

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

SEP 08 1989

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 Lindsborg United States Post Office

other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 125 E. Lincoln Street

not for publication

city, town Lindsborg

vicinity

state Kansas code KS county McPherson code 113 zip code 67456

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 Power State Historic Preservation Officer February 27, 1989
Signature of certifying official 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:)

Alana Byrne **Entered in the National Register** 10/17/89

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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)20th Century Revival: Classical
Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Other: tar and gravel

other Limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lindsborg United States Post Office (c. 1936) is located at 125 E. Lincoln in Lindsborg, McPherson County, Kansas (pop. 3,155). The one story, flat roofed, red brick building has a southern facade orientation. The building measures approximately sixty-eight feet from east to west and fifty-five feet from north to south. A transomed double door with a full blown classical surround pierces the facade's most eastern bay. Steps lead up to the doorway. Four large, multi-paned windows fenestrate the facade wall. A similar fenestration is employed on the lesser bays. A narrow limestone course accents the upper wall of the building, bearing the inscription "United States Post Office Lindsborg, Kansas" on the facade elevation. 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 mural, "Smoky River", was installed on the west wall of the lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller class C and D post offices. "Smoky River" is an oil on canvas mural typical of the Smoky Valley near Lindsborg. The landscape depicts the Smoky River with its beautiful trees and bare clay banks. Sandzen placed a farm on the riverbank in the middle of the canvas and another farm just beyond the next rise. Gnarled, Van Gogheseque cottonwoods frame the riverbank, arching toward the water. High lavender clay banks slope down to the river. Verdant green fields stretch out beyond to meet the rolling, misty lavender hills at the horizon. Billowy white clouds stretch across the blue sky.

The mural was installed on February 24, 1938. It measured 12'11½" by 5'7" before installation and is surmounted by a cornice moulding. Sandzen painted the mural on Belgian linen and mixed his colors with pure linseed oil and a few drops of turpentine. Sandzen applied a tempera varnish to the completed surface. It is not clear whether the mural is tacked to thin wide stretchers which are attached to the wall or if the mural is glued directly onto the wall. In 1973 the mural's condition was assessed as good and it remains as such.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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A plaster and tile vestibule projects into the southeastern corner of the lobby and does not obstruct any view of the mural. While the projecting lobby vestibule is a traditional design feature found in most of the post offices included in this nomination, the location and materials of the Lindsborg vestibule are unusual. The floors and wainscoting retain their original tiles. The postmaster's door and the bulletin boards retain their varnished wood surrounds. The original hanging light fixtures have been replaced with almost flush mounted fluorescent lights.

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a group of artists who founded the Prairie Print Makers, a group that espoused the theory of accessibility of art for the common man. Although Sandzen gained national fame in the 1920s, and was elected as an associate member of the Taos Society of Artists, he continued to live in Lindsborg, where he had taught language and art at Bethany College since his immigration from Sweden in 1894.

The extent of the community involvement in the development of the subject material and presentation of the mural is not clear in the Lindsborg case. Sandzen received the commission as a result of previous submissions to the Section. Sandzen wrote Edward Rowan of the Section in Fall, 1937 that, "It will be a very great satisfaction to do it (the mural) on a large surface which will bring out the decorative design more plainly." Of his technique Sandzen wrote in the technical questionnaire required by the Section that, "I paint very simply and directly without underpaint." Clearly Sandzen was a well known artist in his own time, as a Kansas City Times article on the installation of the mural refers to the "vivid colors characteristic of Sandzen's work (that) dominate the mural."

Sandzen received the contract for the mural on November 8, 1937 and the mural was installed on February 24, 1938. "Smoky River" was installed on the west wall of the lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. It measured 12'11½" by 5'7" before installation and is surmounted by a cornice moulding. Sandzen received \$390 for the commission. The Lindsborg 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.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 3

Samuels, Peggy and Harold. The Illustrated Biographical Encyclopedia of Artists of the American West. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

Spencer, Howard DaLee. Birger Sandzen: A Retrospective. (Wichita: Wichita Art Museum, 1985).

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

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

1938
1938
1938

Significant Dates

1938
1938
1938

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sandzen, Birger: Artist
Simon, Louis: Supervising Architect

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

The Lindsborg United States Post Office (c. 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 mural that it contains. The mural, "Smoky River", was painted by Lindsborg, Kansas artist Birger Sandzen (1871-1954) in 1938.

"Smoky River" is an oil on canvas mural typical of the Smoky Valley near Lindsborg. The landscape depicts the Smoky River with its beautiful trees and bare clay banks. Sandzen placed a farm on the riverbank in the middle of the canvas and another farm just beyond on the next rise. Gnarled, Van Gogh-like cottonwoods frame the riverbank, arching toward the water. High lavender clay banks slope down to the river. Verdant green fields stretch out beyond to meet the rolling, misty lavender hills at the horizon. Billowy white clouds stretch across the blue sky.

Sandzen has taken a familiar regional scene from central Kansas, making the ordinary extraordinary by his attention to light and color. The pastel colors are bright and naturalistic. "Smoky River" is typical of Sandzen's landscapes of the 1930s and 1940s. Sandzen is classified as a post impressionist landscape artist who painted in a type reminiscent of Van Gogh. Similar murals hang in the Belleville and Halstead post offices. "Smoky River" is representative of the illustrative regional realism funded under the Section program.

Sandzen is regarded as one of the most prominent Kansas landscape artists, deriving his national reputation mainly from his lithographs, woodcuts, linocuts, and dry points. Sandzen found guidance and teachings in nature, and studied the Kansas landscapes around him. He believed in the accessibility of art for the general public, and sold many of his own pieces to raise money for the purchase of works by other artists. Sandzen was one of

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

General Services Administration. Treasury Department Section Records - Kansas Post Offices. Lindsborg, Kansas.

Kansas City Times, 12 February 1938.

Lindsborg News Record, 10 February 1938.

National Archives. Public Building Services (RG 121), Technical Questionnaires (Series 134) and Correspondence with Artists (Series 126).

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

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre.

UTM References

A

1	4
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6	1	6	3	8	0
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4	2	7	0	1	6	5
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on the E 100' Lot 12 and the E 100' lot 14 in Lindsborg, Kansas. The property is bounded to the south by Lincoln, to the east by Second, to the west by an alley, and to the north 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 date February 27, 1989
organization Kansas State Historical Society telephone 913-296-5264
street & number 120 W. 10th city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612