

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (November 2005)

State Inventory No. 09-00500

New Supplemental

Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) _____

Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing

Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries

National Register Status:(any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE

9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number _____

Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name United States Post Office - Waverly

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 124 2nd St. SE

city or town Waverly vicinity, county Bremer

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____ Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____

(If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 6 Lot(s) 7 & 8

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

If Non-Eligible Property		If Eligible Property, enter number of:	
Enter number of:		Contributing	Noncontributing
—	buildings	<u>1</u>	— buildings
—	sites	—	— sites
—	structures	—	— structures
—	objects	—	— objects
—	Total	<u>1</u>	— Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title Waverly East Bremer Ave. Commercial Historic District

Historical Architectural Data Base Number 09-029

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

04F GOVERNMENT/post office

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

04F GOVERNMENT/post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

06B LATE 19TH & 20TH C. REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation 10 CONCRETE

walls (visible material) 03 BRICK

roof 08A ASPHALT/Shingle

other _____

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

- Yes No More Research Recommended
- Yes No More Research Recommended
- Yes No More Research Recommended
- Yes No More Research Recommended

- A Property is associated with significant events.
- B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
- C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
- D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Bremer
City Waverly

Address 124 2nd St. SE

Site Number 09-00500
District Number

Criteria Considerations

- 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)

02 ARCHITECTURE

29 SOCIAL HISTORY; 26 GOVERNMENT

Significant Dates

Construction date
1936 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates, including renovation
1950

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect
Simon, Louis A., Ofc. of Supervising Architect
Builder
James I. [or S.] Barnes, Concrete Engineering Co.

Narrative Statement of Significance (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

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street & number 2460 S. Riverside Dr.
city or town Iowa City state IA date 2012-2013
telephone 319-354-6722 zip code 52246

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____

- See continuation sheet or attached *photo & slide catalog sheet* for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or noncontributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: Yes No More Research Recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): _____ Date: _____

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Related District Number

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United States Post Office - Waverly	Bremer
Name of Property	County
124 2nd St. SE	Waverly
Address	City

7. Narrative

This post office building is located one-half block south of E. Bremer Avenue on the northwest corner of 2nd Street SE and 1st Ave SE. The building, which faces east, is one-story in height and has a raised basement. Its footprint dimensions are 64x54 ft. with a 50x21 foot dock addition at the rear. Construction commenced in May, 1936, and the building was put into service in early 1937.

In keeping with its Colonial Revival styling, the building's form suggests a central mass with attached, smaller "dependencies" on either side. The central mass is raised above the dependencies and has a gabled-end roof with pediment returns and fanlight windows that overlooks the flat roofs of the dependencies below. The foundation is concrete and the exterior walls are red brick with white masonry (stone, cast stone, or concrete) trim. Bricks are laid in a 5 to 1 common bond pattern, except under windows and in the brick arches where only headers are used. Also, a row of upright stretchers form the course immediately above the stone watertable. Window sills are masonry and window headers for the largest windows are formed by rows of vertical bricks alternating with a masonry keystone and two masonry voussoirs. Smaller windows have flat lintels of stretcher bricks.

With respect to the main mass, the east elevation is the primary façade and is divided into three bays by three recessed semicircular brickwork arches that hold the main entrance in the center and large windows on either side. Wide original granite steps (with modern metal banisters and a concrete wheelchair ramp) lead up to the modern glass door with a sidelight and transom. This door set is framed by a broken-pediment surround that appears to be wood. A modern canvas canopy overhangs the entrance. Each side archway contains 12/12 double hung sash windows. Above the façade arches, a wide frieze displays the building name: "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE WAVERLY IOWA 50677" (the zip code was added later).

The side dependencies are stepped back very slightly from the main mass. Each has a tall 9/9 double hung sash window on the east façade and two windows of this size on the end walls, plus three larger 12/12 windows. Near the roof on the dependencies is a masonry beltcourse and, above that, the parapet has a metal cap. A smokestack is located on the west side between the south dependency and the westside loading dock, which dock was added in 1950.

The post office was designed in-house by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department when Louis A. Simon was Supervising Architect. Under Simon's leadership, "the design of federal buildings...was described as a 'suitable bromide' to the exuberance of the French Renaissance promulgated by his predecessors. 'In its place, under Mr. Simon's guiding hand, came the more subdued, more sentimental architecture of the Italian Renaissance and the Colonial.'" The Post Office buildings in Philadelphia, Ohio (1927-1928) and Arlington, Virginia (Clarendon Branch, 1937) and, especially, the U.S. federal building in Amsterdam, New York (1935-1936) draw on the same design palette as the Post Office in Waverly (Antoinette J. Lee, *Architects to the Nation* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], 26-261).

The contractor was James S. Barnes (*Waverly Democrat*, 5/15/1936) or James I. Barns (Jeff S. Hagen, U.S. Postal Service, letter to Iowa State Historical Department, 5/3/1982). The Postal Service's 1982 information indicates Barnes was with the Concrete Engineering Company of Des Moines. Indeed, there was a Des Moines office of this larger, Kansas City-based company. (There was also a James I.

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Barnes construction company owner from Logansport, Indiana, who engaged in post office building about the time the Waverly building was constructed [based on a Google search], however, the records of the Postal Service are deemed most reliable in this case.)

Construction began in 1936 and the building was formally dedicated March 16, 1937. Later that year, Iowa City artist Mildred Pelzner, a former student of Grant Wood, was paid \$500 to paint a mural for the new post office. Titled "A Letter from Home in 1856," the mural is extant and has been recognized in both art-book publications on murals and a personal and professional biography of Mildred Pelzer.

Her mural (image below) depicts a figure of a young mother centered in the painting, flanked on her right by a tiny child reaching up toward her mother's hands. The child appears to be asking to be picked up but the mother is smiling down and concentrating on reading a letter she is holding in both hands. To the woman's left is a man who has barely stopped a team of horses pulling a single-row plow. The rolling hills of the Iowa prairie form the background beyond the three figures. The mural is lively and suggests movement via the child's reaching posture, the uplifted corner of the woman's apron caught in a breeze, the billowing of the woman's cape, and the straining legs of her husband as he holds the team steady.

Pelzer (1889-1985) was born and raised in Montana. She met her future husband, long time University of Iowa history professor Louis Pelzer, when he was her history teacher at Montana State Teachers College (Bob Hibbs, *Historic Scenes by Mildred Pelzer, 1934* [no publisher but in association with the Johnson County Historical Society, 2009], 24). Pelzer and her husband relocated to Iowa City when Louis became affiliated with the university. Mildred became a "student and publicist" for Grant Wood and also took lessons from Marvin Cone. Eventually she would create over 400 paintings during her professional career. Among her best documented work is a series of eight murals for Iowa City's Hotel Jefferson. Little had been published about Mildred Pelzer or Iowa muralists of the New Deal era in 1982 when the Postal Service requested and received a determination of National Register *ineligibility* for the post office from the Iowa SHPO (see ISIF #09-00500). Today, however, there is good secondary literature to place Pelzer and her work, including her Waverly mural, in a larger context, and there is growing appreciation for these murals' significance in history and art (see Hibbs, *Historic Scenes*, and also Gregg R. Narber, *Murals of Iowa, 1886-2006* [Des Moines: The Iowan Books, 2012]).

8. Statement of Significance

The Waverly United State Post Office building is significant for its historical associations with the federal New Deal programs of the Great Depression and its Mildred Pelzer mural, which remains *in situ* high on the wall of the lobby. The building contributes to the historic eastside commercial district by reflecting the long-standing importance of the postal service to the town of Waverly. The post office in Waverly has occupied space in several East Bremer commercial buildings but this building marks the high water point of the postal service in this community. It is a very good example of the small-town, federally designed post office.

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United States Post Office - Waverly	Bremer
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9. Major Bibliographical References - as noted in the text and as follows:

Field inspection/photograph – October 2010-2013.

County Assessor online property records.

Downtown History, Waverly Main Street, Waverly Chamber of Commerce website
(http://wadg.waverlyia.com/downtown_history.asp – 9/2011).

“History of the Buildings in the Main Street Area of Waverly, Iowa - West Side.” Vol. 1. Information compiled in part for Main Street–Waverly survey, 1990. Waverly Public Library Collection, Waverly, Iowa.

“New Waverly Post Office To Be Dedicated March 16,” *Waterloo Daily Courier*, March 2, 1937.

“To Paint Mural,” *Fayette County Leader*, September 2, 1937.

Also see accompanying report HADB# 09-029/ NRHP nomination

10. Additional Documents (City map and Sketch map)

N↑



Overall central city with entire survey area circled.
West side survey reported as HADB# 09-026.

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124 2nd St. SE
Address

Bremer
County
Waverly
City



Shaded area denotes property evaluated herein.

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
State Historical Society of Iowa
**Iowa Site Inventory Form
Continuation Sheet**

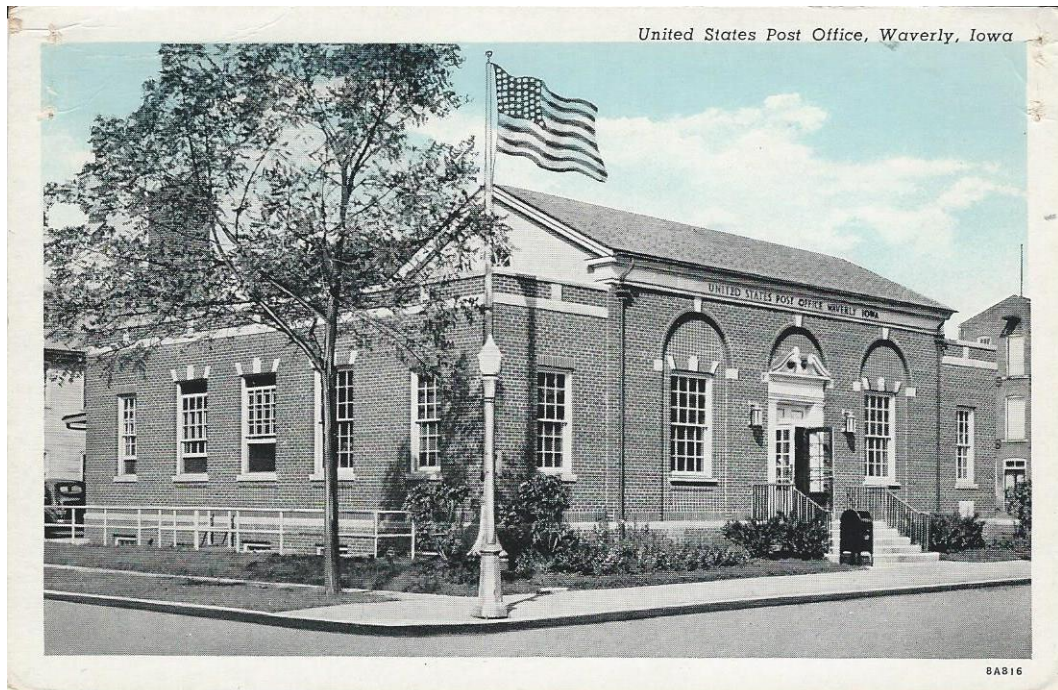
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Historic Postcard, 1937 (author's collection) above; current photograph by author below.

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United States Post Office - Waverly

Bremer

Name of Property

County

124 2nd St. SE

Waverly

Address

City



“A Letter from Home in 1856” by Mildred Pelzer – located in the Waverly U.S. Post Office
Taken from Hibbs, *Historic Scenes by Mildred Pelzer*, 1934 (2009)