

Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Building 1  
903 South 4th Street, NORTH FRONT  
Hamilton  
Ravalli County  
Montana

HABS  
MONT  
41-HAM,  
2A-

**PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
Rocky Mountain System Support Office  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN LABORATORIES,  
Building 1

HABS  
MONT  
41-HAM,  
2A-

HABS No. MT-101-A

**Location:** 903 South 4th Street, north front  
Hamilton, Ravalli County, Montana  
USGS Hamilton South Montana Quadrant,  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates for complex:  
A. 11.719000.5124400 B. 11.719000.5124120  
C. 11.718810.5124100 D. 11.718820.5124360

**Date of Construction:** Constructed 1927

**Architects:** Shanley and Baker

**Present Owner:** National Institutes of Health

**Present Occupant:** National Institutes of Health

**Present Use:** Medical Research Laboratory

**Significance:** The Rocky Mountain Laboratories possess national significance due to the pioneering research conducted at these laboratories from 1921-1945 toward the development of vaccines for insect-borne diseases. Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever occurred frequently among the residents of the Bitterroot Valley in Montana. The facility was the primary site for research into the cause of the fever and many prominent members of the scientific community have worked at the laboratories. The period of historic significance for the site extends to the end of World War II as the Rocky Mountain Laboratories played a critical role in supplying vaccines to troops for the duration of the War.

The buildings are of a high quality for a small community such as Hamilton, Montana. The majority of the buildings were constructed by the Office of the Supervising Architect, Department of the Treasury under the direction of Louis A. Simon, a long time architect for the Treasury Department. The Laboratory, which sits at the edge of this small town, offered employment to local individuals seeking work in the 1930's during the Depression. For all of the above reasons, the Rocky Mountain Laboratories Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988. Building One is a contributor to the Historic District.

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Building One is of the Collegiate Gothic style of architecture. It was constructed in 1927 and was the first structure built at the Rocky Mountain Laboratories complex. Initially a simple brick building, with some Collegiate Gothic character the building was altered during a building campaign in 1938. It was at this time that the majority of the Collegiate Gothic detailing was added.

Composed of common bond brick construction, this three story building has a concrete belt course below the first floor window level. Another concrete belt course runs along the third floor window level separating the body of the building and a crenelated brick parapet. Another feature of the brick work is the row of soldier course bricks that runs along the foundation. The building is composed of a tripartite scheme with a central entry marked by a shield motif above the arch of the doorway. The entry vestibule extends approximately eight feet from the main facade. It is constructed of brick with cast concrete quoining and detailing around the door. This is one of the features that gives the building its Collegiate Gothic character. Above the entry is a second-story bay with narrow, 6-over-1, double hung windows with cast concrete window surrounds. The fenestration surrounds on each of the three levels of the body of the building are also cast concrete.

In plan the building is rectangular and is of three stories. The entry opens into a small hallway and stair hall. The central hallway leads back to the main passageway accessing offices and some laboratories. This building serves primarily as office space, with the library occupying most of the third floor. The elevator on the first floor is one of this building's historic features. Several doors located throughout the building are historic in character. The flooring present in several locations in the building is linoleum dating to the 1930's. The terrazzo flooring in the entrance hall dates to the 1930's. The second-floor rest room has several historic features.

Building One is connected by a recessed, enclosed, three story hallway with Building Two.