

U.S. Customs Service Port of Roosville  
U.S. Highway 93 immediately south of U.S.-Canada border  
Eureka vicinity  
Lincoln County  
Montana

HABS No. MT-110

HABS

MT-110

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Intermountain Support Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE PORT OF ROOSVILLE

HABS No. MT-110

For information about other structures at the U.S. Customs Service Port of Roosville, see:

HABS No. MT-110A Port of Roosville, Main Port Building  
HABS No. MT-110B Port of Roosville, INS Residence  
HABS No. MT-110C Port of Roosville, USCS Residence

Location: On U.S. Highway 93 at the U.S.-Canada border, approximately eight miles north of Eureka, Montana; in the NW ¼ of the NE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 1, Township 37 North, Range 27 West of the Principal Meridian

Date of Construction: 1933

Architects: Louis A. Simon, Superintendent, Architectural Division, Department of the Treasury/ James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect, U.S. Treasury Department

Builder: Grover C. Gorsuch, Wenatchee, Washington

Present Owner: United States of America  
General Services Administration/ Public Buildings Service  
Rocky Mountain Region  
Denver Federal Center, Building 41, Room 272  
Denver, CO 80225-0546

Present Use: Federal border station; customs and immigration inspection

Significance: Built in 1933, the Port of Roosville is an excellent example of the numerous customs and immigration inspection stations designed and constructed by the Treasury Department in the 1930s along the U.S. – Canada border. Roosville's border station reflects the convergence of several significant historical developments. The need for the border station originated as a result of federally-funded improvement of U.S. Highway 93, a major international transportation route, in the 1920s, and by federal enforcement of Prohibition including rampant smuggling of alcohol across the Canadian border between 1920 and 1933. The Port of Roosville is also significant as the product of the Public Buildings Act of 1926, which launched a massive, nationwide federal facilities

construction program, and of federal relief efforts during the Great Depression, which included sponsorship of public works projects as a means of addressing unemployment.

Finally, the Port of Roosville is an important example of 1930s border station design and of the work of architect Louis A. Simon, who was largely responsible for institutionalizing the use of dignified Colonial Revival and other early American stylistic imagery as an appropriate architectural treatment for customs stations along the U.S.-Canada boundary.

## I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Site History

The U.S. Customs Service Port of Roosville (Figure 1) was initially established in 1927, shortly after the adoption of the north-south road through Eureka, Montana, into the federal highway system. Following the trace of the wagon road to Fort Steele, British Columbia, established around 1895 (a branch of the earlier Kalispell-Fort Steele Trail), the roadway extended almost due north across the Tobacco Plains, crossing the U.S./Canadian border near Phillipps Creek and the homestead of Michael Phillipps.<sup>1</sup> Around the same time (circa 1895), the family of Frederick Roo settled south of Elko, British Columbia, in a valley traversed by the Fort Steele wagon road that came to be known as the Roosville Valley. The small community of Roosville materialized approximately one to two miles north of the border and consisted of the Roo family home as well as a store, post office, hotel, and dance hall serving wayfarers and the dispersed farming population of the northern Tobacco Plains.

Increased settlement of southern British Columbia and northwestern Montana after the turn of the century was accompanied by expansion of the transportation network and increased traffic throughout the region. In 1901 the community of Gateway sprang up on the international border, along the Kootenai River approximately five miles east of Roosville, as the Great Northern Railway laid track from Jennings, Montana, to Fernie, British Columbia. A U.S. Customs officer was stationed at Gateway, while on the opposite side of the border, the Canadian railway and customs inspection station of Newgate was founded. In 1903, the community of Eureka, Montana (originally called Deweyville), was established along the route of the Great Northern rail line being extended through the Tobacco Plains to join with the Fernie Branch line at Rexford.<sup>2</sup> Eureka soon grew to be one of the principal communities in Lincoln County.

These developments, combined with a significant trend of national and state involvement to improve transportation routes, led to the extension of Highway 93 north from Eureka into British Columbia. On May 3, 1924, the Montana Highway Commission approved the extension of Highway 93 north from Eureka to the Canadian border. Two years later, in 1926, Highway 93 was targeted for improvement by designation as Federal Aid Route No. 5.<sup>3</sup> Grading and surfacing of the road leading north from Eureka was delayed until the early 1930s; however, in 1927 the U.S. Customs Service initiated operations at the border crossing near Roosville. A one story, wood frame building, measuring 12' x 28' was erected for the purpose, on the east side of the unpaved road close to the international border. A gate placed across the road next to the customs station prevented motorists

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<sup>1</sup> Olga Weydemeyer Johnson, ed., *The Story of the Tobacco Plains Country; the Autobiography of a Community*. Privately published by the Pioneers of the Tobacco Plains Country, Eureka, Montana, 1950, n.p. See also: Marie Cuffe Shea, *Early Flathead and Tobacco Plains; A Narrative History of Northwestern Montana*. Privately published by Marie Cuffe Shea, 1977, pp. 91-94.

<sup>2</sup> Shea, pp. 133-135.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Jon Axline, Montana Department of Transportation, personal communication, February 29, 2000.

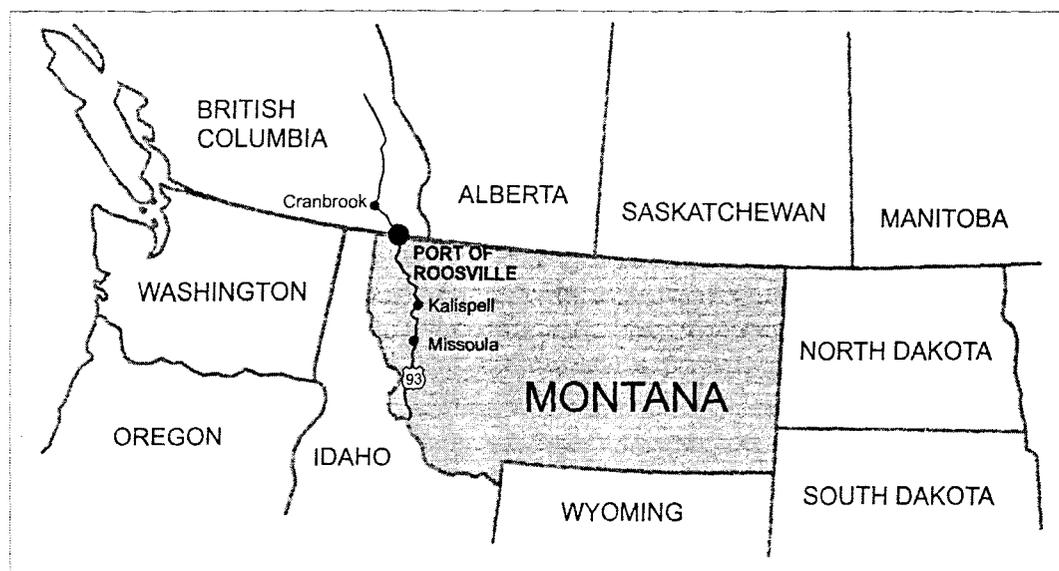


Figure 1. Location of the Port of Roosville on the U.S./Canadian border in northern Lincoln County, Montana.

from crossing the border without stopping.<sup>4</sup> The first officer stationed at this location was Alfred Schrupp.<sup>5</sup> Intending to establish a more permanent inspection station at this location, the federal government purchased from Peter Lenarz in April of 1931 a tract of land adjoining the international border across from Roosville, British Columbia. The parcel was bisected by U.S. Highway 93 and contained approximately 6.8 acres.<sup>6</sup>

Improvement of Highway 93 from Stryker north to Roosville finally commenced in late 1932, and on November 3 the *Eureka Mirror* announced that a contract in the amount of \$41,100 was let for construction of a new customs house at Roosville. Contractor Grover C. Gorsuch of Wenatchee, Washington, was the successful bidder. Plans were drawn up by Louis A. Simon, Superintendent of the Treasury Department's Architectural Division, working under James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department. Work commenced in February of 1933 when the property was surveyed, and a water well was drilled on the site by Ward Elwood and Mayo Shulz of Kalispell. The construction work was supervised by J.D. Levin, construction engineer for the Treasury Department's Office of the Supervising Architect. Levin was kept busy supervising construction of the Roosville customs station as well as another new customs building being erected at Babb, Montana (on the east side of Glacier National Park). Quoting Mr. Levin, the *Mirror* described the new customs station on March 2, 1933:

<sup>4</sup> "Approach Plan," scale  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'-0''$ , Sheet No. 1, U.S. Inspection Station, Roosville, Montana, October 5, 1930. On file at General Services Administration, Rocky Mountain Region office, Denver.

<sup>5</sup> Olga Weydemeyer Johnson, pp. 188-189.

<sup>6</sup> Lincoln County Warranty Deed Record Book 63, p. 236.

... the new station will comprise a two-story main structure 22 x 47 feet, of solid brick construction, with a 4-car garage wing on each side of frame and clapboard construction, each wing being 19.8 x 42.4 [feet]. The main building thus has an over-all length of 131 ft. 8 inches. In addition there are two cottage residences, one for the Customs Inspector and one for the Immigration Inspector, located some distance behind the main building. These are each 24½ x 44 feet in size, and consists of a small basement, two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, living room with fireplace, breakfast nook, and front and rear porches. Cottages are of frame construction; roofs of all buildings will be of architectural roof tile.

By mid-April of 1933, excavation of the Main Port Building's basement was underway, and footings were being constructed for the two residences. In August, as the customs station was being built, the State Highway department was busy surveying the route of U.S. Highway 93 north from Eureka to Roosville. On August 31, the *Eureka Mirror* announced that the new inspection station at Roosville would likely be completed by Thanksgiving. The port building was nearly finished, except for the installation of interior trim, electrical and plumbing fixtures, painting, grading, and pouring of the outside curbs. In early October, William Neville Collier, district engineer from the Treasury Department office in Kansas City, inspected the new station at Roosville. The station was described as 85 percent complete, with both residences scheduled to be ready for occupancy by early November.<sup>7</sup> A popular Montana guidebook published several years after the customs station's completion described it as "a red-brick Colonial type structure with white columns, [set] among low pine-covered hills. The two cottages back of it are the homes of officials."<sup>8</sup>

The Port of Roosville was one of several new customs stations erected in Montana in the 1930s; others built during this period include border stations at Piegan, Raymond, Scobey and Sweetgrass. One of approximately 11 border stations in Montana, Roosville was the westernmost in the state.

Since its completion late in 1933, the Roosville customs station has served an important function in the control of people and goods entering the United States. As it was being improved in the 1930s, U.S. Highway 93 was promoted as a major transcontinental roadway extending from Kingman, Arizona, northward through Nevada, Idaho, and Montana, to Roosville, where it was connected to the Canadian highway leading to Banff and Lake Louise.<sup>9</sup> The stretch extending between the Canadian border and Eureka was

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<sup>7</sup> *Eureka Mirror*, October 12, 1933.

<sup>8</sup> Federal Writers' Project, *Montana, A State Guide Book* (American Guide Series), Compiled and Written by the Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Montana. Sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Labor and Industry, State of Montana (New York: The Viking Press, 1939), p. 293.

<sup>9</sup> *Eureka Mirror*, July 17, 1934.

apparently not surfaced until 1950, when it was improved by Federal Aid Project No. F-263(6).<sup>10</sup>

The Port of Roosville has monitored traffic from Canada that includes a high proportion of lumber trucks carrying logs to lumber mills in the Eureka vicinity, as well as skiers from British Columbia bound for the Big Mountain resort near Whitefish. In 1971 the Tobacco Valley Improvement Association (TVIA) vigorously lobbied for longer hours of operation at the U.S. Customs station of Roosville to enhance the economy of Lincoln County and northwest Montana. The TVIA's effort achieved partial success, and in October of 1972 Roosville's hours of operation were extended to 16 per day. Although this change was deemed an improvement, later in the 1970s TVIA sought to make Roosville a 24-hour port of entry. Supporting this request were data indicating an increase in vehicles and travelers passing through the port and the claim that Roosville and Highway 93 constituted the "best and only entry into Western Montana from the Province of British Columbia" as well as being the "closest port to the Flathead Valley and the best truck route in Montana for Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta."<sup>11</sup> Despite these efforts, it was not until July of 1989 that the Port of Roosville initiated 24-hour operation, one year after the precedent was set by the Canadian customs station on the opposite side of the border.<sup>12</sup>

Deficiencies in the aging facilities at the Port of Roosville were addressed in the 1970s--80s. In 1978, a contract was let for replacement of the canopy over the inspection lanes, as well as for installation of public restrooms and handicap access ramps. These improvements were made by Christensen Construction of Libby, Montana, for the sum of \$74,850.<sup>13</sup> Other interior alterations were made to the Main Port Building in recent years, including conversion of the northern garage wing into office space and construction of a ground floor detention cell that replaced two original upper story detention cells.

In 1979, the Port of Roosville was enlarged slightly by the acquisition of a small triangular-shaped parcel, encompassing 0.275 acre, on the west side of U.S. Highway 93 and extending from the original site southward to Airport Road.<sup>14</sup> The following year (1980), a new Secondary Non-Commercial Inspection Garage was built southeast of the Main Port Building. The new freestanding garage, which replaced the garage space in the end wings of the Main Port Building that had recently been converted to other uses, provided a spacious and well-lit facility for conducting vehicular inspections.

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<sup>10</sup> Federal Writers' Project, p. 293; Mr. Jon Axline, Montana Transportation Department, personal communication, February 29, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Anonymous letter, dated January 27, 1977, in Tobacco Valley Improvement Association "Roosville Promotion" file, Lincoln County Public Library, Eureka.

<sup>12</sup> INS Officer G.L. Dimon, personal communication, February 24, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> *Tobacco Valley News*, June 15, 1978.

<sup>14</sup> CTA Architects Engineers, *Feasibility Study, United States Border Station, Roosville, Montana*. Final Submittal, April 17, 1998. Unpublished report prepared for the General Services Administration, Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado (Billings, Montana: CTA Architects Engineers, 1998), p. 3.

Another significant development occurred in the 1990s when high radon levels were detected in buildings on the property. Consequently, the INS and USCS dwellings were declared unsafe for habitation and were abandoned, forcing officers stationed at the Port of Roosville to commute to work. The Main Port Building was also found to contain high levels of radon, resulting in the installation of a radon remediation system in the basement.<sup>15</sup>

Formerly situated within the U.S. Customs Service's North Central Region, which encompassed 17 states and was charged with inspecting traffic across the Canadian border from the western Washington border to Erie, Pennsylvania, the Port of Roosville was one of 16 ports situated within the Great Falls District.<sup>16</sup> More recently, the Customs Service disbanded its regional organizational structure, and the Port of Roosville was incorporated, along with all of the ports of Montana, North Dakota, Idaho, and parts of Minnesota and Washington, into the Northwest Great Plains Customs Management Center (CMC). Regardless of these administrative changes, the Port of Roosville remains a vital link in the chain of customs inspection stations along America's northern border. In the late 1990s, the agency began planning to expand and upgrade the facility to better meet its current and future operational needs.

## B. Historical Context

The U.S. Customs Service was established in 1789, however, its presence along the Canadian border awaited westward expansion of the United States as well as resolution of its border with Canada in the nineteenth century. Ironically, the impetus for creation of the U.S. Customs Service was the new nation's need for operating revenue, following in the wake of a war of independence spawned by oppressive British revenue collections policies. The idea of implementing a fair system for collecting revenue from imports into the United States was championed by James Madison at the first meeting of the House of Representative, and three laws passed in July 1789 created the organizational mandate and structure of the U.S. Customs Service.<sup>17</sup> Immediately thereafter, Customs officers were stationed at ports of entry along the eastern seaboard, and customs houses were among some of the earliest federal buildings erected.

In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was consummated, resulting in American acquisition from France of a vast western territory extending from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The northern boundary west of the Great Lakes was resolved by a series of agreements, including the Rush-Bagot Agreement (1817), followed soon after by the Convention of 1818, fixing the U.S./Canadian border along the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. The Canadian boundary west of the Rocky Mountains, above the Oregon Territory, was in dispute until 1846, when agreement was reached to continue the line westward along the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel to the

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<sup>15</sup> CTA Architects Engineers, pp. 4-5

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Customs Service, Regions, Districts. Ports, U.S. Customs Service (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Customs Service, Treasury Department, July 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Carl E. Prince and Mollie Keller, *The U.S. Customs Service, A Bicentennial History* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Treasury, U.S. Customs Service, 1989), p. 37.

Pacific coast.<sup>18</sup> Exclusive of Alaska, the U.S./Canadian border extends nearly 4,000 miles in length.

The establishment of federally-controlled ports of entry along the Canadian border followed a prolonged period of settlement of the western states, and the development of transportation networks including trans-border routes. Beginning with the blazing of the Oregon Trail and the California Gold Rush in the 1840s, the pace of settlement and state formation quickened throughout the nineteenth century, fueled by such developments as completion of a transcontinental railroad in 1869. In two of the western border states, Montana and Idaho, settlement commenced in the 1860s with the influx of hopeful miners to newly discovered precious metal mining districts. Violent resistance by Plains Indians temporarily retarded settlement of the Dakotas. However, the momentum of western expansion was facilitated by military subjugation and removal of Native Americans, and by federal homesteading mandates that permitted American citizens to secure and develop lands in the public domain. Completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad in September 1883, extending from Lake Superior to Puget Sound, created an influx of settlers to the northern tier, and by the end of the decade North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, and Washington had achieved statehood.<sup>19</sup>

Customs officers were undoubtedly stationed at the relatively few international transportation routes along America's northern boundary by the late nineteenth century. In addition to the collection of duties on imported goods, the Customs Service was charged with the task of enforcing federal immigration laws including the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (and subsequent, similar legislation) and the more general Immigration Act of 1882. The latter act levied a head tax on each immigrant and prevented the entry of certain types of persons deemed likely to become public charges.<sup>20</sup>

Customs inspectors were instructed to intercept illegal Chinese immigrants who were smuggled through west coast ports such as Seattle and San Francisco, as well as across the Canadian and Mexican borders. The number of Chinese seeking to enter the United States from Canada rose significantly in the early 1880s, after completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad and the release of approximately 9,000 Chinese laborers. However, the long, sparsely populated Canadian border was difficult to guard. Pembina, North Dakota, was reportedly a favorite western crossing point for Chinese in the 1880s and early 1890s.<sup>21</sup> By 1904 the federal government established a "U.S. Chinese Examination Station" at the border crossing in Portal, North Dakota, to process potential immigrants.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas H. Johnson, *The Oxford Companion to American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> Montana, Washington, and South and North Dakota all achieved statehood in November 1889, while Idaho became the 43<sup>rd</sup> state less than a year later, in July 1890.

<sup>20</sup> Prince and Keller, pp. 171-72; and Marian L. Smith, "Overview of INS History," in *A Historical Guide to the U.S. Government*, edited by George T. Kurian (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>21</sup> Prince and Keller 188-191.

<sup>22</sup> A photograph of this station is contained in Record Group 121, Box 25 ("Construction Management Division, Denver"), at the National Archives and Records Administration, Denver.

This responsibility later passed to the U.S. Immigration Service (predecessor of the Immigration and Naturalization Service), established by the Immigration Act of 1891 as a new agency within the Treasury Department. As a result of this act, a new corps of U.S. Immigrant Inspectors was stationed at principal ports of entry, where they worked side by side with customs inspectors to enforce federal immigration laws.

Profound developments in overland transportation in the 1910s and 1920s facilitated the flow of goods and people across the Canadian border. The introduction and proliferation of affordable, mass-produced, internal combustion engine-powered automobiles began around 1914, when the Ford Motor Company instituted a conveyor system in its automobile factory that greatly increased its output while reducing manufacturing costs. In that year alone, Ford produced nearly 270,000 of its Model T automobile, a cheap, no-frills vehicle that was considered affordable by the average citizen. The democratization of the privately-owned automobile was paralleled by a growing public desire for improved roads. In 1913, for example, Packard Motor Company president Henry Joy spearheaded a successful campaign to construct the nation's first transcontinental roadway, known as the Lincoln Highway. In spite of these efforts, privately funded road building could not meet the growing demand, and passage of the Federal Road Act of 1916 provided welcome government funding to states for road building projects. In subsequent years, numerous routes were blazed or improved for automobile use, including some extending across the Canadian border.

The presence of the U.S. Customs Service at the Canadian border was intensified between 1920 and 1933, when the federal government attempted to enforce the Prohibition of alcoholic beverages instituted by passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, also known as the Volstead Act. The long Canadian border offered many opportunities for bootleggers, especially around the Great Lakes. Canadian imports of alcohol, mainly from Britain and France, increased sixfold during the first four years of Prohibition, most of it destined for resale in the United States.<sup>23</sup> However, it wasn't until the closing years of the Prohibition era that improved facilities for Customs officers were constructed to help stem the flow of contraband liquor.

Passage of the Public Buildings Act of 1926 was a watershed event in the history of the U.S. border station system. The Act, conceived during a period of national economic prosperity, authorized the Treasury Department to expend \$150,000,000 for the construction and improvement of federal facilities, including immigration stations and customhouses. The Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department was delegated the responsibility of designing the buildings and awarding construction contracts.<sup>24</sup> The result was an unprecedented building program, that enabled the Customs Service to finally obtain improved quarters needed to effectively carry out its mission along the northern boundary.

At least 38 border stations were built along the Canadian border with Public Buildings Act funds between 1931 and 1940, some of which replaced earlier, obsolete structures.

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<sup>23</sup> Prince and Keller, pp. 202-204.

<sup>24</sup> 44 Stat. 630, Ch. 380, May 25, 1926

These included at least 11 new or replacement border stations in Vermont, seven in New York, six each in Maine, North Dakota, and Montana, four in Washington state, and at least one each in Minnesota and Idaho.<sup>25</sup> Several distinct, standardized border station designs were developed, all expressive of either the Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, and Dutch Colonial Revival styles that originated on the eastern seaboard. These designs included symmetrically arranged gambrel- and gable-roofed brick main port buildings one and one-half stories high, equipped with hip-roofed, wood frame garage wings as well as canopies extending over the vehicle inspection lanes. Another design, apparently built only at remote, relatively low traffic border crossings – such as those built at Scobey and Raymond, Montana – consisted of a small, two story side-gabled brick building with a substantial hipped canopy on the façade covering a solitary vehicle inspection lane. These isolated border station buildings contained officers' living quarters upstairs, and each was typically provided with a nearby detached, wood frame, gable-roofed, two-bay garage.

At some border stations such as Roosville, Montana, and Chateaugay, New York, inspectors' dwellings were built close to the main port buildings. Typically, separate, mirror-image plan dwellings were built to house the customs and immigrations officers and their families. These small houses were typically designed as simplified Colonial or Georgian Revival style buildings, in order to be stylistically compatible with the nearby, larger station building.

The border stations built in the 1930s with Public Buildings Act funding were designed by architects James A. Wetmore and Louis A. Simon, both of whom were responsible for designing hundreds of government buildings nationwide, including courthouses, post offices, and customs buildings. Wetmore served for a time as Acting Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department, while Simon, a prolific and talented architect schooled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, served between 1905 and 1939 as Superintendent of the Architect's Office of the U.S. Treasury Department and later as Supervising Architect of the department's Procurement Division. The border stations designed by Wetmore and Simon utilized historic architectural precedents in order to convey a dignified image befitting their official function.

The peak of new border station construction activity was in 1932, when 11 new border station buildings or complexes were built. Thirty-five new stations had been completed by the end of 1937, and three more stations were built in 1938-40. The border station construction program of the 1930s coincided with the federally-sponsored public works programs developed by the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt to combat unemployment during the Great Depression. Although not connected directly with the New Deal building programs such as the Public Works Administration (PWA) or the

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<sup>25</sup> This inventory of border stations was derived from several sources, including numerous individual border station histories included in the "Historic Federal Buildings" database on the General Service Administration's internet website; a database printout (2001) of GSA-administered customs station facilities along the Canadian border; and records contained in Record Group 121, Box 25 ("Construction Management Division, Denver" files), at the National Archives and Records Administration branch, Denver.

Works Progress Administration (WPA), implementation of the border station construction program was undoubtedly viewed by the government as a means of stimulating local economies in the border states by providing employment to laborers as well as new officers hired to man these posts.

No new customs inspection stations were constructed along the Canadian border until after the end of World War II. A border station modernization program was implemented in the 1960s, following passage of the Public Buildings Act of 1959, made possible by another period of renewed national economic prosperity. Numerous stations along the northern border were either improved or newly built, including those at Coburn Gore, Jackman, Madawaska, Van Buren, and Vanceboro, Maine; Derby Line, Vermont; Sault Saint Marie, Michigan; Grand Portage and Noyes, Minnesota; Sweetgrass, Montana; Portal and Dunseith, North Dakota; Porthill, Idaho; and Blaine, Washington. At least one border station building constructed in the 1930s - the Dutch Colonial style brick main port building at Sweetgrass, Montana on Interstate 15 - transferred to private ownership after its replacement by a new, modern border station facility in 1964.<sup>26</sup> Additional border station projects along the U.S. - Canada boundary were completed as needed at various locations in the 1970s and 1980s.

Increased cooperation between the governments of Canada and the United States beginning in the late 1980s has focused attention on improvements to inspection facilities. A 1989 trade agreement between the two countries, that eliminated or reduced many tariffs, served as the foundation for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which became effective on January 1, 1994 in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Subsequently, the Canada-United States Accord on Our Shared Border (the Shared Border Accord) was announced on February 25, 1995, and committed both governments to work together to 1) promote international trade; 2) facilitate the movement of people; 3) provide enhanced protection against drugs, smuggling, and the illegal movement of people; and 4) reduce costs to both governments and the public.

The Shared Border Accord has initiated a new era of border station development. Joint border stations were determined to be a significant and innovative way to implement the goals of the accord, by reducing duplication of space and achieving mutual cost savings, as well as promoting cooperation, information and technology sharing, and security among Canadian and American border inspection agencies and their field personnel. Several joint border station construction projects were immediately identified for key border crossings that were in need of replacement or major renovations, including Sweetgrass, Montana/ Coutts, Alberta; Poker Creek, Alaska/ Little Gold Creek, Yukon; and Oroville, Washington/ Osoyoos, British Columbia.

The mission of constructing and maintaining America's border station facilities, including the new jointly operated stations, is managed by the Public Buildings Service of the U.S. General Services Administration. At the beginning of the third millennium

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<sup>26</sup> National Register of Historic Places Registration form for the United States Customs Building, Sweetgrass, Montana (Site 24TL204), prepared by Nathan Latta, Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, August 1990.

the northern border stations and their tenant agencies – the U.S. Customs Service and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service – continue to play a significant role in the enforcement of American laws along the world's longest undefended border. Continued population growth in both the United States and Canada have increased the volume of trans-border traffic and commerce, and new and unprecedented challenges have arisen for border inspectors in the aftermath of the devastating international terrorist attacks launched upon the United States on September 11, 2001.

## II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The Port of Roosville is situated directly south of the U.S.-Canada border, on the west side of U.S. Highway 93 (Figure 2). It is located in Lincoln County, approximately seven miles north of the town of Eureka. Although the Port property encompasses slightly more than seven acres of land straddling U.S. Highway 93, all of the port buildings are situated on approximately two acres on the west side of the highway. The undeveloped portion of the port property lying east of U.S. Highway 93 is used as a firearms practice range, and has been excluded from the historic site boundary. The site is bounded on the north by the international border, on the south by Airport Road, on the east by Highway 93, and on the west by the fence line corresponding to the port's western property line.

The border station designed by Louis A. Simon<sup>27</sup> contains three historic buildings: the Main Port Building as well as two nearly identical wood frame dwellings for USCS and INS officers, set upon an attractively landscaped and fenced site (Figure 3).

The Main Port Building is a Colonial Revival style, symmetrically arranged structure consisting of a central, one and one-half story, side-gabled brick office section, flanked by one story, wood frame, hip-roofed wings that originally contained garages. The central portion of the building features a steeply-pitched gable roof, dark red brick walls set in English bond, and 12/12 light, double-hung windows with flat, segmental brick arches accented by concrete (simulated carved stone) keystones. The hipped end wings are clad with wide, lapped vinyl siding, and the northernmost wing has been converted to office space while a portion of the south wing was transformed into handicap-accessible public restrooms. Large 12/12 light double-hung windows are placed on the ends of the hipped wings as well as on the back side of the main port building.

A flat-roofed, sheet metal canopy is affixed to the façade of the Main Port Building, and extends over parallel traffic inspection lanes which pass in front of the building. A small inspector's booth is placed atop a concrete curb beneath the canopy. A small paved parking lot for employees and visitors is situated near the south end of the main port building.

Two similar, mirror image plan, side-gabled wood frame dwellings for INS and USCS officers and their families are situated behind (west of) the Main Port Building. Although now vacated, the southernmost dwelling was originally occupied by an INS officer's family, while the northern dwelling served as the USCS officer's residence. These single story houses sit atop full basements, are fenestrated with multi-light (mainly 6/6), double-hung, wood sash windows, and are clad with narrow lapped aluminum siding resembling clapboard. Both are equipped with prominent enclosed or semi-enclosed front porches, which originally featured Colonial Revival style detailing. The officers' dwellings are surrounded by an expansive lawn, and are accessed by a series of narrow concrete walkways. The landscaping of the residential area behind the Main Port Building also includes a number of medium to large evergreen (spruce or fir) and deciduous trees.

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<sup>27</sup> Copies of selected drawings from the original design of Roosville as well as later alterations, accompany this HABS report in field notebooks.

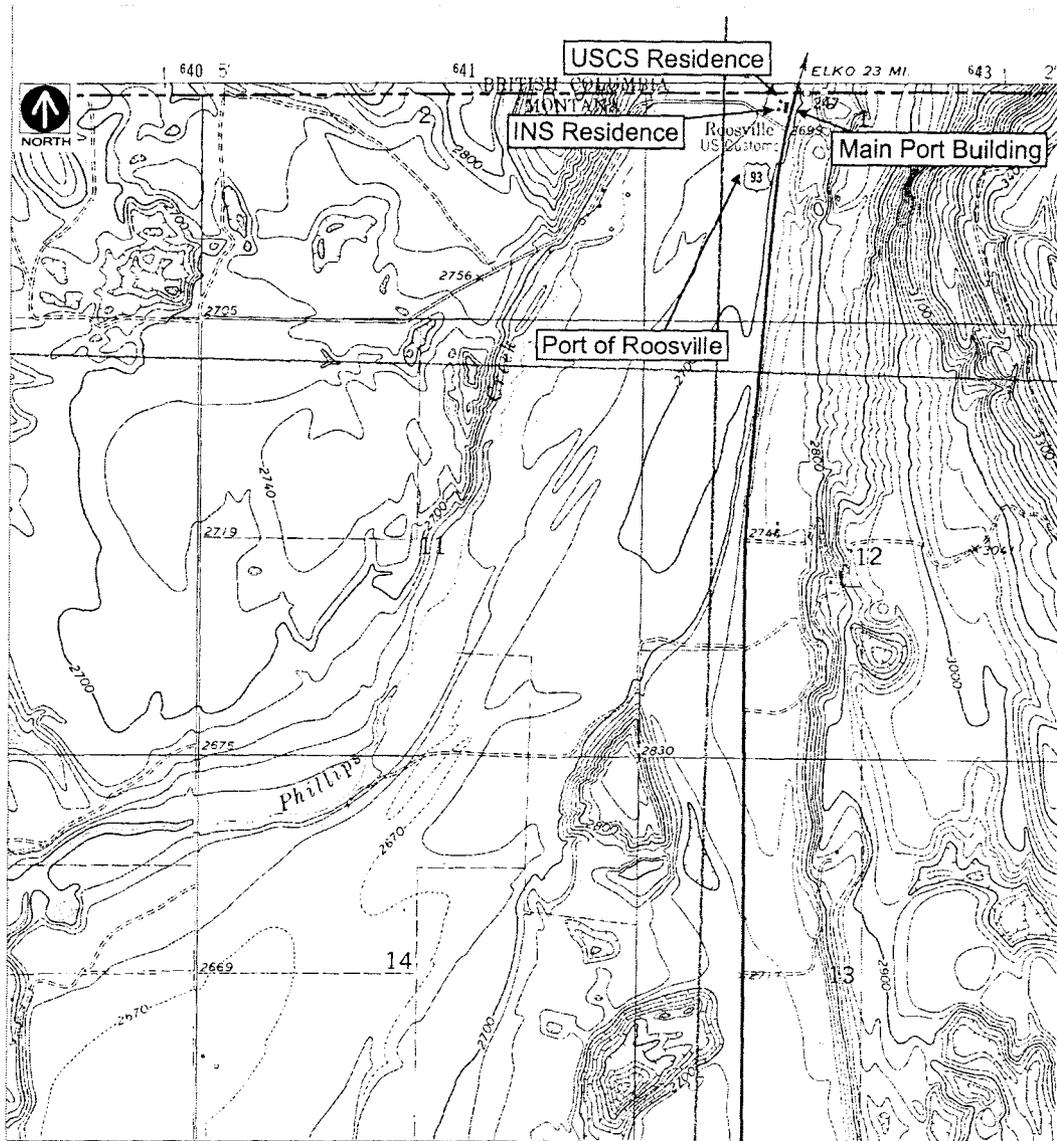


Figure 2. The Port of Roosville, shown on the USGS *Eureka North*, Montana 7.5' topographic quadrangle.

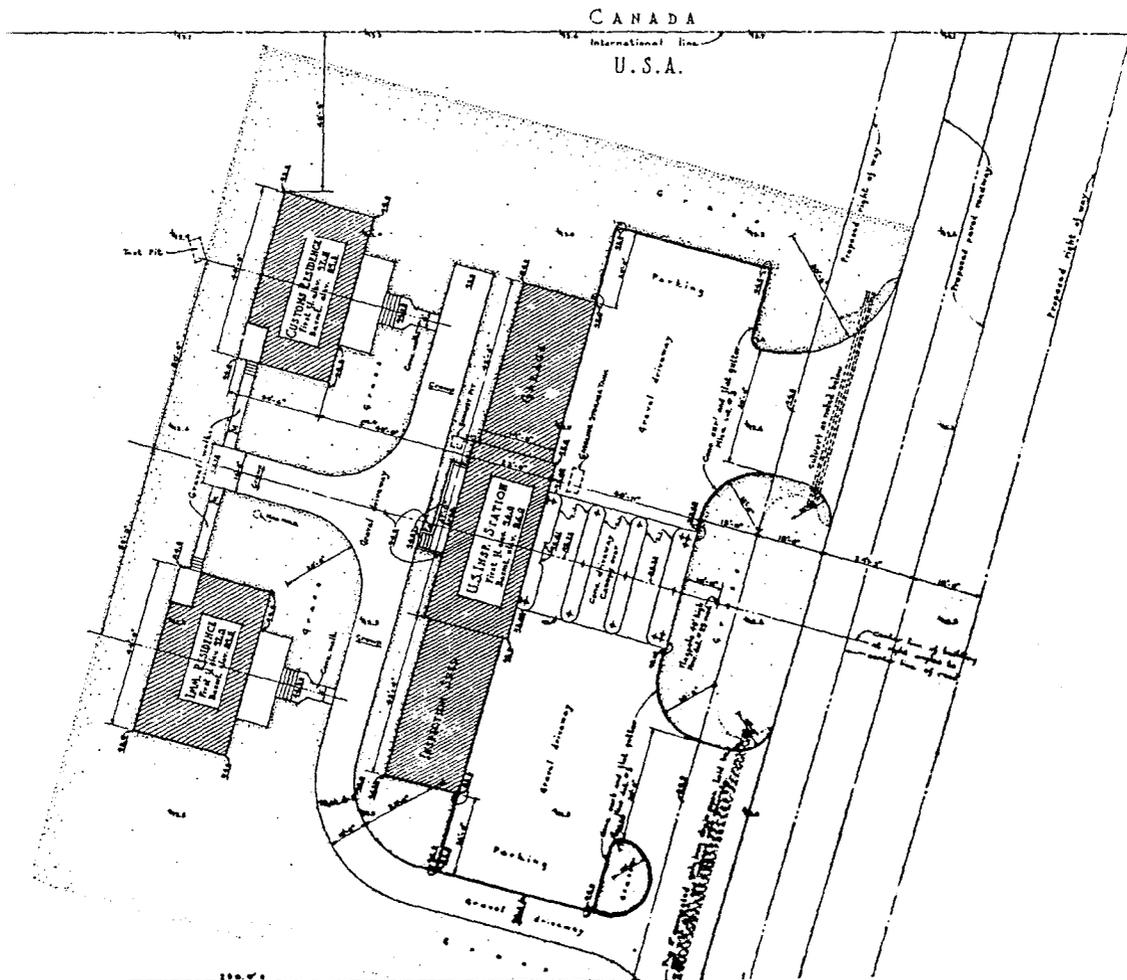


Figure 3. Plan of the Port of Roosville, Montana, adapted from the "Approach Plan" prepared by the U.S. Treasury Department in 1932.

Other, non-historic structures on the site include a large, one story, nearly square plan, hip-roofed wood frame building (Non-Commercial Secondary Inspection Garage), located directly southeast of the Main Port Building, as well as two small, modern, prefabricated generator buildings located on the lawn near the south end of the property.

Other prominent features on the Port property include a historic (original) painted metal flagpole located directly north of the main port building, and a substantial, tall, modern steel lattice radio tower set upon a concrete pad adjacent to the rear (west) side of the main port building. The north, south, and west sides of the property are enclosed by a chain link fence.

### III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Region office of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), in conjunction with a border station replacement project managed by GSA's Public Buildings Service, Portfolio Management Division. HABS documentation was required as mitigation of an adverse effect resulting from proposed replacement of the historic border station at Roosville with a new facility.

This documentation was prepared in fall of 2001 by historian Jason Marmor of Balloffet-Entranco, Fort Collins, Colorado. Mr. Marmor produced the narrative reports for the border station and its individual buildings, and compiled the documentation. The accompanying large format photographs were contributed by Clay Fraser of Fraser Design, Loveland, Colorado. GSA staff provided copies of original construction drawings. The project was coordinated by Steven M. Burke, GSA Regional Historic Preservation Officer.