

Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Building 8
(Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Residence)
904 South 4th Street
Hamilton
Ravalli County
Montana

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**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**

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LABORATORIES,
Building 8, (Residence)

HABS No. MT-101-H

Location: 904 South 4th Street
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: **Residence**

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 Eight is a contributor to the Historic District.

Building Eight 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.

Building Eight is a late Colonial Revival style residence. Many military facilities of the same period had housing in Colonial Revival or Dutch Colonial Revival similar to these houses. Two houses were constructed during this building campaign and had common interior features such as hardwood floors, plan layout, the bathroom features such as the floor tile, hardware and lighting, and the linoleum in the kitchen.

The structure is a two story, wood frame structure on a concrete foundation. A gable roof runs parallel to 4th street. The roof has a slight projecting eave. Below the eaves is a molded fascia that provides a lateral overhang of approximately 6 inches. The south sun room has a balcony above with a balustrade in a two foot by two foot diamond pattern. Shutters flank the first story windows. A brick chimney rises along the south wall of the house. There is an entry portico with square columns accented by an arch and side light windows with pilasters.

The plan of the building is rectangular with a central stair hall to the rear of the building. Porches are located on the south and east sides of the building and a small entry porch faces 4th street to the west. The porches disguise the basic rectangular plan of the building. The first floor plan consists of a west facing living room with a fireplace and dining room, a bedroom in the southeastern corner of the house, and a kitchen in the north eastern corner with a pantry dividing the kitchen and dining room spaces. The east-facing porch houses service and storage spaces and the only first floor bathroom. From the service porch one can access the back stairway. The south facing sun porch can be accessed from the living room.

Four rooms dominate the second floor plan. A bedroom and library are above the living room and dining room respectively. Another bedroom is located above the kitchen in the north eastern corner and a large storage space occupies the south eastern corner of this floor. A bathroom divides the library and front bedroom.

The basement of the building is divided into several rooms primarily used as storage space. Several windows light the space.