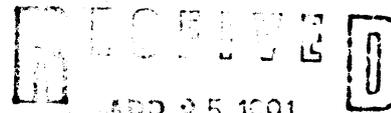


651

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



APR 25 1991

NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Omak Main Post Office

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 104 South Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Omak

N/A vicinity

state Washington code WA county Okanogan code 047

zip code 98841

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic U.S. Post Offices In Washington, 1893 - 1941

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official
U.S. Postal Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

1-11-90
Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature]
Signature of commenting or other official
State or Federal agency and bureau

12/15/89
Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

[Signature] 5/30/91

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

U.S. Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Terra cotta shingle

other Tar composition

Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Omak Main Post Office is a one-story red brick building which rests upon a raised basement platform. Its structure consists of reinforced concrete footings and floor slabs, structural steel framing, and brick walls. The front elevation is flat, symmetrical, and Classically-proportioned. Five flat-arched bays divide the front facade--two window bays flanking a centered entry bay. Facade detailing is nominal. A gable roof with terra-cotta shingles covers the front portion of the building and a flat built-up tar composition roof, the rear.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (east) is horizontal in orientation and symmetrically-arranged. Red brick, in Flemish Bond, faces the basement and main floor walls. The basement and main floors are separated by a brick soldier-course water table. Five bays divide the facade--a centered entry bay with two window bays on each side. The entry bay contains two aluminum-framed glass doors. Set above, is a multi-light transom window consisting of wood sash in a pattern formed by interlocking semi-circles. Framing the bay are flat wooden pilasters which support a molded wooden entablature. The entry is approached by six granite steps and a granite landing which are flanked by wrought-iron balusters with integrated lamp standards.

Two window bays flank each side of the entry. Framed with flat terra-cotta sills and a flat brick arch, the sash is double-hung wood with twelve-over-twelve-lights. Raised brass letters "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE" are affixed to the wooden frieze and centered over the entry. Block modillions hang from the simple molded wooden cornice. Rising from the cornice is a gable roof, clad with terra-cotta shingles. Brick chimneys, rising above the ridge, are on both ends of the roof.

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The original north facade contains four window bays--two in the front portion and two in the rear--and the rear addition (1966-67) contains three bays. Although the brick of the addition does not exactly match the original the detailing is identical--brick-faced basement wall, brick soldier course water table, and molded wooden cornice. The window bays are also identical--double-hung wood sash with twelve-over-twelve lights. Also, the front and rear portions of the original building are slightly articulated with the front projecting one brick-width from the rear. Additionally, the front is covered by a hipped roof while the rear is covered by the flat roof of built-up tar composition.

The south facade contains two window bays in the front portion and one window bay in the rear. One of the front bays has been filled with brick to form a niche. Within the niche is a small double-hung wood sash window with four-over-four lights. The detailing elements are the same as those used for the north side. At a point corresponding to the original rear corner of the north side, the facade is recessed by one brick width (rear of loading platform in the original building). From this wall, projecting to the south, is the loading platform added in the 1967 building expansion. The south wall of the platform is brick on a concrete foundation. A single metal loading door is centered in the wall. The platform opens to the front (east) and is covered by a flat metal roof with a projecting marquee. The rear of the platform is also brick. The wall to which the platform was attached was also extended to the east in 1967. Within the corner formed by this wall and the rear of the platform is a brick-enclosed storage area which is lower in height than the platform and covered with a flat roof. An open access bay and a single window bay (fixed, eighteen-light, wood sash) occupy the south side of this storage area.

The rear facade consists entirely of the 1967 building extension. The rear of the main portion is brick with three window bays--four-over-four-light, double-hung, wood sash. The brick-enclosed storage room is set in from the south corner and attached to the rear of the platform wall. A single entry bay occupies the interior corner and three equally-spaced window bays (identical to south side) are between the opening and outside corner. The blank brick wall of the platform extends south beyond the storage area.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1941

Significant Dates

Site acq.-1940

Const.-1941

Addn.-1967

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Louis A., Supervising Architect/Federal Government

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

Though not yet 50 years old, the Omak Post Office is significant on the local level as a legacy of the Federal public works programs of the Depression era. The Colonial Revival building is an example of a small town single-purpose post office. (Although expanded in 1967, the original integrity is good.) As Omak's first and only federally-constructed post office, and having been built during the Depression, the building symbolizes not only the federal presence, but also that government's assistance to Omak through its public building programs of that period. Further, it is a legacy of the interaction of local citizens and their elected representatives to obtain their post office. Finally, the building is the last one built in a discrete body of federal architecture and is integral to the interpretation of that era.

ARCHITECTURE

The design and construction of the building is typical of a number of small town post offices built in the state, Northwest, and nation during the late stage of the Depression. The scale, proportion, detailing, and floor plans are patterned from standardized plans developed by the Office of Supervising Architect. Although the detailing is sparse, that which is provided to the Classical box--the entry architrave, cornice, and gable roof--results in a dignified building, one that is Colonial in flavor. Even though the building has been expanded, the addition is sensitive and does not compromise design integrity. The simple American Colonial was a favored style of the late Depression; but, although the Omak MPO employs elements similar to those used in other Washington post offices (such as Camas and Raymond), it is unique in its specific design solution. Its design embodies a distinctive interpretation of this style and thus the building is locally significant under Criterion C.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Omak Chronicle; various articles 1938 - 1941.
2. Extension & Modernization Building Plans; 1965 - 1967.
3. Construction Progress Photographs; 20 March 1941 - 11 February 1942.
4. Ramsey, Guy R. Postmarked Washington: Okanogan County. Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1977.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

USPS Facilities Service Center
San Bruno, CA 94099-0330

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 0.49

UTM References

A

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9	3	0
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5	3	6	4
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6	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1, 2 & 3, Block 5, Coleman & Stoddard Addition to Omak. The site is on the southwest corner of First Avenue South and Main Street. Beginning at the northeast corner, thence S150', W142', N150', E142' to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property purchased by the federal government for the post office site.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant
 organization Institute for Urban & Local Studies date March 1989
 street & number West 705 First Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219
 city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

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POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The building is the first and only federally-constructed post office in Omak. It represents assistance to small communities by the federal government through its massive New Deal public works programs of the Depression. It is a symbol of the federal government and a demonstration of its faith in the future of the city. The building is also evidence of the successful lobbying efforts of local citizens through their elected officials in Washington. Although their Congressman, Charles H. Leavy, was able to gain federal funds for new schools, road projects, and other New Deal projects which benefited Okanogan County and Omak, the Post Office best symbolizes the link between the local citizenry and Washington, D.C. Although Omak had to wait in line behind its sister city (and County seat) Okanogan, its citizens voiced pride in their "building for the future" when the cornerstone was laid on September 5, 1941. The building, as the last Depression era post office constructed in Washington State, marks the end of the New Deal building programs. Because of its association with this era, the Omak MPO is locally significant under Criterion A.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Omak, in the Okanogan River Valley of northcentral Washington, is the commercial center of Okanogan County. Okanogan, the county seat, is four miles south of Omak (city center to city center). The Colville Indian Reservation, on which a large part of the city is located, is east of the city. Omak's economy is based on forest products and agriculture. The estimated 1987 population for Omak was 3,920.

Ben Ross, the "Father of Omak," came to the area from Illinois in 1900. Ross, whose homesite would become the site of Omak, saw the possibility of reclamation of the area's "flats" by taking water from the Salmon Creek. In January 1903, Ross, John W. O'Keefe of Okanogan, and S. T. Sterley of Pogue Flat petitioned the Secretary of the Interior for reclamation of Pogue Flat lands. The development of the Okanogan irrigation District converted bunchgrass benchlands along the Okanogan River into productive orchards. In January 1907 Ross platted 20 acres of alfalfa field as the townsite of Omak. The first business to open was the Omak State bank,

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followed by the Omak Mercantile Store. Also in 1907 Mrs. Rebecca Lucas became Omak's first postmaster (a dinner pail hung on a wall served as the town's first mail receptacle). The new city was chartered in 1910.

Omak's early growth was based on the development of the Irrigation District; its growth was boosted when it was chosen as the site of a sawmill in 1922. By the 1930s the Biles-Coleman Lumber Company was known as "The Community Builders" and employed 600 people. The economic boost provided by the orchards and timber industry resulted in the city's most significant growth period. From its first official census of 525 residents in 1920, the population boomed to 2,547 persons in 1930. During this ten year period, Omak's population surpassed that of Okanogan, which had 1,519 residents in 1930. The city continued to grow through the Depression, reaching a population of 2,918 in 1940. In 1950 the population rose to 3,791; in 1960, with a population of 4,068, it stabilized near its present level.

The Omak MPO is on the southwest corner of Main Street and First Avenue, on the southern edge of the city's downtown business district. Main is the primary commercial/retail street in Omak. Adjacent to the west of the Post Office is the modern one-story brick First Bank. Adjacent to the south of the Post Office is a one and one-half story frame house used as an office. The rest of the block is occupied by a Safeway store and parking area. Across First to the north is a Chevron Station with a modern bank building to its west. Kitty-cornered from the Post Office is an Exxon Station with one-story commercial buildings to its north. Across Main to the east is the two-story Hammond Organ Center. One-story office buildings are to its south. None of these buildings are of historic or architectural significance.

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

On July 8, 1938 the Omak Chronicle reported that Okanogan County fruit crop estimates for 1939--for apples, pears, cherries, apricots, plums, and peaches--were set above last year's harvest. In August the two-year old strike against the Biles-Coleman Lumber Company had finally ended and 106 men were to seek reemployment at the company. Local WPA work

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was also reported in August: over 20 miles of county roads had been widened and sloped the previous year and a \$5,000 school ground project had just been approved. In September the Chronicle reported two other WPA projects: a \$34,464 Omak city street improvement project and \$172,084 county road project. An article of October 11th revealed that Okanogan County had received "huge sums" under federal recovery programs: between 1933 and 1938 the county had received over \$2.5 million (or \$502 per family). The year ended with more good news on December 9th when it was reported that Okanogan County's apple crop for the year was 4,274 cars and a new 600 seat theatre was planned for Omak.

On January 6, 1939 the Chronicle quoted postmaster R. H. Mitchell as saying that Omak's postal business had increased from \$15,063.71 in 1937 to \$15,276.98 in 1938. On March 17th it reported that a new \$172,084 WPA project would improve 100 miles of county roads and employ 300 men.

News of the post office came On May 26th; a telegram had been received from Congressman Charles H. Leavy stating that Omak had been allocated \$73,000 for a new post office building. A week later, on June 2nd, it was reported that site bids would soon be advertised and would be opened June 16th. On June 16th the paper announced that six bids had been submitted and were to be opened that morning. The June 20th report was that there were now nine site bids--ranging from \$1,500 to \$11,500. The bids had been sent to Washington, D.C. and a "field man" would inspect the sites.

A banner headline of July 11th announced "Omak Theatre To Open Wednesday." The theatre was described as the "largest and most up-to-date show house in north central Washington" and its opening was "another milestone in progress of Omak." By July federal agent J. E. Fitzgerald was in town inspecting the post office sites (July 18th) and it was announced that WPA jobs would be reduced: those on the job more than 18 months were to be dropped to reduce the quota (July 25th). On September 8th the paper reported that pending PWA applications would not be granted since Congress had not authorized any appropriations; 209 Washington State projects would be affected.

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On September 19th it was announced that the "Harris Hall" corner site had been selected for the post office. Owned by Fred Harris, it would cost \$5,000, and was home to a second hand store and Eagles Hall. The paper added that \$74,000 had been allocated for the post office. By October 27th the Chronicle could report that the site was being surveyed and test holes were being dug. Postmaster White, however, didn't expect work to begin until spring. At year's end Congressman Leavy informed the paper that architects were working out the final plans, the title was being processed, and construction bids might be called for by April 1st.

On March 26th, 1940 the Chronicle reported that plans were being drawn and that Congressman Leavy was "doing everything to keep the project moving" and was following its progress "very closely." "Building Program On Big Upswing In Omak District" read a headline of May 3rd; new Omak residences and businesses were being built and planned. Further, the government now owned the post office site and work was expected to start "before too many months." A week later it was reported that 27 building permits had been issued during the first four months of the year compared to 28 for all of 1939. A May 31st article reported that Congressman Leavy had written that construction bids were expected to be issued in August and actual construction would begin by November.

On June 4th a "cabinet sketch" and description of the planned post office was published (the information had been released by the PWA to Leavy). "Will Open Bids Omak P.O. Next Week" reported the Chronicle on August 30th. But rather than a bid opening, the news was of delay. Finally, Matson & Potucek of Tacoma was announced as submitting the lowest of four bids on November 5th. The December 3rd report was that construction would start within six weeks, with 240 days allotted for completion. The contract amount was \$57,370.

"To Complete New Federal Building By August 15, 1941" was the headline of January 3, 1941. The building on the site was being torn down and the post office would rise in February. The paper wrote: "Known to many as the 'White Elephant,' it will soon be only a memory.... The building has served as a church, lodge hall, store, beauty shop, and living rooms, at various times during its long career, since it was built in 1907 when the Omak townsite was plotted."

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On February 21st it was reported that excavation had started and much work had been subcontracted locally. An article of May 23rd reported that Omak building construction was on an "upward swing"; the total estimate since January 1 was \$200,000 (including the \$74,000 post office).

An article of September 2nd reported that an "impressive" cornerstone laying ceremony was planned for that Friday at 5:00, with the Masonic Lodge in charge. A banner headline of September 5th proclaimed "P.O. Cornerstone Ceremony Today"; the program was to include "special music" by the school band and addresses by Mayor Mackey and Postmaster Mitchell. Another article that day gave the history of the Camas post office, starting with the first postmaster, Mrs. Rebecca Lucas who used a dinner pail as the first mail box (her certificate was to be placed in the cornerstone). The paper also published a drawing of the new post office.

On September 9th it was reported that a large crowd had attended the ceremony. Postmaster Mitchell called the new post office "a building for the future." The paper wrote: "In speaking of the long future of the new federal building, the grand orator declared that the telephones, radios, etc., would never replace the demand for the written word which is sent through the postal service system."

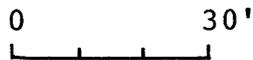
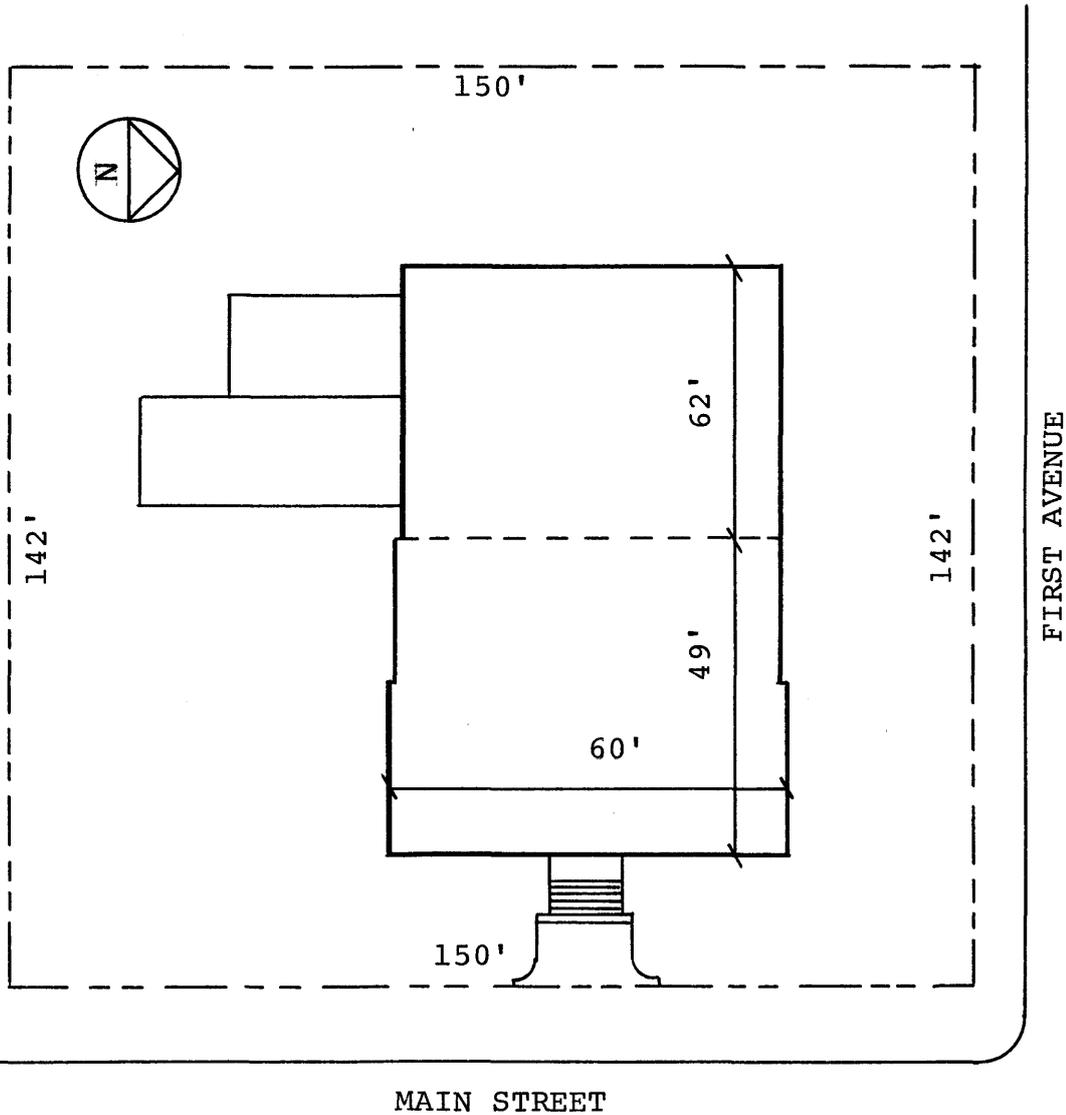
In late 1941 it was reported that the Biles Memorial Hospital would finish its remodeling and expansion and a new market and office building were being built near the new post office. "Christmas Mail Breaks All Records of Omak Post Office," was a headline of December 30th; on December 22nd, 11,473 letters had been sent out and approximately 12,000 letters were received.

"Omak Post Office To Move Sunday" stated the Chronicle on January 23rd, 1942. Post office supplies and records were to be moved on Sunday and reopen on Monday. The article noted the cornerstone laying ceremony ("when the incomplete structure was viewed by many visitors") and described the building's location, measurements, and materials. On January 30th the paper reported that the post office was open for business Monday morning and "Residents of Omak are now enjoying the benefits of a new post office building."

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Section number Photos Page 1 OMAK MPO

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

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

Photo No. 1 (negative #1)

6. View to northwest

Photo No. 2 (negative #3)

6. View to west

Photo No. 3 (negative #4)

6. View to southwest