



1238

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 Park Falls Post Office  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	109 First Street North	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Park Falls	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Price	code 99 zip code 54552

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.)

*Alvina L. Carl*  
Signature of commenting official/Title

*July 26, 2000*  
Date

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

Park Falls Post Office

Price 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*

*for*

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.)

U.S. Post Office Construction from 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)

Classical Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation stone

walls      brick

roof

other      limestone

**Narrative Description**

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

Park Falls Post Office  
Name of Property

Price 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  
Architecture

### Period of Significance

1936-1938

### Significant Dates

1936  
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.)

Park Falls Post Office  
Name of Property

Price 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	6/9/7/8/4/0	5/0/8/9/8/8/0	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 & Joseph G. Jurkiewicz, AIA		
organization	HNTB	date	12-29-93
street & number	11270 West Park Place	telephone	414-359-2300
city or town	Milwaukee	state	Wisconsin
		zip code	53224

Park Falls Post Office  
Name of Property

Price County  
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### 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.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Park Falls, Price County, Wisconsin

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**Narrative Description**

The Park Falls Post Office, constructed in 1936-1937, is a three-story, brick and limestone cube of a simplified Neo-Classical Revival style. The post office building is larger than many included in the survey because it was built to house the headquarters of the nearby Chequamegon National Forest, in addition to the post office functions. The building is located near the business and commercial district of Park Falls, Wisconsin.

The first floor forms the visual base of the building. Unlike the majority of post office designs, the door is almost at the level of the sidewalk. A single step forms the transition from walkway to the landing before the doors. At the center of the ground floor is the door with a transom above. On either side of the door is a 15-over-15, double-hung window. The two windows and the door with transom are framed with limestone surrounds. A single 12-over-12 window is located at the outer portions of the ground floor. These windows have stone lintels. The foundation rises to the level of the bottom of the ground floor windows.

Massive Doric pilasters, rising two stories in height, unify the two upper floors. A stone beltcourse marks the transition between the lower and two upper stories. The pilasters rise from the beltcourse. The central portion of the building is indented allowing the face of the pilasters to be flush with the brick walls of the side bays. Fenestration on these upper floors corresponds to the placement of openings on the ground floor. The upper story windows are eight-over-eight and have stone lintels. Those of the second story have blank panels below them, the third story windows rest on stone sills. The pilasters support a wide limestone fascia and cornice that wrap around the entire building. The words "United States Post Office" are inscribed above the central portion.

A cornerstone located at the bottom left of the façade reads: "Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, James A. Farley, Postmaster General, Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect, Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer, 1936."

The side elevations repeat the window treatment found on their respective floors of the front façade, with four windows per floor. On the south elevation, a door replaces the far-left window. The door is contained in a limestone surround, as is the door of the front façade. The rear elevation contains six windows on the upper two floors. The central four windows are smaller; they are six-over-six. A loading dock with a second story projects from the rear of the building. Because the land slopes downward, the flat roof of the wing corresponds to the beltcourse forming the transition between the first and second stories.

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The building is rectangular in plan with three stories and a basement. The first floor is used for the post office, while the upper two floors originally contained the offices of the US Forest Service. On the first floor, the post office lobby retains many of its original features, including plaster walls and ceiling, terrazzo floor, marble wainscot, wood trim, and the wood and glass vestibule. Above and around the door to the postmaster's office is a mural by James Watrous. It is titled "Lumberjack Fight on the Flambeau River" and is dated 1938. The mural is painted in subdued shades of browns, reds and blues. Unlike most post office murals that fill the wall space above the door, this mural is L-shaped. It rises to the height of the ceiling and extends down the right hand side of the doorframe to the wainscot. The mural depicts a savage fight between two rival groups of loggers. Men are depicted wrestling, kicking, pushing and stomping those of the rival logging crew both on land and on the logs floating in the water.

The mural and the building are in good condition.

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Section 8 Page 3 Park Falls Post Office  
Park Falls, Price County, Wisconsin

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Park Falls Post Office is an example of a post office evaluated in the context of the multiple property nomination "United States Post Office Construction from 1913 to 1943, State of Wisconsin - Milwaukee District." The Park Falls Post Office is the only post office surveyed as part of the multiple property nomination that was specifically constructed for two separate federal functions - the local post office and the headquarters of the nearby Chequamegon National Forest. The Park Falls Post Office is eligible for listing under Criterion C for Art for the mural by James Watrous found in its lobby and for Architecture as a locally significant example of the Neo-Classical style.

**Historic Context**

This building is the first federally owned post office in Park Falls. Prior to its construction, postal services were conducted at various sites selected by the local postmaster.

The Park Falls Post Office is one of a series built in Wisconsin in the 1930s by the federal Public Works Administration. The context for post office construction and mural commissions during the 1930s is detailed in the multiple property nomination. As noted in the multiple property nomination, the federal government standardized the design and construction of postal facilities during this period; however, the Park Falls Post Office is unique in its design among those surveyed for the multiple property nomination.

In addition to its use as a post office, this building was also constructed to house the headquarters of the 850,000-acre Chequamegon National Forest that surrounds Park Falls. During the Depression and into the 1980s, the Chequamegon Forest provided a large number of jobs coordinated from these headquarters.<sup>1</sup> As headquarters for the forest, Park Falls was also the source for supplies and other retail and service needs for the region. This boost to the local economy helped support and sustain the community over the years, especially in the late 1930s. This building remains one of the few ties of Federal Depression-era involvement in the region.

**Significance**

The Park Falls 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. The post office is nominated under Criterion C, Art, for the mural in its lobby. It is also locally significant under Criterion C, Architecture, as an example of the Neo-Classical Revival style.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mary Lobermeier, U.S. Forest Service, Chequamegon National Forest.



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The post office lobby contains a very fine example of public works funded art. Artist James Watrous completed the tempera "Lumberjack Fight on the Flambeau River" in 1938. The mural, like many others commissioned by the Section of Fine Arts, is based on an event drawn from local history. However, unlike the majority, this one is a scene of violent confrontation. A plaque near the mural explains:

In this mural . . . is depicted a river fight said to have taken place in the year 1888 at the junction of the North Fork and South Fork of the Flambeau Rivers. Two rival logging crews fought savagely for days for the privilege of driving logs into the main river ahead of the other. Stories of the fight have been told and retold by the old "river pigs," as the log drivers were then called, until it has become a legend in the North Woods.

The Flambeau River flows through many counties of northern Wisconsin. It served as the transportation route for both the explorers and their bounty. It also served as a liquid conveyor belt for the lumber industry. The mural depicts the rougher and sometimes violent side of the lumberjack's life.

The exhibition of mural designs at the National Gallery of Canada cited Watrous' knowledge of local oral traditions as a subject source. The catalogue noted: "He is particularly interested in the legends and folklore of the region in which he lives and works and has created a number of murals involving Paul Bunyan and the lumbermen of the North Woods."<sup>2</sup> Watrous painted a series of murals depicting the legend of Paul Bunyan and Babe for a room in the Memorial Union at the University of Wisconsin.

Thomas Watrous was born in 1908 in Winfield, Kansas. Watrous was educated at the University of Wisconsin, earning a BA in Art Education and a MA and PhD in art history. At the time of this commission, Watrous was a young instructor at the University of Wisconsin and received \$1600 for the mural. Later, he served as the chairman of the University of Wisconsin Art History Department from 1952 to 1961. Watrous was one of the winners of the Forty-Eight State Mural Competition with the design for "Life in Grand Rapids and the Upper Mississippi." It was painted in 1940 for the post office in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.<sup>3</sup>

The Park Falls Post is also locally significant in the area of architecture. It is the best local example of Neo-Classical Revival architecture. The three-story post office building is the tallest building in this city of 3000 people and it stands in sharp contrast to most of the other buildings in the community. Like other prominent buildings in the city, the post office is of brick construction. However, this example makes

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<sup>2</sup> Mural Designs for Public Buildings (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1940), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 215.

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references to the classical past through the use of giant order pilasters supporting a wide entablature, all executed in stone. The use of classical vocabulary also symbolically marks the presence of the federal government in the community. With the exception of a door alteration, the original building exterior remains intact. The interior lobby also retains many of its original features, with few alterations. Historic features of the lobby include an intact vestibule, service windows, ceiling cornice, and window and door surrounds. Together the service lobby and the exterior provide a setting with a high degree of architectural integrity for the mural in the lobby. The survival of the character defining features of the building's design and the presence of the mural mark this as a significant building within Park Falls.

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Section 9/10 Page 6 Park Falls Post Office  
Park Falls, Price County, Wisconsin

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**9. Major Bibliographic References**

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

Lobermeier, Mary (U.S. Forest Service, Chequamegon National Forest). Interview.

Marling, Karal Ann. Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post Office Murals in the Great Depression. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Mural Designs for Public Buildings. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1940.

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

Park Falls Post Office. Building cornerstone.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Reconnaissance Files.

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

**10. Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary corresponds to the following legal description: Park Falls Lumber Company Plat. Lots 1, 4 and 5 in Block 12.

**Boundary Justification**

This boundary encompasses the Park Falls Post Office, parking lot, and surrounding yard. This is the limit of the original property holding.

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

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Park Falls Post Office  
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**Photos**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Park Falls Post Office  
Park Falls, Price County, Wisconsin  
Photographed by Joseph Jurkiewicz, 1993  
Negatives in the possession of HNTB, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

1. Interior view, lobby.
2. Plaque on lobby wall.
3. Interior view, lobby.
4. Interior view, mural "Lumberjack Fight on the Flambeau River."
5. Side elevation, looking east.
6. Side elevation, looking west.
7. Rear elevation, looking north.
8. Cornerstone.
9. Front elevation, looking south.
10. General street view, looking east.