

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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).

805-1870-0017

1. Name of Property

historic name Fredonia United States Post Office other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 428 Madison Street city, town Fredonia state Kansas code KS county Wilson code zip code 66736

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/district/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: Kansas Post Offices that contain Treasury Department Section Artwork, 1936-1942

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. Signature of certifying official: Kansas State Historical Society, Date: February 10, 1989

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: State or Federal agency and bureau, Date:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

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 Brick

walls Brick

roof Wood: Shingle

other Stone: limestone

Tar; gravel

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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 watertable connects the entire building, a limestone friezes 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.

See continuation sheet

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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 wainscotting and classical cornice mouldings, as the original surrounds for the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards. These surrounds are painted.

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 L.: 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

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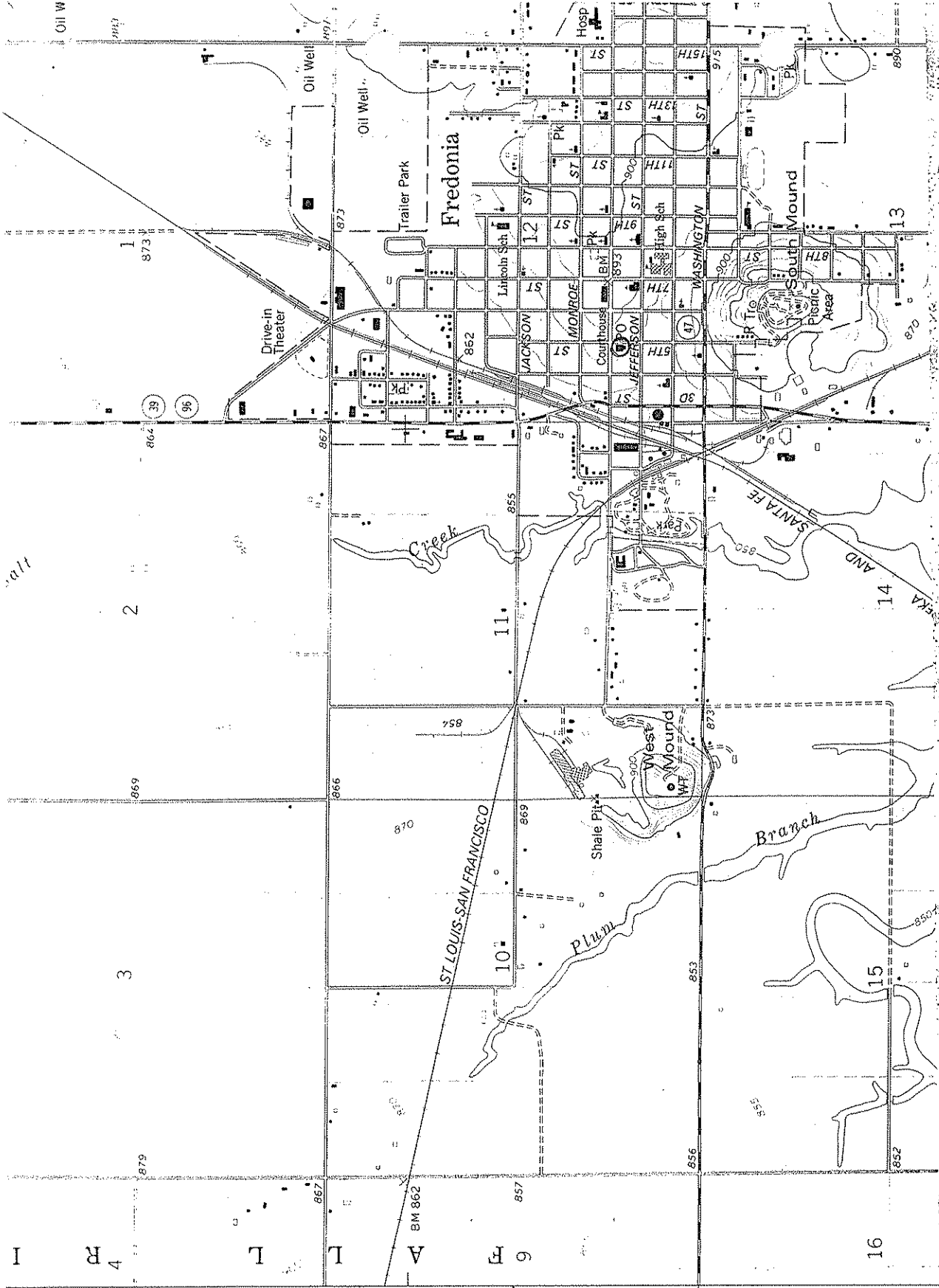
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Continuation Sheet

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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.



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 STATES POST
 OFFICE
 FREDONIA, KANSAS
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