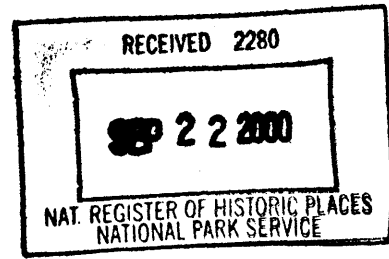


**United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

1259



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** Elkhorn Post Office  
**other names/site number** N/A

**2. Location**

<b>street &amp; number</b>	102 East Walworth Street	N/A	<b>not for publication</b>
<b>city or town</b>	Elkhorn	N/A	<b>vicinity</b>
<b>state</b> Wisconsin	<b>code</b> WI	<b>county</b> Walworth	<b>code</b> 127
			<b>zip code</b> 53121

**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. G...*  
Signature of commenting official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date *July 26, 2000*

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

Elkhorn Post Office

Walworth 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*

*Joe*

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

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 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)

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.)



Elkhorn Post Office  
Name of Property

Walworth 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 Elkhorn Post Office, Walworth County, Wisconsin

---

**Narrative Description**

The Elkhorn Post Office is a one story, brick and limestone building. It is located at the northeast corner of Washington and Walworth streets in the downtown business district of Elkhorn, Wisconsin. Built in 1936, the building is of the stripped modernist style favored by Federal and institutional buildings of the 1930s. At the bottom right of the front elevation is a cornerstone. It reads: "Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, James A. Farly, Postmaster General, Louis A Simon, Supervising Architect, Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer, 1936."

The flat-roofed building is constructed of tan brick with limestone trim. It sits on a brick foundation. The plan of the building is rectangular with the main façade on East Walworth Street. The front elevation is organized symmetrically about the entry. The entry steps leading to the front door are of granite with limestone sides. The central of the three pavilions of the front facade is faced with rectangular limestone panels. Raised vertical detailing runs the full height of the panels. At the center is a pair of doors with a 12 light transom above. Also within the central pavilion, there are two twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows, one on each side of the door. The side pavilions each have a nine-over-nine window set in a shallow recess with limestone trim. The side elevations carry the same window treatment as the side pavilions. The east elevation has six windows, while the west has five. New aluminum storms have been added over all of the original wood, double-hung windows. There is a loading dock at the rear of the building.

The interior lobby retains its original tile floors and wainscot, wood trim, and vestibule. The walls and ceiling are of plaster. Minor alterations to this space include new lighting fixtures and an aluminum window wall to separate the post office boxes from the counter service area.

Over the door to the postmaster's office is a mural painted in 1938 by Tom Rost.<sup>1</sup> Titled "Pioneer Postman," the mural depicts a postman standing beside his horse, taking letters from his hat to distribute to the waiting people. The mural is painted in the realistic fashion and large scale favored for government sponsored murals.

The mural and the post office building are in good condition. The building has had minor alterations, which do not detract from the integrity of the mural in the lobby.

---

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

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8      Page 2      Elkhorn Post Office, Walworth County, Wisconsin

---

**Statement of Significance**

The Elkhorn Post Office is an 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 building is nominated Under Criterion C – Art for the mural found in its lobby.

**Historic Context**

This building is the first federally owned post office in Elkhorn. Prior to its construction in 1936, postal services were conducted in various locations. In 1875 the post office was located on Wisconsin Street; in 1916 it occupied the front of the Sprague Building. After the Sprague Building burned, the post office had temporary quarters in Columbus Hall and then in the John Harris building.<sup>2</sup> The first postmaster was LeGrand Rockwell, serving from 1838 to 1949.

Elkhorn was founded as a speculation in 1837 by Le Grand Rockwell, Hollis Latham and Albert Ogden. The founders thought that its location at the geographic center of Walworth County would assure its designation as the county seat. Elkhorn was designated the county seat by the Wisconsin legislature in 1843. County government remains a principal activity in the community.

The Elkhorn Post Office was one of several constructed in Wisconsin by the federal Public Works Administration in the 1930s. Many of these post offices were built from standard plans with only slight variation in the façade treatment. This post office is identical to the one in Berlin, Wisconsin; however, the Elkhorn example does retain its original windows. The history of post office construction in Wisconsin is detailed in the multiple property nomination. The local newspaper reported that J.P. Cullen and Sons of Janesville were the general contractors for the project, which cost \$70,000, including land acquisition.

The Elkhorn Post Office contains a mural, "Pioneer Postman," in the lobby. Tom Rost painted it in 1938 as part of the WPA artists' program. The historic context for post office art of this era is also discussed in the multiple property nomination.

**Significance**

The Elkhorn Post Office is considered eligible for listing in the NRHP by meeting the registration requirements for federally owned post office as specified in the multiple property nomination for post office construction in Wisconsin from 1913 to 1943. It is eligible under Criterion C, Art, for the mural of high artistic value found in the largely unaltered lobby of the building.

---

<sup>2</sup> Elkhorn History Club, History of Elkhorn, Wisconsin (Elkhorn: Elkhorn Independent, 1977), 18, 20.

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

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

Section 8 Page 3 Elkhorn Post Office, Walworth County, Wisconsin

---

"Pioneer Postman" painted by Tom Rost in 1938 is a good representative example of Depression-era art designed under the auspices of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This painting depicts a view of the history of mail delivery -- horseback mail service in the settlement period. The history of postal delivery was one of the themes promoted by the Section of Fine Arts as appropriate for post office murals. This mural also portrays local history. The first regular mail service was established to Elkhorn in 1838. Mail was relayed from Racine to Spring Prairie and then by horseback to Elkhorn. A man named Harvey made the trip on horseback each week and carried the mail in his hat and pockets. The mural depicts the mail carrier standing beside his horse under one of the burr-oak trees for which Elkhorn is noted.

Tom Rost was born in Richmond, Indiana, on 14 February 1909. He studied painting with Gustave Moeller, Robert von Neumann and Howard Thomas from 1926 to 1930 at the Milwaukee State Teachers' College. He also attended the Layton Art School in Milwaukee. From October 1934 to April 1935, Rost worked as a government artist for the PWAP and was stationed at Camp Honey Creek in West Allis, Wisconsin, to record camp life. Rost's work is represented in the permanent collections of various Milwaukee county and municipal buildings, including the Milwaukee County Courthouse and the public high schools. His work is also represented at the University of Wisconsin and in Iowa public buildings. His other work for the Section of Fine Art includes murals in the post offices in Lancaster, Wisconsin, and Paoli, Indiana.<sup>3</sup>

In July 1937 when Tom Rost began work on the Elkhorn mural, he was on the staff of the Art Department of the Milwaukee Journal, responsible for much of its illustration work and political cartoons. After receiving the commission for the mural at the Elkhorn Post Office, Rost traveled to the town seeking historical information and viewing old photographs. He stated that the assignment was difficult because he did not know the history of the area.<sup>4</sup> The completed mural was hung in the post office in June 1938.

### **Conclusion**

The Elkhorn Post Office is locally significant as a largely unaltered public works project with an intact mural. Artist Tom Rost's 1938 mural "Pioneer Postman" depicts a generalized view of local mail delivery history. The theme of the work and the realistic style in which it was painted are both representative of work produced by the Section of Fine Arts for public buildings throughout the country.

---

<sup>3</sup> Marlene Park and Gerald Markowitz, Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984): 209.

<sup>4</sup> "Mural Painting for Post Office," Elkhorn Independent, 22 July 1937, 1.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 4 Elkhorn Post Office, Walworth County, Wisconsin

---

The building retains an appropriate and historic setting for the mural. Both the exterior and the interior of the Elkhorn Post Office have remained largely intact. The original tile floor with wainscoting, wood vestibule, plastered ceiling and walls, along with wood trim remain in the lobby. Although an aluminum window wall has been added to separate the lobby functions, this detract relatively little from the integrity of the setting.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9/10 Page 5 Elkhorn Post Office, Walworth County, Wisconsin

---

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

The following resources were consulted in addition to those included in the multiple property nomination form for Wisconsin post office constructed between 1913 and 1943:

Elkhorn History Club. History of Elkhorn, Wisconsin. Elkhorn: Elkhorn Independent, 1977.

Elkhorn Post Office. Building cornerstone.

“Mural Painting for Post Office.” Elkhorn Independent. 15 July 1937.

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

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

“Work is Started on New Federal Post Office Here.” Elkhorn Independent. 23 July 1936.

**10. Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property corresponds to the following legal description: Lot 6, Block 21 and W 45'3 1/2" of Lot 7, Block 21. Original Plat. City of Elkhorn.

**Boundary Justification**

This boundary encompasses the Elkhorn 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 Elkhorn Post Office, Walworth County, Wisconsin

---

**Photos**

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

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

1. Interior view, lobby
2. Interior view, mural "Pioneer Postman"
3. Front and side elevations, looking northwest
4. Detail, cornerstone
5. Rear elevation, looking southeast
6. Side elevation, looking east
7. Front elevation, looking north