



1242

**United States Department of 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 Plymouth Post Office
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	302 East Main Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Plymouth	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Sheboygan	code 117 zip code 53073

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

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Alisa J. Cochran
Signature of commenting official/Title

July 26, 2000
Date

Deputy SHPD - WI

State or Federal agency and bureau

Plymouth Post Office
Name of Property

Sheboygan County
County and State

Wisconsin

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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.
___ See continuation sheet.
___ removed from the National
Register.
___ other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall

10/24/00

for

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

contributing	noncontributing
1	0 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	0 total

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

United States Post Office Construction 1913-1943
State of Wisconsin - Milwaukee District

**Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)
Government / Post Office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)
Government / Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)
Modern Movement

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Brick
walls Brick

roof

other Limestone

Narrative Description

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

Plymouth Post Office
Name of Property

Sheboygan County
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Art

Period of Significance

1941

Significant Dates

1941

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Louis A.

Melick, Neal A.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Plymouth Post Office
Name of Property

Sheboygan County
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less Than One Acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 4/2/1/3/5/0 4/8/4/4/2/5/0
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Charles W. Causier, AICP and Joseph G. Jurkiewicz, AIA		
organization	HNTB	date	12-29-93
street & number	11270 Wet Park Place	telephone	414-359-2300
city or town	Milwaukee	state	Wisconsin
		zip code	53224

Plymouth Post Office
Name of Property

Sheboygan County
County and State

Wisconsin

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/title	John S. Sorenson, Program Manager, Historic Preservation		
organization	US Postal Service, Customer Service Facilities		
street&number	475 L'Enfant Plaza	telephone	202-268-3107
city or town	Washington	state	DC
		zip code	20260-6235

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Plymouth Post Office, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Narrative Description

The Plymouth Post Office is a one-story, tan brick building with limestone trim located in a combined residential and commercial district in Plymouth, Wisconsin. The building has a flat roof and sits on a brick-faced, raised basement. The building's architecture is minimalist, of a style sometimes called "WPA Moderne."

The front elevation is organized symmetrically around the entry doors. The doors, transom panel above, and two large windows are recessed deeply into the face, highlighting the entrance. These recesses are trimmed with both smooth and fluted limestone. The building retains its original windows. The wide entry stairs are granite and have painted metal railings at the center and sides.

The two other windows of the front elevation, one near each of the two corners, are six over nine light double hung. The windows have narrow side panes on either side of a larger center light. There is a limestone course around the building at the window sill level and one at the level of the top of the limestone panels around the front entry.

The side elevations employ large and small windows. The west elevation has four small and one large window. The east elevation has three large and one small window. At the rear of the building is a one-story loading dock, which creates the stem of a "T" in the building's plan. The loading dock was extended in the late 1970s or early 1980s.

A cornerstone is located at the front left of the building. It reads: "James A. Farley, Postmaster General, John M. Carmody, Federal Works Administrator, W. Englebert Reynolds, Commissioner of Public Buildings, Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect, Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer, 1940."

The interior lobby retains its original terrazzo floor and marble wainscot. The walls and ceiling are of plaster. The wood, trim, doors, and vestibule are original. A glass partition has been added to separate lobby functions and the lighting fixtures are modern.

Over the door to the Postmaster's office is a large mural painted by Charles Thwaites. Titled "Making Cheese" the mural is dated 22 November 1941. The scene is painted in dark greens, browns, and muted whites and yellows. It depicts a group of men engaged in the various steps of making cheese. The story of the process begins at the right of the mural where milk delivered by the farmer is being weighed and the empty cans set aside. In the center, the milk is processed in one of the huge vats by stirring machinery, rennet and coloring solution is added and the temperature is noted. At the left, a worker tests the acid content, while at the back, cheese is removed from the molds and stored in the refrigerator room. Through the window is a view of a Wisconsin farm with Holstein cattle.

The post office building and the mural retain a high level of integrity.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Plymouth Post Office, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Plymouth Post Office is an intact example of the a Federal post office in the context of the multiple property nomination "United States Post Office Construction form 1913 to 1943, State of Wisconsin – Milwaukee District." The building is nominated under Criterion C- Art for the Public Works mural "Cheese Making" by Charles Thwaites in its lobby.

Historic Context

The Plymouth Post Office is the first federally owned post office building in Plymouth. Prior to its construction, postal services were conducted is various locations selected by the local postmaster. Postal service in Plymouth dates from 1846 and the first postmaster was Thomas I. Davidson.¹

This post office was one of several constructed in Wisconsin by the federal Public Works Administration in the 1930s and early 1940s. The history of post office construction in Wisconsin in this era is detailed in the multiple property nomination. The historic context for public art in the post offices of this period is also featured in the multiple property nomination.

Plans for the post office building were underway by 1938. The newspaper reported \$85,000 had been slated for the building and the site. The cost of the site could not exceed 20% of the money allocated.² Bids from contractors were received by the Spring of 1940. Ring Construction Corporation of Maryland and Minneapolis, Minnesota won the contract and completed the building in 1941.

Significance

The Plymouth Post Office is considered eligible for listing in the NRHP by meeting the registration requirements for federally owned post offices as specified in the multiple property nomination for post office construction in Wisconsin between 1913 and 1943. The Plymouth Post Office is eligible for the mural found in its lobby.

The mural, "Cheese Making," by Chares Thwaites is a good example of Depression-era art executed under the auspices of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Projects Administration (WPA). Thwaites also painted murals in the post offices in Greenville, Michigan; Windom, Minnesota; and Chilton, Wisconsin.³ "Making Cheese" is one of the later murals painted under the federal programs.

The subject of the mural is tied to its locality. Plymouth, Wisconsin is known locally as the cheese center of the world. Thwaites painted the process of making Cheddar cheese, a local specialty. The mural presents a view of a rural cheese factory in the dairy region. In her book on post office murals, Karal Ann Marling

¹ Carl Ziller, History of Sheboygan County, Past and Present (Chicago: 1912): 296.

² "Plymouth to Have Its Own Federal Building Shortly," Plymouth Review, 7 July 1938, p.1.

³ Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982): 215, 216, 232.

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Section 8 Page 3

Plymouth Post Office, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

notes that this is one of the few murals in which the artist depicted workers happy in their tasks, rather than the intent demeanor typical in most commissions.⁴

Charles Winstanley Thwaites was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on 12 March 1904. After studying at the University of Wisconsin, he attended the Layton School of Art in Milwaukee. From 1936 to 1939 Thwaites created numerous works for the WPA Art Program. These works were allocated to schools and public buildings throughout Wisconsin. His work has been shown at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the American Art Show at Rockefeller Center in New York, and at The Pennsylvania Water Color Show. Charles Thwaites received numerous prizes and awards for his works, including the \$100 prize and medal in the 1939 Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors Show.⁵ His submission for the Chilton, Wisconsin, Post Office, "Threshing Barley," was a winning design in the Forty-Eight States Competition held in 1939. Thwaites died in 1959.

In conclusion, Charles Thwaites' mural "Making Cheese" is locally significant as a good example of federally funded art in America's post offices. The Plymouth Post Office has had only minor alterations and retains a high degree of integrity. The building and its lobby provide an appropriate setting for the mural.

⁴ Karal Ann Marling, Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post Office Murals in the Great Depression (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982): 173.

⁵ Park, Democratic Vistas, 215.

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Section 9/10 Page 4

Plymouth Post Office, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

The following resources were consulted in addition to those include in the multiple property nomination for post offices in Wisconsin built between 1913 and 1943:

Marling, Karal Ann. Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post Office Murals in the Great Depression. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Park, Marlene and Gerald E. Markowitz. Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.

Plymouth Post Office. Building cornerstone.

“Plymouth to Have Its Own Federal Building Shortly.” Plymouth Review. 7 July 1938.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Reconnaissance files.

Woodson, Leigh Yankey. Wisconsin's New Deal Art. 1980.

Zillier, Carl. History of Sheboygan County, Past and Present. Chicago: 1912.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The property corresponds to the following legal description:
South eight feet of lots 3 and 4 and all of lots 5 and 6, block 9. Original plat, Plymouth, Wisconsin.

Boundary Justification

This boundary encompasses the Plymouth Post Office, parking lot and surrounding yard. This is the limit of the original property holding.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section photos Page 5

Plymouth Post Office, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Photos

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Plymouth Post Office
Plymouth, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin
Photographed by Joseph Jurkiewicz, 1993
Negatives at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

1. General view, East Main Street, Plymouth, Wisconsin.
2. Interior view, lobby.
3. Interior view, mural "Making Cheese."
4. Side elevation, looking northwest.
5. Rear elevation, looking south.
6. Side elevation, looking east.
7. Cornerstone.
8. Front elevation, looking north.