

Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Building 2
903 South 4th Street, Center Front
Hamilton
Ravalli County
Montana

HABS
MONT
41-HAM,
2B-

**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 2

HABS No. MT-101-B

HABS
MONT
41-HAM,
2B-

Location: 903 South 4th Street, center 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 1932-34

Architects: Built by the Public Health Service (a federal agency).

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 Two is a contributor to the Historic District.

Building Two was constructed in 1932 to 1934 utilizing funds from the Public Health Service. Funds totaling \$150,000 were appropriated for construction of this new building.

Building Two was constructed of the same brickwork and detailing as Building One. A row of soldier course bricks runs along the foundation and there is repeated use of cast stone decorative exterior features. Building Two was not designed with an entry on the east facing or South 4th Street elevation. The building was accessed via a passageway from Building One. This feature has remained throughout the history of the buildings.

This building houses laboratory and office space. A large lunch room occupies the northwestern corner of the first floor. This room is a partial basement and is the site of the original heating plant/boiler room. There is a coal door remaining at the northeast corner of this room.

On the second floor, the western portion of the building houses photography laboratories while the eastern half of the building houses scientific laboratories. On the third floor of Building Two a large annex to the library has been developed on the eastern side of the central corridor, while the western side houses a large laboratory and office space.