Anthony, Preston, and Buhl MPOs, for example, represent four of only six public artworks in the entire state that were placed in post offices. Therefore, these murals as provided to the communities and the state under the public arts programs are rare examples and serve as an important legacy to the state as a whole. They symbolize the federal government's efforts to bring public art to Utah and to illustrate the local context in the historical development of the state.

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To meet the demands of growing communities, many post offices were expanded and others were sold without alteration and replaced by new facilities. While most of these buildings retain their integrity, some have had changes that affect the exterior materials, proportion, symmetry, and scale of the original facades. Of particular importance is the front facade or public face of the building. Expansions which extend the building to the rear or to the sides while not affecting the original front facade are not generally considered to compromise the building's eligibility.

There are some cases, however, when a building that has had an alteration of the front facade by addition may retain its eligibility (unless totally obscured). These include: (1) the building houses a WPA mural that is intact and was unaltered by building expansion; (2) the building is a prototype or a distinctive design type; and (3) the building was pivotal in the development of a community.

Post offices less than fifty years old will not normally be considered eligible for listing unless they meet the following criteria: (1) the building houses a WPA mural which is integral to its interior; (2) the building is a prototype or a distinctive design type; (3) the building was pivotal in the development of the community; or (4) the building was a major project in a small community during the Depression era.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

The multiple property listing for U.S. post offices in Idaho is but one in an overall program being undertaken by the Postal Service to survey and document all USPS-owned, federally-constructed post offices/federal buildings in the Western Region that were constructed prior to World War II. The same basic survey procedures, property analysis, contextual period, and evaluation format have been maintained throughout the program. The contextual period for each state begins with its first federally-constructed post office and ends with WWII when federal construction programs shifted to the war effort and were subsequently revised.

Survey methodology for each property included the following: field surveys; interviews with local post office personnel; consultation with local planning agencies, libraries, and historical societies; review of assessors' records; and review of available federal statutes and reports of the Office of Supervising Architect, Department of the Treasury, and Congress. The field survey involved building

☒ See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☒ Federal agency

- ☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Specify repository: Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA

I. Form Prepared By

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inspection; review of available plans, specifications, and progress photographs of building construction; photographing the existing building; and survey of surrounding land uses and other significant period buildings within the community.

After completing the field work and review of local historical information, a preliminary evaluation of significance was made. This was later supplemented by additional research at the Idaho Historical Society Library. In addition to the USPS-owned buildings that were included in the initial survey work, the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was consulted to gather survey data on post offices no longer owned by the USPS (including GSA, state or local government, and private ownership). Information on these other surveyed buildings is used in comparative analysis and for supplemental information.

In addition, inquiries were made to individuals or local planning agencies regarding former federally-constructed post offices that were not included on the USPS, GSA, or SHPO inventories, but that were listed in either newspaper accounts or federal appropriations. All of these non-USPS-owned buildings were visited.

It should be noted that the methodology outlined in the document "How To Apply National Register Criteria To Post Offices" (Bulletin 13, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. Fall 1984) was used as a guide in preparing this nomination.

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