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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 08 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fredonia United States Post Office

other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 428 Madison Street

not for publication

city, town Fredonia

vicinity

state Kansas

code KS

county Wilson

code

zip code 66736

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Kansas Post Offices that contain Treasury  
Department Section Artwork, 1936-1942

Number of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Ramon Pomeroy  
Signature of certifying official

State Historic Preservation Officer

February 10, 1989  
Date

Kansas State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Entered in the  
National Register

Alvina Byers

10/17/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Government: Post Office

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Government: Post Office

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

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20th Century Revival: Classical  
Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

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foundation Brick  
walls Brick

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roof Wood: Shingle

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other Stone: limestone  
Tar; gravel

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

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The Fredonia United States Post Office (c. 1935-1936) is located at 428 Madison Street in Fredonia, Wilson County, Kansas (pop. 3,047). The one story, gable and flat roofed red brick building has a northern facade orientation. The building measures approximately sixty-five feet from east to west and fifty-five feet from north to south. The facade of the building is comprised of a center, three bay gable roofed unit that is flanked by two, one bay flat roofed units. A double door pierces the center of the gable roofed unit. A classical limestone surround with a broken swan's neck pediment accentuates the door. Steps lead up to the doorway. The doorway is located in a recessed brick niche, whose arch is highlighted by a keystone. Identical arched recessions with keystones and impost blocks mark the two window bays that flank the door. Multi-paned, 1/1 double hung windows surmounted by flared lintels with limestone keystones and brick and limestone voussoirs and underscored by plain brick sills fenestrate the gable unit. A wooden classical entablature graces the gable unit's facade. The east and west gable ends are decorated by a fanlight. One bay, flat roofed units project from the east and west elevations. A multi-paned, 1/1 double hung window pierces each unit on the facade elevation. Five windows of similar description fenestrate the east and west elevations of these units. A limestone water table connects the entire building, a limestone frieze accentuates the upper walls of the flat roofed bays. A loading dock projects from the rear of the building. This post office is an example of the smaller class C or D standardized design type that was repeated throughout the country during the 1930s.

The sculpture, "Delivery of Mail to the Farm" was installed on the west wall of the post office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two framed bulletin boards that flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller class C and D type post offices. "Delivery of Mail to the Farm" is a grouping of ten glazed terra cotta reliefs. The reliefs are bolted to the wall and arranged in three major groupings. As it is arranged it measures twelve feet square. "Delivery of Mail to the Farm" was installed on April 28, 1939. In 1973 it was assessed in good condition and remains as such.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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The relief of the mail carrier is placed on the center of the wall. The mail carrier is driving away in a convertible car, he wears a hat. To the right of the car stands a woman in a dress reading a letter. A dog huddles at her feet and a boy wearing overalls and carrying a book trudges up behind her. On the left side of the wall a young girl and boy stand underneath the mail box reading a letter. Two pigs and three chickens stand between the mail box and the car, indicating a farmyard. The red flag is up on the mail box, more for visual appeal than logic since the mail has just been delivered. Although there are no landscape references, one imagines that the figures are outside. Thomas uses black, rust, and blue as the predominant colors and tan, white, and maroon as the secondary colors. The style employed is primitive and naive.

The sculpture is obscured by hanging fluorescent lights. These lights replaced the original hanging chandeliers which were also obtrusive but more visually appealing. The lobby retains its marble wainscoting and classical cornice mouldings, as the original surrounds for the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards. These surrounds are painted.

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National Park Service**

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The images of rural free delivery are obvious and overwhelming in "Delivery of Mail to the Farm". Thomas' piece is beautiful in its simplicity and arrangement. Until rural free delivery, farmers were isolated from current news and events. Rural free delivery began in the late 1890s and by 1926 the last routes had been established. By the time that Thomas cast "Delivery of Mail to the Farm" rural free delivery had become a symbol of rural American farm life. Thomas uses rural free delivery as a symbol, letting a common, everyday occurrence represent the democratic tradition. Her choice provides a very strong and effective image of Section artwork and philosophy.

The extent of community involvement in development and presentation of the subject material is not clear in the Fredonia case. Thomas was awarded the commission as a result of an honorable mention in a Section competition. Thomas received the contract for the sculpture on November 1, 1938 and the work was installed on April 28, 1939. "Delivery of Mail to the Farm" was installed on the west wall of the post office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two framed bulletin boards that flank it. As it is arranged "Delivery of Mail to the Farm" measures approximately twelve square feet. Thomas received \$350 for the commission. She is responsible for the Section commissions at the Leetonia, Ohio; Covington, Virginia; and Webster Springs, West Virginia post offices as well as the limestone sculpture for the Greenbelt community in Maryland. The Fredonia post Office is an example of one of the many smaller class C or D type post offices that received Section artwork in Kansas.

Please see the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources cover nomination for additional information.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art  
Politics/Government  
Social history  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1939  
1939  
1939

Significant Dates

1939  
1939  
1939

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Thomas, Lenore: Artist  
Simon, Louis: Supervising Architect  
Barnes, James I.: Contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Fredonia United States Post Office (c. 1935-1936) is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources nomination at the local and state levels of significance under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Treasury Department's Section program and for the artistic significance of the sculpture that it contains. The sculpture, "Delivery of Mail to the Farm", was made by Accokek, Maryland artist Lenore Thomas (1909-?) in 1939.

"Delivery of Mail to the Farm" is a grouping of ten glazed terra cotta reliefs. The reliefs are bolted to the wall and arranged in three major groupings. Although there are no landscape references, one imagines that the figures are outside. The relief of the mail carrier is placed on the center of the wall. The mail carrier is driving away in a convertible car, he wears a hat. To the right of the car stands a woman in a dress reading a letter. A dog huddles at her feet and a boy wearing overalls and carrying a book trudges up behind her. On the left side of the wall a young boy and girl stand underneath the mail box reading a letter. Two pigs and three chickens stand between the mail box and the car, indicating a farmyard. The red flag is up on the mail box, more for visual appeal than logic, since the mail has just been delivered.

Thomas uses black, rust, and blue as the predominant colors; tan, white, and maroon are secondary colors. Thomas employs a naive and primitive style for the reliefs that is very appealing. The faces of the people are simple and innocent. The two small children underneath the mail box look like the chubby Campbell soup kids of the 1930s. Thomas gets mileage out of the chickens and the pigs by repeating the casts, varying the placement of the chickens to achieve variety and reversing the black and rust color combination on the pigs to achieve variety. Even though the figures are all removeable, the total grouping and placement makes the art and tells the story of rural free delivery.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Falk, Peter Hastings. Who Was Who in American Art. (Madison, CT.: Soundview Press, 1985).

Fuller, Wayne E. RFD - The Changing Face of Rural America. (Bloomington, IN.: University Press, 1964).

General Services Administration. Treasury Department's Section Records. Fredonia, Kansas.

Svedlaw, Dr. Anthony V. (Mulvane Gallery, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas). Personal interview with Martha Hagedorn-Krass, January 8, 1988.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than 1 acre.

UTM References

A 1 5 2 4 9 8 2 5 4 1 5 7 7 6 0  
 Zone Easting Northing

C                                             

B                                               
 Zone Easting Northing

D                                             

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on the E 100' Lots 5-6, Block 19, Fredonia, Kansas. The property is bounded to the north by Madison, to the east by N. 5th, and to the south and west by adjacent property lines.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian  
 organization Kansas State Historical Society date February 10, 1989  
 street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264  
 city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612