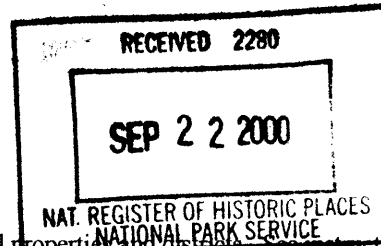


**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**



1257

**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 Neillsville Post Office

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	619 Hewett Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Neillsville	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Clark	code 19 zip code 54456

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.)

Alicia J. Cochran
Signature of commenting official/Title

July 26, 2000
Date

Deputy SHPO - WI
State or Federal agency and bureau

Neillsville Post Office

Clark County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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
 ___ 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 Sandstone

Narrative Description

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

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

1940

Significant Dates

1940

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Louis A. (4)
Melick, Neal A. (5)

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

Neillsville Post Office
Name of Property

Clark 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 15 6/9/0/9/2/0 4/9/3/6/7/9/0
 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 & Joseph G. Jurkiewicz, AIA		
organization	HNTB	date	12-29-93
street & number	11270 West park Place	telephone	414-359-2300
city or town	Milwaukee	state	Wisconsin
		zip code	53224

Neillsville Post Office
Name of Property

Clark 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 Neillsville Post Office
Clark County, Wisconsin

Narrative Description:

The 1937 Neillsville Post Office is a one-story, tan brick building with sandstone trim built in the minimalist institutional style of the 1930s. The building sits on a brick foundation and has a flat roof. The cornerstone notes: "Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, James A. Farley, Postmaster General, Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect, Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer, 1937."

The post office is located at the northeast corner of Sixth and Hewett streets in the business district of Neillsville, Wisconsin. Along Hewett Street, the principal business street of the city, there are one and two-story commercial buildings both north and south of the site. Both the building and the site are well maintained.

The front elevation is organized symmetrically about the entrance doors. Granite stairs with pole lamps on either side lead to the entrance. The doors are modern aluminum replacements. Above the doors is a large transom window. On either side of the entrance are two eight-over-eight double hung windows. The storms over the transom and the side windows are all modern replacements with an aluminum finish. The entrance and the windows of the front façade are recessed from the main plane of the elevation by the thickness of two bricks. A sandstone course runs around the building at the top of the window. A second sandstone band serves as a cornice. The side and rear elevations are treated in a similar manner to the front. However, the windows do not sit in stepped back recessions.

The Neillsville Post Office is rectangular in plan with a loading dock projection at the rear of the building. The public entrance and lobby are located at the front of the building on Hewett Street. The interior lobby retains many of its original features. These include plaster walls and ceiling, tile floor and wainscot, and the original wood vestibule.

Located above the door to the postmaster's office is a large mural. John Van Koert painted "The Choosing of the County Seat" in 1940.¹ The left side of the mural depicts citizens of Neillsville gathered to vote. Two men sit at a table, while another casts his ballot. A group of people at the center looks out over the landscape where a horse drawn wagon loaded with barrels of whiskey and a second group of people is visible. The landscape in the background is a generalized view. Van Koert designed the mural around the top of the postmaster's door. The figures in the foreground stand on a planked boardwalk supported by posts. The frame of the door below forms a visual support for the planking.

The post office and the mural are in good condition.

¹ Leigh Yankey Woodson, Wisconsin's New Deal Art (1980).

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 2 Neillsville Post Office
Clark County, Wisconsin

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Neillsville Post Office is an intact example of a small federal post office evaluated in the context of the multiple property nomination "United States Post Office Construction from 1913 to 1943, State of Wisconsin - Milwaukee District." The post office is eligible for listing under Criterion C- Art for the WPA-era mural located in its lobby.

Historic Context

The community of Neillsville began when James O'Neill, a lumberman and sawmill operator, built a log home on the banks of what became known as O'Neill Creek. The following year O'Neill and his brothers moved their sawmill from Black River Falls to O'Neill Creek. Other industries followed. Neillsville was incorporated as a Village in 1875 and chartered as a city in 1882.

James O'Neill was elected to the first Wisconsin legislature and held various other public offices. After the Civil War, he built a three-story hotel, the O'Neill House, on the present post office site. The hotel was sold and rebuilt in the 1870s and burned down in 1912. The site stood vacant until construction on the post office began in 1936.

This building is the first federally owned post office in Neillsville, Wisconsin. Postal service in Neillsville dates from 1855. Samuel C. Boardman was the first postmaster.² Prior to its construction, postal services were conducted in various location determined by the local postmaster. From 1890 until the current building's completion in 1938, the post office was housed in a building just north of the present site.

The Neillsville Post office was one of a series constructed in Wisconsin by the federal Public Works Administration in the 1930s. The history of post office construction during this period is discussed in the multiple property nomination. The context for public art in post offices of this era is also discussed in the multiple property nomination.

The majority of the post offices built during this period came from a set of standardized plans, with slight variations in the treatment of the facade. The Neillsville Post Office shares its design with the post offices in Stoughton and Hartford, both of the Milwaukee postal district.

Significance

The Neillsville Post Office is considered eligible for listing by meeting the registration requirements for a federally owned post office as specified in the multiple property nomination for post office construction in Wisconsin from 1913 to 1943. The post office is eligible under Criterion C- Art for the mural by John Van

² Franklyn Curtis-Wedge, History of Clark County (Chicago: 1918).

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3 Neillsville Post Office
Clark County, Wisconsin

Koert in its lobby. The mural is an example of the Depression-era art designed under the auspices of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Projects Administration (WPA). This mural represents one of the themes for post office murals promoted by the Section of Fine Arts, that is the theme of local history.

Van Koert described this mural as being mostly concerned with "the orderly process of voting" and as a celebration of Midwestern democracy.³ The artist wrote of his work:

The solid citizen seated at the table represents the proprietor of the township, Mr. O'Neill, descendents of whom still figure importantly in the activities of Neillsville. The wagon I have introduced in order to emphasize that the whiskey was a clever expedient, that it had been wheeled up in inspiration, and that it was not unusual in county business. Through the grouping in the figures and with their gestures I have tried to erect a psychological barrier between the solid people of Neillsville and their less worthy neighbors across the river. (The settlement on that bank failed to develop into a town, hence no civic pride need be offended.) For pictorial purposes I have condensed the territory on which the episode took place. The hills in the background are typical of those surrounding the town, impersonal enough that it would be difficult to establish the exact location of the buildings used in the design. These very early buildings have completely disappeared.⁴

The Centennial Edition of the Clark County Press (July 1, 1982) gives a more complete account of the events pictured in the mural:

The picture depicts election day in November 1854 in Neillsville, a day in which a vote was taken to determine whether the county seat of Clark County would be at O'Neill's Mills (the original name of Neillsville) or at Weston Rapids, three miles north on Black River.

Two polling places were set up. One was at O'Neill's mills, the other at Parker's tavern, seven miles south of the city.

According to legend, James O'Neill and some of his cohorts devised a scheme to keep the rough-and-ready loggers from Weston Rapids from the polls. They brought a barrel of whiskey from LaCrosse, and on the morning of election day, they put it out on the north side of O'Neill Creek and dispensed free whiskey to those who came along.

³ Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984): 94.

⁴ Park, p.94.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4 Neilsville Post Office
Clark County, Wisconsin

The boom across the pond was narrow, and O'Neill and his compatriots knew the loggers well. They couldn't resist free booze, so many of them got too tipsy to negotiate the narrow boom. Thus, despite the fact that the polls appeared to be open to anyone who came along, regardless of their actual place of residence, many Weston Rapids people missed voting. . . .

The mural, as it was painted, erred in that it displays the whiskey barrel on the wrong side of O'Neill Creek.⁵

The artist of the mural, John Van Koert, was born July 30, 1912, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He studied at the University of Wisconsin and obtained a M.A. at Columbia University. He also studied abroad in 1936. Van Koert taught in the Milwaukee public Schools and was an instructor in Art Education at the University of Wisconsin. He exhibited at the Midwest Show in Kansas City, Missouri, the Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors Show in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and at the Wisconsin Salon of Art in Madison, Wisconsin. He won the Award for Purchase Prize from the Art Institute of Milwaukee in 1937 and the Oscar Mayer Purchase Award in Madison, Wisconsin. Van Koert also served as Faculty Advisor to the Student Gallery Committee at the Memorial Union at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin.⁶

Both the post office exterior and its lobby have had few alterations. They maintain a largely intact setting for John Van Koert's mural, which was commissioned for the Neillsville Post Office and depicts a generalized view of local history. The mural and the post office retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing on the National Register.

⁵ Clark County Press, 1 July 1982. In "US Postal Service Historic, Architectural and Archaeological Significance Survey - United States Post Office Neillsville," 1983.

⁶ Park, p.94.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9/10 Page 5 Neillsville Post Office
Clark County, Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

The following resources were consulted in addition to those included in the multiple property nomination for post offices in Wisconsin's Milwaukee district built between 1913 and 1943:

Clark County Press. 1 July 1982.

Curtiss-Wedge, Franklyn. History of Clark County, Wisconsin. Chicago: 1918.

Neillsville Post Office. Building cornerstone.

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

"US Postal Service Historic, Architectural and Archaeological Significance Survey – United States Post Office Neillsville," 1983.

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

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundary corresponds to the following legal description:
Lots 391 and 391 ½ C.S. Stockwell's plat, 1821, City of Neillsville.

Boundary Justification

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

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section photos Page 6

Neillsville Post Office
Clark County, Wisconsin

Photographs

The following information is the same for all enclosed photographs:

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

1. Interior view, lobby.
2. Interior view, mural.
3. Back corner of building, looking southwest.
4. Rear elevation, looking west.
5. Side elevation, looking north.
6. Front elevation, looking east.
7. General street view, looking south.