

Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Building 7  
(Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Steam Plant)  
903 South 4th Street, North Rear  
Hamilton  
Ravalli County  
Montana

HABS  
MONT  
41-HAM,  
2G-

**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**

HABS  
MONT  
41-HAM,  
2G-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN LABORATORIES, Building 7, (Steam Plant)

HABS No. MT-101-G

**Location:** 903 South 4th Street, North Rear  
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:** **Steam Plant**

**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 Seven is a contributor to the Historic District.

**Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Building 7, Steam Plant**  
**HABS No. MT-101-G**  
**(Page 2)**

Building Seven 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.

Located to the west of Building Six, this structure is small in comparison to the other buildings in the main group. Building Seven is the steam plant and is a two story, masonry building. It has three large, multi-paned windows with metal mullions that rise a full two stories on the west elevation. A broken belt course accents the wall above these windows. On the west side of the building is a tall, round, masonry smokestack. The west elevation has one of the large, multi-paned windows. The south elevation has regularly spaced sash windows.

The most important architectural features are the large windows which run the length of the two story interior. Remnants of the original heating system are still visible in the building. The interior of the building is very industrial in character.