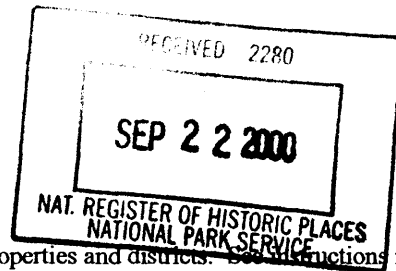


**United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service**

1263



**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 Prairie du Chien Post Office  
other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

street & number	120 South Beaumont Road	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Prairie du Chien	N/A	vicinity
state	Wisconsin	code	WI
county	Crawford	code	023
zip code	53821		

**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 Z. Goulet*  
Signature of commenting official/Title

*July 26, 2000*  
Date

*Deputy SHPO - WI*  
State or Federal agency and bureau

Prairie du Chien Post Office

Crawford 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

*Edson H. Beall*

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 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 Granite

walls Brick

roof

other Limestone

**Narrative Description**

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

Prairie du Chien Post Office  
Name of Property

Crawford 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**

1938

**Significant Dates**

1938

**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.)

Prairie du Chien Post Office  
Name of Property

Crawford 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    6/5/1/0/0/0    4/7/6/7/9/2/0  
    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

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

Prairie du Chien Post Office  
Name of Property

Crawford 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.)

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

Prairie du Chien Post Office, Crawford County, Wisconsin

---

**Narrative Description**

The Prairie du Chien Post Office is a one-story, tan brick building with limestone trim. The building has a flat roof and sits on a granite foundation. The plan is T-shaped with the public entrance and lobby on the South Beaumont Road façade. Built in 1936, the Prairie du Chien Post Office is of the minimalist modern style favored for public and institutional buildings in the 1930s. 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, 1936." The post office is located in the downtown business/commercial district of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

The front façade is organized in five bays with a pair of doors at the center. Above the doors is a one light transom panel. The transom, doors, and all of the windows are dark bronze aluminum replacements. All of the openings are set in recessed panels stepped back two brick courses. The three central bays have limestone relief panels above the door, the transom and the windows. From left to right they depict a train, a plane, and a boat. Above the windows of the two outer bays are simple, limestone lintels. Below each window is a limestone sill and panel. A wide flight of stairs leads to the landing by the front doors. The entry stairs are granite with metal railings at the sides and center. The pole lamps on the sides are in poor condition.

Stone bands frame the façade. A limestone water table provides a base for the window panels. The water table rests on an ashlar foundation. Above the central decorative panels is a limestone belt course. Above the belt course is an area of brick with raised metal letters stating: "United State Post Office" and "Prairie du Chien Wisconsin."

The side elevations continue the theme set on the facade. On the main block of the building, one side has three windows the other four. These feature stone lintels above and panels below. They are also set back two courses as in the front. The rear ell is of two stories, but of the same height as the main block. The beltcourse from the block wraps around the extension tying it to the main building. Attached to the rear of the building is a covered truck loading dock.

The interior lobby has a terrazzo floor and a marble wainscot. The walls and ceiling are of plaster. The wood vestibule differs somewhat from those in other post offices of the period. The base of the Prairie du Chien example is marble with the wood and glass portion above. The lighting fixtures are modern replacements.

Above the door to the postmaster's office is a plaster relief. Titled "Discovery of Northern Waters of the Mississippi" it was completed in 1938 by Jefferson E. Greer.<sup>1</sup> The panel contains three figures. In the

---

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Woodson Yankey, Wisconsin's New Deal Art (1980).

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7      Page 2      Prairie du Chien Post Office, Crawford County, Wisconsin

center are a missionary holding a crucifix and a Native American. Kneeling on the left of the missionary is an explorer in buckskin garb. Balancing him on the right is a canoe.

The building and the relief panel are in good condition.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 3 Prairie du Chien Post Office, Crawford County, Wisconsin

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Prairie du Chien Post Office is an intact example of a small, Federal post office 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 being nominated under Criterion C – Art for the relief panel found in its lobby.

The Prairie du Chien Post Office is one of four Wisconsin post offices surveyed that are all of a similar style. However, the Prairie du Chien example is a bit simpler in execution. Even the three transportation relief panels over the front doors and central windows are flatter and have less detail than the panels found at the similar Kewaunee Post Office.

**Historic Context**

This building is the first federally owned post office in Prairie du Chien. Prior to its construction, postal services were conducted in various locations selected by the local postmaster. Postal service in Prairie du Chien dates from 1823 when Judge James Duane Doty requested he be named Postmaster.<sup>2</sup>

The Prairie du Chien Post Office is an example of a post office constructed in Wisconsin by the federal Public Works Administration in the 1930s. The history of post office construction in Wisconsin during this period is detailed in the multiple property nomination. The post office is significant for the relief sculpture in its lobby. The historic context for public art in the post offices of this era is also featured in the multiple property nomination.

**Significance**

The Prairie du Chien Post Office is considered eligible for listing in the NRHP by meeting the registration requirements for a federally owned post office as specified in the multiple property nomination for post office construction in Wisconsin between 1913 and 1943.

The Prairie du Chien Post Office is eligible under Criterion C – Art for the plaster relief sculpture found in its lobby. The work, by artist Jefferson Greer, is a local example of depression-era art designed under the auspices of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Projects Administration (WPA). The 1938 relief, "Discovery of the Northern Waters of the Mississippi" deals with local history – a common subject in public works and post office art. This example depicts the exploration of the upper Mississippi River. The figures in the relief must represent Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joilliet, and their guide, who sighted the Mississippi at its confluence with the Wisconsin River on 17 June 1673. This confluence occurs just south of the present day city of Prairie du Chien.

---

<sup>2</sup> History of Crawford and Richland Counties, Wisconsin (Springfield, IL: 1884), 314.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 4 Prairie du Chien Post Office, Crawford County, Wisconsin

Jefferson Greer was born in Chicago in 1905. He studied at the University of Wisconsin, at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, and at the Layton Institute in Milwaukee. In 1925, he was living on a ranch in Texas. While there, he assisted on murals at the El Paso School of Mines. In 1934 Greer assisted Gutzon Borglum at Mount Rushmore, and was responsible for the profile of Theodore Roosevelt. In Milwaukee, he made sculpture murals for the Milwaukee Journal Building. The relief at Prairie du Chien is the only known post office commission by Jefferson Greer. It is also the only example of a plaster relief work in a Wisconsin post office, and one of three works that is not painted.

In conclusion, the Prairie du Chien Post Office is locally significant for an intact relief sculpture located in a largely unaltered PWA project. Furthermore, the mural is an example of federally funded art of the period. The post office lobby retains its original woodwork, flooring, wainscot, and vestibule, providing an historic setting for the work "Discovery of the Northern Waters of the Mississippi" by Jefferson Greer.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9, 10 Page 5 Prairie du Chien Post Office, Crawford County, Wisconsin

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

The following resources were consulted in addition to those included in the multiple property nomination:

America Builds: The Record of the PWA, Public Works Administration. 1939.

Falk, Peter Hastings (Ed.) Who Was Who in American Art. Sound View Press, 1985.

History of Crawford and Richland Counties. Springfield, IL: 1984.

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

Prairie du Chien Post Office. Building cornerstone.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Reconnaissance files.

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

Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.) Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

**10. Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property corresponds to the following legal description: Lots 3, 4 and 5, block 90, Union Plat.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses the Prairie du Chien 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      Prairie du Chien Post Office, Crawford County, Wisconsin

**Photos**

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

Prairie du Chien Post Office  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin  
Photographed by Joseph Jurkiewicz, 1993  
Negatives at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

1. Interior view, detail of post office boxes.
2. Interior view, lobby.
3. Interior view, relief "Discovery of the Northern Waters of Mississippi."
4. Side elevation, looking north.
5. Rear elevation, looking west.
6. Detail, building cornerstone.
7. Side elevation, looking south.
8. General view, looking south.
9. Front elevation, looking east.