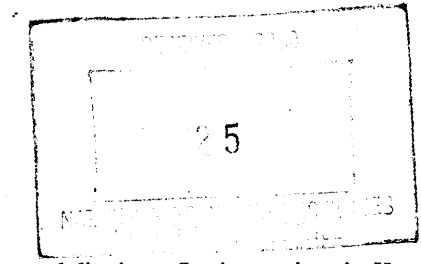


174



**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 West Allis Post Office  
other names/site number United States Post Office, Milwaukee, West Allis Branch

**2. Location**

street & number	7440 West Greenfield Avenue	N/A	not for publication
city or town	West Allis	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Milwaukee	code 79 zip code 53214

**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 John Gorman, FPO Date 1-22-01

State or Federal agency and bureau USPS

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

Signature of commenting official/Title Alicia L. Gault Date October 16, 2000

State or Federal agency and bureau

West Allis Post Office

Milwaukee 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. Brad*

*2/23/01*

*[Signature]*

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

1                      0 objects

   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 Granite

walls Brick

roof Slate

other Limestone

**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)

Architecture

Art

**Period of Significance**

1939-1943

**Significant Dates**

1939

1943

**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.)

West Allis Post Office  
Name of Property

Milwaukee 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

Acreege of Property Less Than One Acre

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

1	16	4/1/8/0/7/0	4/7/6/2/9/6/0	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		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

West Allis Post Office  
Name of Property

Milwaukee 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            West Allis Post Office  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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**Narrative Description**

The West Allis Post Office, built 1939-1940, is a large, brick building located in the central business district of West Allis, Wisconsin. The building consists of a taller central portion with a hipped, slate roof and slightly lower wings with flat roofs. The building is an example of the Stripped Classical style popular in the late 1930s. The building combines classical massing and symmetry with Moderne decorative elements. The building cornerstone notes: "James A. Farley, Postmaster General, John M. Carmody, Federal Works Administrator, Englebert Reynolds, Commissioner of Public Buildings, Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect, Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer, 1939."

The post office is constructed of brown brick laid in American bond on a granite base. The front elevation is organized symmetrically about the entrance. A metal fascia extends around the perimeter of the hipped roof. It contains raised metal letters with the inscription "United States Post Office." The central, hipped-roof portion of the building contains five elongated bays. In the center is the door with a large transom panel above. Decorative, metal grille work covers the transom. Above the transom is a decorative panel studded with stars with a sculpted eagle at its center. Leading to the doors is a shallow flight of steps. On either side of the granite stairs are sandstone balusters. Cylindrical lighting fixtures of cast aluminum flank the entry and stairs. On either side of the doors are two windows. The tall windows are triple hung and have limestone panels below. The door and window openings are framed in limestone. Corresponding to the outer two bays of the front portion is a low parapet wall that is located on the same plane as the main landing of the central stairs. A decorative railing composed of supporting vertical members and three sets of parallel horizontal bars tops the parapet. The top bar is capped by cone shaped protrusions.

The side wings have one window each on the front façade. These are double-hung windows set in simple, wooden surrounds. The side elevations follow the window pattern of the end pavilions. A loading dock is in the wing at the back of the building.

The building's interior walls are faced with marble wainscot to half their height and are plaster above. Located on the upper portions of the walls are openings covered with decorative grilles composed of a rectilinear grid along the wall surface with a semicircular grill intersecting from behind. Marble pilasters are located at each corner. A plaster, dentilled molding encircles the lobby ceiling. Birch woodwork and doors are used throughout the building. The lobby floor is laid in beige terrazzo tiles with a red terrazzo border and a pink granite baseboard. The interior retains its original notice cases with cutout letters, door surrounds and writing tables.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 701 Page 2 West Allis Post Office  
West Allis, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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The lobby has had some alterations. All but one of the original service windows was replaced in 1970. A metal and glass partition has been added to separate the lock box area at the east end of the lobby from the service area at the west.

Also in the lobby are two murals by artist Frances Foy. They are titled "Wisconsin Wild Flowers - Spring" and "Wisconsin Wild Flowers - Autumn." The murals were painted in 1943. The murals depict forest scenes. The view is idealized; however, the depictions of people and dress of the time and of Wisconsin wild flowers are accurate. The murals are painted in rich earth tones, predominantly green and brown, and are located at each end of the lobby. The two murals are similar in composition. A large tree trunk anchors the center of each mural. The bases are covered with an abundance of wild flowers. Figures are arranged singly and in pairs throughout the mural.

The building and murals are in good condition. The alterations of the postal lobby do not compromise the architectural integrity of the building.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1 West Allis Post Office  
West Allis, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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**Statement of Significance**

The West Allis Post Office is an intact example of a 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 West Allis Post Office, built 1939-1940, is nominated under Criterion C for Art for the two murals by artist Frances Foy located in the lobby. It is also nominated under Criterion C for Architecture as a fine, local example of the Stripped Classical style popular in the design of public buildings in the 1930s.

**Historic Context**

With the construction of the new building, the West Allis Post Office moved to an increasingly important commercial node, which began to develop along West Greenfield Avenue after 1910. The new building was constructed to serve the growing population of West Allis. While in 1910 the population was 6,645, by the time of the building's completion in 1940, the population had grown to 36,360. Prior to the construction of this building, the West Allis post office facility was located at South 70th Street. In 1940 the VFW bought the former building for use as a clubhouse.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the new post office on 5 September 1939 was unusually large. It was scheduled to coincide with the golden jubilee celebration of the National Association of Letter Carriers being held in Milwaukee. As a result, a number of high-ranking postal officials were on-hand for the celebration. The Weitz Company, Inc., of Des Moines, Iowa, won the contract for the building. The new post office opened in June 1940. In 1950, the West Allis Post Office became a branch of the Milwaukee Post Office. It now functions as a branch distribution point for the greater Milwaukee area.

When it was completed, the West Allis Post Office represented a good and costly example of the "Stripped Classical" favored by federal designers. The building cost \$200,000. Its form and style were not repeated elsewhere in the larger cities of the state.

Frances Foy painted the two murals depicting Wisconsin wildflowers located in the post office lobby in 1943. The historic context for public art in the post offices of this period is also included in the multiple property nomination.

**Significance**

The West Allis 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.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8      Page 2      West Allis Post Office  
West Allis, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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The post office is eligible under Criterion C – Art for the two murals found in the lobby. Painted by Frances Foy, the works are good examples of Depression-era art designed under the auspices of the Section of Fine Arts. The program officially concluded on June 30, 1943, marking these murals as some of the final works undertaken by artists employed by the Section.

Frances Foy was a Chicago artist recognized for her dreamlike fantasies painted in industrial communities such as this example in West Allis and another set found in East Alton, Illinois. Foy also painted murals in the Chestnut Street Postal Station in Chicago and the post offices in Gibson City and East Alton, Illinois, and in Dunkirk, Indiana.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary publications noted that Foy's work was "characterized by a delightful sincere femininity."<sup>2</sup> In this respect, her work differs from the typical public mural that focused on the grand and massive. However, in keeping with public art commissions for post office murals this one has a regional identity expressed in the representation of Wisconsin wild flowers.

The West Allis Post Office is also eligible under Criterion C- Architecture as a fine example of the Stripped Classical style. The building is designed with the strict symmetry and balance of classical vocabulary. The main block is capped with a continuous frieze. The Stripped Classical style reflects struggle between historicism and modernism that reigned between the world wars. The style was favored for governmental building because it combined these features. The building's design would be both progressive and maintain traces of the classical styles historically associated with government buildings. While the West Allis Post Office was undoubtedly constructed with brick facing as a cost saving measure, the building has fine decorative details. These are seen on the exterior on the railings, light fixtures, grille work over the central window, and the eagle panel above this window. On the interior, the lobby retains its original display cases and door surrounds, as well as wall mounted writing tables.

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<sup>1</sup> Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984): 169, 171, 207-209.

<sup>2</sup> Exhibition of Mural Designs for Federal Buildings (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada: 1940): 12.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8      Page 3      West Allis Post Office  
West Allis, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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**Conclusion**

The West Allis Post Office is significant for the two murals, "Wisconsin Wild Flowers - Spring" and "Wisconsin Wild Flowers - Autumn," by Frances Foy located in its lobby. The murals are also examples of public murals commissioned from women artists. Of the 850 artists working for the Section of Fine Arts, about 150 were women.<sup>3</sup> Although not always the case, many of the women tended to paint in a more detailed and delicate style. The murals in the West Allis Post Offices also represent some of the last works commissioned by the Section of Fine Arts, whose program concluded in 1943, marking an end of a nine year era of post office enhancement. The post office is also a locally significant example of the Stripped Classical style favored for public buildings during this period. The building and its lobby retain a high degree of architectural integrity and retain many of their decorative features, including the decorative grillework and exterior lanterns. The building provides a period setting for Foy's murals.

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<sup>3</sup> Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, "New Deal for Public Art," in Critical Issues in Public Art (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 136.



Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section photo Page 1 West Allis Post Office  
West Allis, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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**PHOTOS**

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

West Allis Post Office  
West Allis, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Photographed by Joseph Jurkiewicz, 1993.  
Negatives at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

1. Entrance detail, facing north.
2. Carved eagle over front door.
3. Cornerstone.
4. Side and rear elevations, looking southwest.
5. Street view, looking east.
6. Rear elevation, looking south.
7. Side elevation, looking east.
8. Front elevation, looking north.

The following photographs were taken by Joe DeRose, September 2000

9. Mural "Wisconsin Wild Flowers - Spring"
10. Mural "Wisconsin Wild Flowers - Autumn"
11. Interior detail, lobby
12. Interior detail, lobby