

Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Building 3
903 South 4th Street, South Front
Hamilton
Ravalli County
Montana

HABS
MONT
41-HAM,
2C-

**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 3

HABS
MONT
41-HAM,
2C-

HABS No. MT-101-C

Location: 903 South 4th Street, South 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 in 1938

Architects: Public Buildings Branch of the United States Treasury Department
under the direction of Louis A. Simon.

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 Three is a contributor to the Historic District.

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Building Three was constructed as part of a major building campaign started at the Laboratories in 1938. \$132,000 was allocated from the Public Buildings Fund and \$407,000 was allocated from the Public Works Administration for expansion of the complex. In addition at this time 26.5 acres of vacant land was purchased to the west and north to serve as a buffer zone between the residential areas of Hamilton and the Laboratories.

Constructed in 1938, building three was given the same Collegiate Gothic as Buildings One and Two. It was during this campaign that the facades of Buildings One, Two and Three were given unifying characteristics. Unlike Building Two, Building Three has a central entryway similar, but not identical, to Building One. The entry projects five feet from the east facade. The vestibule features a recessed doorway, one step up into a small foyer that has a rounded Romanesque arch with voussoirs. Above the doorway is inscribed the medical insignia of a winged scepter staff with two snakes. The second story bay above the entry is designed to compliment the bay of Building One. Repeated here are the soldier course bricks at the foundation and the cast stone exterior features.

Similar to Building One, Building Three has a central entry. This structure is a rectangular, three story building which serves as laboratory and office space with a fair number of small rooms. A central corridor accesses the various rooms on all three floors. An original staircase connects this building to Buildings Two and Five.

Throughout this building glazed hollow clay tile is used in the hallways and some of the laboratories. The entrance hall has terrazzo flooring dating to the 1930's. Another historic feature is the dumb waiter which services all three levels of this building. The second and third floor bathrooms have several historic features, such as tile flooring, marble panels, and porcelain fixtures.