

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name (former) United States Post Office

other names/site number Federal Building

2. Location

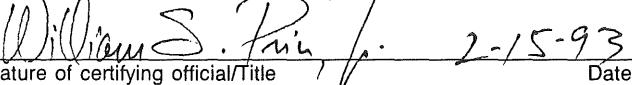
street & number 405 East Market Street n/a not for publication

city or town Smithfield n/a vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Johnston code 101 zip code 27577

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official/Title William S. Price Jr. Date 2-15-93

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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): _____

(former) United States Post Office
Name of Property

Johnston, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | | buildings |
| 0 | | sites |
| 0 | | structures |
| 0 | | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/post office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Slate

other Limestone

Granite

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1935-1936

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

U.S. Treasury

See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

(former) United States Post Office
Name of Property

Johnston, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. one-eighth of an acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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Zone Easting Northing
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davyd Foard Hood

organization _____ date December 9, 1992

street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331

city or town Vale state NC zip code 28168

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

The (former) United States Post Office at Smithfield, completed in 1936, is a one-story-on-basement Federal Revival style brick building located at 405 East Market Street. Free-standing at the corner of East Market and North Fourth streets and facing southwest, it is one of a group of public and commercial buildings that line the county seat's main business avenue. The Johnston County Court House, designed by Harry Barton and built in 1921, is the most impressive building on the street and stands two blocks west of the post office. Joining these two classically-detailed public buildings are numerous commercial buildings of one, two, or more stories that represent the usual types of commercial buildings in small cities of North Carolina. Some of the buildings adjoin one another and present stretches of a continuous streetscape, whereas others including the court house and post office are free-standing with small landscaped set-backs from the sidewalk.

The former post office building is set back from both Market and Fourth streets. The area between the building and the sidewalk is sowed with grass and creates a lawn for the post office. The southeast side elevation is likewise a grass lawn. To either side of the front stoop and steps are large junipers that were probably planted while the building was used as a post office. The rear part of the lot and nominated property is a paved parking lot.

The elevations of the (former) United States Post Office are laid up in a one-to-five bond. The form of the building is generally rectangular; however, functionally and in elevation, it is comprised of three distinct sections which are successfully integrated to form a cohesive and handsome building. The front block, on which the principal decorative treatment occurs, is covered with a side-gable roof; it housed the principal public lobby of the post office and the postmaster's office. Immediately behind it is the large rectangular space in which the sorting of mail and other in-office functions occurred; this block is three bays deep and is covered with a flat roof. The rear third of the building is actually two levels in height. The first level was given over to service spaces and the loading dock; the second level housed a staff room and showers and changing rooms for the postmen.

The front block of the post office building, facing southwest to East Market Street, is the focus of the decorative detailing which establishes the style of the Federal Revival building. It sets above street level on a high basement which is capped by a limestone water table. The five-bay facade is dominated by the central entrance fitted in a handsome frontispiece featuring fluted Ionic pilasters rising to a frieze supporting a broken pediment. It contains a traditional six-panel wood door below a single-pane transom. A flight of granite steps rises to the shallow stoop in front of the entrance. The two bays to either side of the entrance hold nine-over-nine sash windows set in molded casings. Most of the first-story wood window sills are molded; however, they are concealed behind a metal boxing that appears to have been added in 1969. On the southeast side elevation, the sills are limestone. At the basement level there are pendant window openings which hold six-over-six sash. These are

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
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Johnston County, North Carolina

preceded by poured concrete wells covered by flat cast iron grills. Above the inner first story windows--at what would be the mezzanine level--there are rectangular recessed limestone panels. A shallow limestone entablature features a flat frieze and a modillion block cornice crowns the elevation. The term "FEDERAL BUILDING" in aluminum letters is centered on the frieze above the entrance. The building is covered with a slate roof and has recessed gutters. The gutters carry down inside the building to the front corners where they empty, through spouts at the base of the elevation, into shallow exposed troughs which lead to and under the sidewalk.

The first-story gable ends of the front block are identical in their appearance and are one bay deep. Single, tall, nine-over-nine sash windows, surmounted by blind, carved fanlights, are set in overscaled, recessed, stucco-faced panels with arched heads. Metal grills carry across the face of the panels below each window sill. At the basement level there are two windows on the northwest end and a single window and door on the southeast gable end which illuminate and open into the basement offices. These are protected by waist-high railings made up of round piping.

The center block (third) of the building, recessed behind the face of the main block's gable ends by the width of a brick, is three bays deep. Its northwest and southeast elevations are likewise laid up in a one-to-five bond. The water table is continuous across these walls which terminate in a parapet capped by a limestone coping. The southeast elevation has a trio of nine-over-nine sash windows in molded surrounds on the first story and smaller pendant windows in the basement level enclosed by poured cement wells and railings. On the northwest elevation there are small paired four-over-four sash windows in the other two openings. At the basement level there is a railed, poured cement well which encloses a single window and a larger door opening which contains paired metal doors; these doors open into the furnace/boiler room.

The rear block of the building, as noted earlier, is two levels in height. Originally, it was a small block centered on the rear of the building, and recessed inside the walls of the center block by a bay's width. On the Fourth Street side, the transition between the middle and rear blocks is marked by the square brick chimney stack. The limestone water table and frieze band continue here. The added height of the second level is contained within a blind brick parapet wall. There are two windows on the northwest elevation, three on the rear wall, a single one on the southeast. All hold six-over-six sash. At some point, apparently shortly after the building's construction, it was doubled in width by a one-story wing to the southeast. At the first-story level, there is an open recessed porch at the northwest end supported by a brick pier. In 1991, a simple wood handicap-access ramp was constructed off the northwest side of the porch. The remainder of the former loading dock here, also originally supported by brick piers, was infilled in 1969 with a blind wall of running bond brick. In 1991, two small fixed pane windows were installed in the wall. The lower part of this level is marked by the projecting edge of the poured cement loading

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

dock; it is protected by a flat-roof pent which carries fully across the elevation and sheltered the loading operations.

The interior of the building was substantially altered in 1969-1970 for GSA when the building was renovated and refitted to house four agencies of the federal government. The refinements in the interior, focused on the public lobby that included a marble wainscot, were mostly removed when the postal boxes were likewise removed and a suspended ceiling installed throughout the office areas. The original L-shaped lobby that occupied the space behind four of the facade's five bays--excepting only the window illuminating the postmaster's office in the southwest corner of the building--was cut down to half of its original size. The center third of the building, originally the post office sorting room and work area, was partitioned into one large and one smaller work area for secretaries and clerks. The back block of the post office contained service facilities including the original stairwell connecting the basement and second level with the first story, men's and women's bathrooms installed in 1969, the open porch, and the former loading dock across the rear of the building that was enclosed in 1969-1970 for office storage.

In 1990, while the last of the federal agencies were still using the building, it was acquired by four men who, in 1991, renovated the exterior and main level of the building for use as the legal offices of their law firm. The GSA-era renovations that had compromised the original appearance of the post office were removed and a new plan for the interior was designed. Four principal offices--one for each of the partners in the firm--were created and positioned in each of the four corners of the front two-thirds of the building thereby giving each office windows on two sides of each room. In the center of the southeast and northwest side elevations, unequal size secretarial work spaces were created. The building's front door opens into a lobby/waiting area with a desk for a receptionist and seating for clients. This space occupies the general center of the building behind the front door and the window to the west (left), and extends for about one-third of the depth of the office block. The waiting area extends into a U-shaped concentric corridor which serves the offices and work spaces around the perimeter of the building and encircles a central interior block of two rooms which are also for secretarial work.

The finish of these offices is generally uniform and all finishes and surfaces date to the 1991 renovation. Except for the two offices in the rear corners of the building which have oak flooring over sub-flooring, the offices, lobby, and work areas are carpeted. The walls throughout the offices are painted sheetrock. The dropped metal grid ceilings include panels of acoustical tile, recessed fluorescent lights, and heating and air-conditioning vents. All doors are hollow-panel with flush stained wood finishes set in simple metal frame surrounds painted to match the walls. The woodwork in the renovated offices is spare and consists of a low, molded-top baseboard and a molded chair rail through the waiting room and corridor areas. Three of the four attorneys' offices also feature the use of applied chair rails. There is some

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

differentiation in the appearance of the four principals' offices through the use of wallpapers and wallpaper borders. The furnishings are all freestanding except for built-in bookcases on the northeast wall of the front right office and a series of wall hung or mounted cabinets and work units in the two-person secretarial work area immediately behind that office. The fittings and furnishings of the offices are conservative and traditional in appearance.

The interior plan of the rear block of the building is less symmetrical in its arrangement; however, the general scheme of finishes used in the front offices are continued here. Carpeted floors, painted sheetrock walls, and dropped metal panel ceilings are repeated here. The first-story of the two-level rear block is divided roughly into thirds. The west (left) third contains a stairwell and the staircase which descends to the basement and a companion flight of steps which rises to the second level. The center third of this block is an open service lobby which connects to the principal U-shaped office corridor and a vestibule immediately behind (northeast of) it which opens onto the rear entrance platform. The east (right) third of this block houses a storage closet and men's and women's restrooms. While the staircases, lobby, and storage closet are carpeted, the bathrooms have square composition tiles. The common partition wall between the bathrooms contains the plumbing and all the fixtures are attached to it. The wall in the men's room is faced with a wainscot of blue ceramic tiles and the opposite side in the women's restroom is faced with a wainscot of yellow tiles. At the rear of the building, the former one-story loading platform was enclosed by a brick wall in the 1969-1970 renovation. The aforementioned vestibule, in the near-center, opens (left) onto the platform porch at the northwest corner of the building and to the right into a small anteroom that connects with the conference room which is finished, with an applied chair rail.

In the stairwell which connects the three levels of the building, a single flight of stairs rises to the large room on the second level of the building. Apparently originally it consisted of at least two rooms--an employee changing room and a shower room; this division did not survive the 1969-1970 renovation. The single space on this upper level is now used as a law library. Its floor is carpeted, its walls are painted sheetrock, and it has a dropped panel ceiling. There are three symmetrically placed windows on the rear, northeast wall, a single window on the southeast wall, a door in the southwest elevation opening into the attic service crawl space over the main building, and the entrance from the stairwell in the northwest wall. While the door from the stairwell is a modern hollow-panel door, the door into the crawl space is original: it has three, molded recessed panels and is set in its original molded Colonial Revival style surround. The windows are fitted with six-over-six sash of plain, clear, or figured glass and have concave quarter-round moldings around their recessed frames and molded bottoms on the aprons below the projecting sills.

Because of changes made in the basement level of the building in 1969 to house federal agency offices, it is difficult to discern what the original 1936

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

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arrangement of rooms was like. Because three-part molded surrounds and some original doors survived the 1969 remodeling here, it appears that there were at least two well-finished office spaces (and probably a third) in addition to the original surviving men's and women's lavatories in the southeast end of the front two-thirds of the post office. These were reached by the exterior stairwell on the southeast side of the post office.

The men's and women's restrooms survive largely intact from the original construction of the building. Both retain their original three-panel wood doors in three-part molded surrounds. The women's lavatory retains its original "Standard" sink and toilet complete with chromium fittings. An oak framed beveled glass mirror hangs above the sink. The commode is enclosed in a closet formed by warm rose beige marble with chromium fittings and a four, horizontal panel swinging door. Its floor and the floor of the adjoining men's room is a poured-in-place mosaic-like material with an inner field of yellowish cast and a darker perimeter frame. The men's lavatory likewise retains its original wall-hung "Standard" sink and commode and oak-framed mirror. Apparently, originally there was not a divider between the commode and wall-hung urinal. The present green enamel on steel divider, with chromium fittings, appears to have been installed in the 1940s or early 1950s.

The room in the rear right corner of the basement appears to be an original office space. Although the entrance door from the corridor is a modern hollow-core replacement, the surround here is original and three-part in its composition like those at the bathroom doors. Inside the office there is an original three-panel door, with surround, opening into a closet. The two windows in the room have molded edges on the aprons carrying below the window sills. This chamber is now used as a staff break room.

It appears that there were two or more offices across the front of the building since the windows here have molded-edge aprons and their recessed wood frames bear dark stained finishes behind chipped paint. These spaces were repartitioned into four offices in 1969-1970 and some of the original three-panel doors were reused. Behind them and in the center of the building there is a large service/storage room, now used for overflow secretarial space, and a small storage room with masonry walls that retains its original surround and three-panel door.

The boiler room occupies the rear left corner of the front two-thirds of the building. It has paired metal doors opening onto the exterior stairwell on the northwest side of the building, a second set of paired and partially glazed doors opening into a corridor at the foot of the interior staircase, and a third set of paired metal doors opening into the large former service/storage room that is now used as overflow secretarial space. To the northeast of the boiler room, and in the area below the platform porch and vestibule in the rear third of the building, there is a large room with masonry walls. It is fitted with paired wood double-panel doors which open into the corridor a few feet away from

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

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the foot of the interior staircase and the paired doors into the boiler room. Its ceiling is fitted with a coal chute and apparently the room was originally used for coal storage. It is now used for file storage.

INTEGRITY ASSESSMENT: In that the significance of the (former) United States Post Office building lies in the area of politics/government as an architectural expression of the strong Federal presence in American life in the 1930s, the critical factor which represents that significance is the exterior of the building. Except for the replacement of the front door in both 1969-1970 and 1991 and the modest expansion of the rear loading dock and its subsequent enclosure in 1969-1970 for storage space, the exterior of the building remains virtually intact as an important example of Federal Revival style architecture in the 1930s. As such it is symbolic of the federal government's role in the daily life of Smithfield residents and an important example in the series of Depression-era post offices constructed with federal support and designed in the general Colonial Revival style with classical details. The refinements on the interior of the building were largely restricted to the public lobby and offices at the front of the first story and a group of offices in the basement. The GSA-sponsored renovation of 1969-1970 removed most of the important features of the first story and partially reworked the basement offices into a new arrangement, although numerous elements of the basement remain intact. The fact that a determination of eligibility was made by concurrence between the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer and the GSA, at the request of the GSA, in 1988 is critical in reaffirming the exterior integrity and appearance as the carrier of the building's significance for listing in the National Register.

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Johnston County, North Carolina**Summary Paragraph**

The (former) United States Post Office building, a handsome Federal Revival style brick masonry building completed in 1936, is significant in the area of politics/government as Smithfield's major symbol of the federal government and for its association with a series of classically-detailed buildings erected by the WPA and like federal agencies throughout the United States in the 1930s. Unlike most other buildings erected during the Depression era to provide work for the unemployed, the construction of the Smithfield Post Office was no make-work project. In 1934, the town's existing post office building--a very impressive Classical Revival style building erected in 1928--was destroyed by fire. Beginning in 1932, a series of building projects in Smithfield had been supported or undertaken through the federal Emergency Relief Administration. Cognizant of that fact and that the federal government was supporting the construction of post office buildings throughout the nation, the town leaders and Congressman Edward William Pou sought funding from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works to construct a new post office in Smithfield. Funding was approved later in 1934, construction began in 1935, and the new post office was completed, occupied, and opened in August 1936. Dedicated on Labor Day 1936, it served as the town post office for just over thirty years, through December 1967. (The town post office relocated and opened in new quarters on 2 January 1968.) In 1969-1970, the General Services Administration thoroughly renovated the building for use by the local offices of four federal agricultural agencies and the slogan "FEDERAL BUILDING" was installed on the front of the building in aluminum letters. Although the last of those four agencies departed the building in 1991, the slogan remains across the facade of the office building, following a second recent renovation to law offices, to remind Smithfield's citizens of the former post office's role as a symbol of the federal presence in their lives for fifty-five years from 1936 until 1991.

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

Historical Background

The (former) United States Post Office in Smithfield, the county seat of Johnston County, is important in the history of Smithfield as the most imposing project in the county supported by the Depression-era WPA. The exterior appearance of the building, unchanged except for the replacement of the front door and some brick infill at the rear, is an imposing Federal Revival-style building and a good representative example of the classically detailed buildings erected by the WPA as post offices throughout the United States in the 1930s.¹

Ironically, the construction of this building in Smithfield did not occur just as a "make-work" effort to employ citizens of Johnston County. Instead, the movement to construct this building came about because a fire in 1934 destroyed the then existing post office that had been erected in 1928. From its designation as a post office in April 1829, the Smithfield Post Office had been housed in a number of buildings. These locations often changed when new postmasters were appointed or when town businessmen had buildings that were offered for that purpose.

The immediate predecessor of this building was surely the handsomest building that served as the town post office up to 1928. Designed by the skilled Raleigh architect William H. Dietrick as an investment rental building for William M. and W. Ransom Saunders, it was a handsome Classical Revival style masonry building with a triumphal arch motif as the organizing element on the facade. Ground for it was broken in January 1928 and it was completed and occupied in the late spring of that year; the contractors were Rogers and Lowrimore, a local company. In addition to the Smithfield Post Office, the building housed a large movie theater, rental offices, and a storefront. The post office was housed in this building, on Market Street between First and Second streets, until it was destroyed by fire.

After the fire destroyed the post office, U.S. Congressman Edward William Pou (1863-1934) advanced a request that the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works erect a post office in the county seat. The congressman died on 1 April 1934 before approval was granted and his son George Ross Pou took up his father's efforts on behalf of the project. Pou's successor, Congressman Harold D. Cooley, likewise pursued funding for the post office. Approval of the new building was secured later in 1934. Construction on the post office began in 1935; the year is inscribed on the building's cornerstone together with the name of the supervising architect, Louis A. Simon.

The new masonry post office building with Indiana limestone dressings was completed at a cost of \$55,000 and occupied in August 1936. It was formally dedicated on Labor Day, 7 September 1936, in ceremonies that featured J. Austin Latimer, special assistant to the Postmaster General, and Congressman Harold D. Cooley as the main speakers. For just over thirty years after the summer of 1936, the United States Post Office was used as the town post office; however,

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

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it appears that a movement began toward the construction of a new post office building in the mid-1960s. S. R. Hinnant and Sons, general contractors of Selma, began building the new post office in May 1967 on the lot at the north corner of Third and Bridge streets; that site is one block diagonally northwest of the 1936 building. That building, owned by an investor and leased to the U.S. Postal Service, was completed in the fall of 1967. On Saturday, 30 December 1967, service at the 1936 building ended when the post office closed at noon. The Postal Service reopened for business in its new quarters on Tuesday, 2 January 1968.

In June 1968, the General Services Administration announced that the old post office building on East Market Street would be renovated for use by the offices of four federal agencies: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Soil Conservation Service, Federal Crop Insurance Company, and the Farmers Home Administration. Bids were sought for remodeling the building in the spring of 1969. The renovations included both exterior and interior repairs as well as a remodeling of the former office and public lobby spaces of the building. The contract for this work was let to L. A. Mann of Decatur, Georgia, who completed the work early in 1970.

The building was occupied by the four federal agencies in 1970; the slogan "FEDERAL BUILDING" was placed in aluminum letters on the frieze of the cornice. The building continued to house one or more of these government offices until early in 1991 when it was vacated. Meanwhile, the building and lot were put up for sale at auction on 17 May 1990 by the General Services Administration. The property was purchased by N. Leo Daughtry, Stephen C. Woodard, Jr., and James R. Lawrence, Jr., partners in the law firm of Daughtry, Woodard, Lawrence & Starling. The new owners leased the building to the remaining federal agencies, who vacated the premises in early 1991. The attorneys then renovated the building for use as the offices of their law firm and occupied the building later in 1991.

Politics/Government Context

The (former) United States Post Office was not the first building erected in the county seat by a relief agency during the Depression. Instead, it was the last and most imposing structure erected in Smithfield by the federal government during the 1930s and it can be seen as the culmination of federal relief in the way of public construction projects in the county seat. During the period from 1932 until 1935, the Emergency Relief Administration supported the construction and repair of several buildings in Smithfield. These included: repairs to the Johnston County Court House; construction of a T. B. unit; the construction of a house for Negro county dependents; repairs to the Smithfield grammar school; the construction of a garage and gymnasium at the Smithfield grammar school; and the construction of a Community Building in Smithfield. Of this group, the Community Building, a handsome log building erected in the Adirondack Lodge style and located on a part of the old town commons on the southeast bank of the

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

Neuse River, is the most impressive and costly. It stands on the southwest side of West Market Street just below the bridge carrying US Business 70 west across the Neuse River and on toward Clayton and Raleigh.

Prior to the construction of this building, the post office for Smithfield had been located in rented premises, most recently in the handsome building designed by William H. Dietrick and erected in 1928. That building was destroyed by fire in 1934, and immediately afterward the movement was begun by Congressman Edward William Pou to secure funding for the new post office. Pou died before funding was secured and the case for federal funding was pursued by his successor in office, Congressman Harold D. Cooley. The project to build a new federally-supported post office in Smithfield was approved in 1934 and construction was begun in 1935 by contractor L. B. Gallimore of Greensboro.

The United States Post Office in Smithfield is important both as the culmination of a series of federally-supported projects in Johnston County and as a part of the great expansion of post office construction by the Department of the Treasury in the 1930s. During the early twentieth century, the post offices and federal buildings erected throughout the country had frequently been large, expensive, and very impressive buildings that oftentimes owed their appearance as much to political influence as to the actual local requirements for a facility.

That was certainly the case with the United States Post Office and Court House in Salisbury where a very handsome, costly marble building was erected in 1911-1912 in the hometown of Lee Slater Overman (1854-1930) who served in the United States Senate from 1903 until his death in 1930. After 1913, policies were changed and guidelines instituted concerning the size and cost of federal buildings in relationship to their use and the size of the constituency to be served. These guidelines remained in force through the 1910s and 1920s. The post offices erected in North Carolina during this period, including the post office at Waynesville, erected in 1917, are handsome public buildings but not the splendid edifices of an earlier generation.

During the course of the Depression and the 1930s, the number of new public buildings increased dramatically over the previous decades; however, the style and character of these new buildings also dramatically changed. Approximately three times the number of post offices were built in the 1930s as had been built in the previous decade. The new post offices reflected efficiency in their plans and a visible economy in the detailing and finish of the buildings. The Smithfield Post Office, erected in 1935-1936, dressed with limestone trim, is simply finished with a pedimented entrance and recessed arch-headed panels in its gable ends which combine to impart a certain conservative, symbolic dignity to the town's post office.

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

FOOTNOTE

1. The principal source on the history of the United States Post Office building in Smithfield is a series of newspaper articles which appeared in the SMITHFIELD HERALD in 1928, 1934, 1936, 1966, 1967, and 1969. These articles deal with both the building being nominated as well as the post office which preceded it. The later articles from the 1960s recount the erection of the replacement post office which continues to serve Smithfield as well as the plans by the General Services Administration to renovate the 1936 building for use as agricultural agency offices. Photocopies of these articles are included in the file for the building at the State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh. The listing of Johnston County relief projects in EMERGENCY RELIEF IN NORTH CAROLINA provides the background of federally supported construction and improvement projects in the county from 1932 through 1935.

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Johnston County, North Carolina

Kirk, J. S., and others, Eds., EMERGENCY RELIEF IN NORTH CAROLINA. Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1936.

SMITHFIELD HERALD. 28 January 1928; 18 May 1928; 20 April 1934; 1 September 1936; 8 September 1936; 28 June 1966; 19 May 1967; 29 December 1967; 25 March 1969; 6 May 1969.

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

Verbal Boundary Description:

The property being nominated consists of the historic building and its lot, measuring 85 feet by 150 feet, as shown on Johnston County Tax Map 1694, parcel 19-51-0490.

Boundary Justification:

The property included in this nomination is the existing parcel lot on which the building stands and which forms its setting.

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(former) United States Post Office
Johnston County, North Carolina

(former) United States Post Office, Smithfield: Schedule of Photographs

The following numbered list of photographs is a schedule of those photographs included in this nomination. The following information applies to all of the photographs.

Name of property: (former) United States Post Office
405 East Market Street
Smithfield
Johnston County
North Carolina

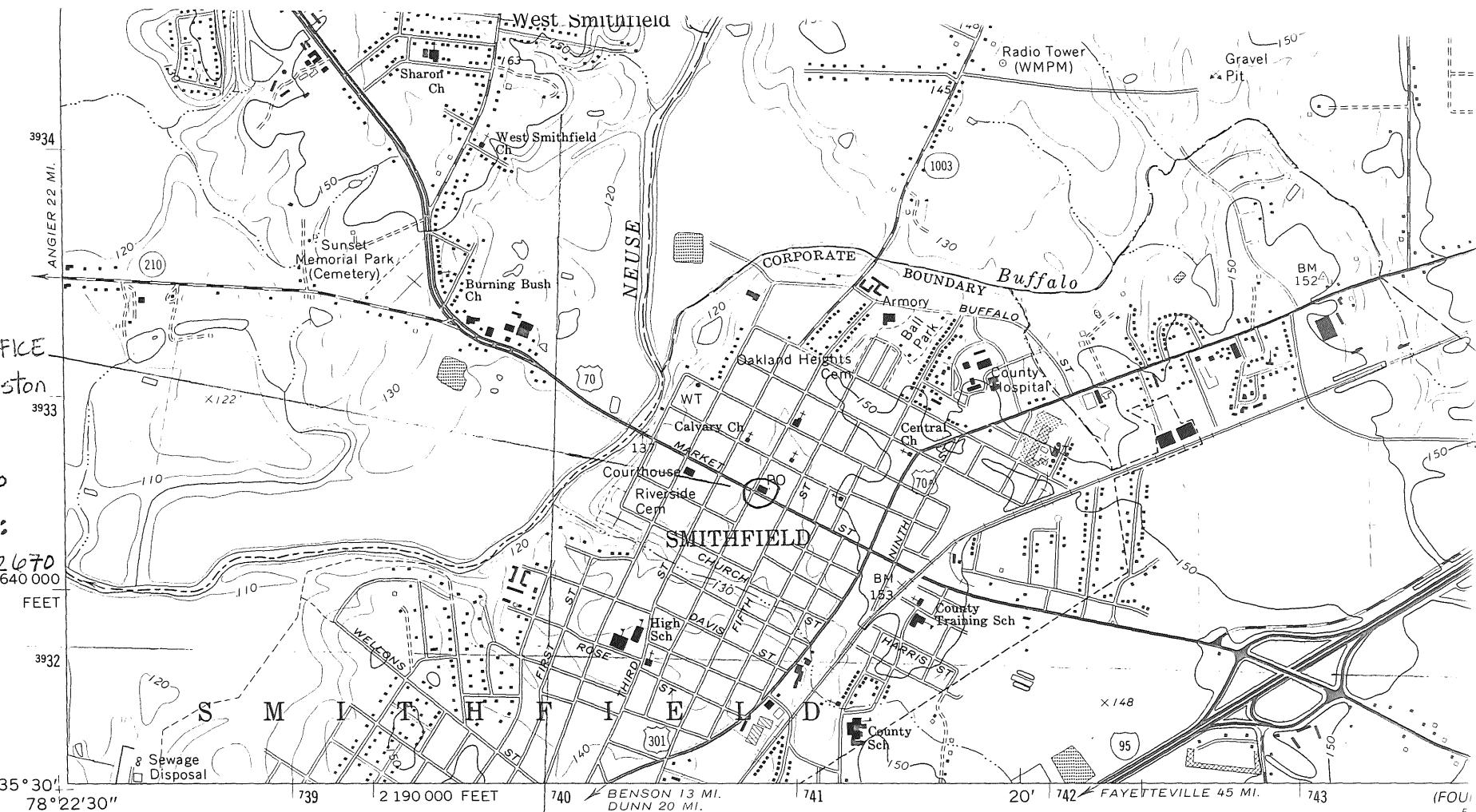
Photographer: Davyd Foard Hood

Date of Photographs: 7 December 1992

Location of original negatives: Division of Archives and History
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

1. Overall view showing front(southwest) and side(northwest) elevations.
looking northeast
2. Window on southeast elevation of the main block, looking northwest
3. Overall view of office in left rear(north) corner of the building, looking north
4. Paired wood doors in the basement coal storage room, looking southwest
5. Original sink and mirror in the basement women's rest room, looking northeast

(former) UNITED
STATES POST OFFICE
Smithfield, Johnston
County, NC 3933
Selma Quad
Scale: 1:24,000
UTM Reference:
17/740 840/3932 670
640 000



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962. Field checked 1964

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on North Carolina coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 17, shown in blue

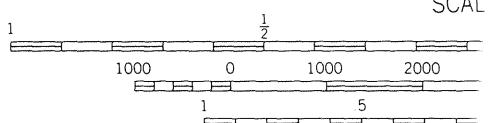
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial
photographs taken 1973. This information not
field checked

A diagram showing two vertical lines representing sight lines from point M to point N and from point G to point N. The angle at point M between the vertical line MN and the sight line MG is labeled as 5° 89 MILS. The angle at point G between the vertical line GN and the sight line MG is labeled as $1^\circ 34'$ 28 MILS.

UTM GRID AND 1973 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

The difference between 1927 North American Datum and North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) for 7.5-minute intersections is given in USGS Bulletin 1875. The NAD 83 is shown by dashed corner ticks



CONTOUR IN
NATIONAL GEODETIC

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH N
FOR SALE BY U.
DENVER, COLORADO 802

A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC M

