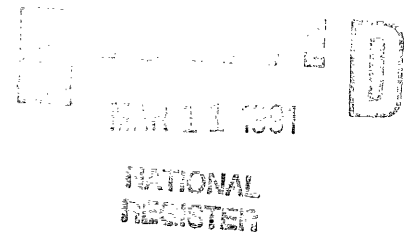


NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

historic name: Wyoming Mercantile

other name/site number: Aladdin General Store; Aladdin Store and Post Office

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2. Location

street & number: Highway 24

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Aladdin

vicinity: N/A

state: WY county: Crook code: 011 zip code: 82710

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3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing		Noncontributing		
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>			buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>			sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>			structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>			objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>			Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: Zero

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this XXX nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria.      See continuation sheet.

Thomas S. Marceau, DSHPO 2/15/91  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria.      See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

~~Entered in the~~  
National Register

- entered in the National Register      See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register      See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Helena Byers 4/16/91

fu Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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6. Function or Use

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Historic: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub:department store (general store)  
GOVERNMENT restaurant  
post office

Current: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub:department store (general store)  
GOVERNMENT restaurant  
post office

7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

LATE VICTORIAN\VICTORIAN ERA COMMERCIAL BUILDING

Materials: foundation Stone roof Wood/shingles  
walls Wood other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance:

COMMERCE  
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period(s) of Significance: 1896 - 1940

Significant Dates : N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Amos Robinson

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 13 564750 49443100
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: XXX See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: XXX See continuation sheet.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Mabel Brown

Organization: Wyoming Historical Society Date: April 20, 1990

Street & Number: P.O. Box 746 Telephone: (307) 746-4770

City or Town: Newcastle State: WY ZIP: 82701

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Section number 7

Wyoming Mercantile Page #1

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Aladdin, Wyoming is a small community located along state highway 24, in the extreme northeast corner of the state. It is situated in Crook County, nestled within the scenic Black Hills region. Belle Fourche, South Dakota is seventeen miles to the east, while the nearest Wyoming town, Alva, is fifteen miles to the west. Sundance, Wyoming, the county seat of Crook County, is located approximately thirty miles to the southwest. When entering the town from either east or west, a signpost boasts "Aladdin pop. 15". Current residents, however, state that there are presently only twelve people living in the town.

The Aladdin General Store is the largest and most prominent of perhaps a total of fifteen buildings that make up the town along both sides of the highway. The store is located on the north side of the highway, facing south. An asphalt and gravel parking area is located between the highway and the store. Gas pumps are located to the southwest of the store where there is an old round sign with the message "Aladdin Store Aladdin-Wyo." bordering a painting of a cowboy on a bucking bronco. The area where the store is located slopes very gently from south to north. Seeded grass areas are located immediately to the west, north and east of the store, while a hillslope rises slightly farther to the northwest. Two wooden privies respectively labeled "Bucks" and "Does" are located in the grassy area to the west of the store. A hand water pump and a pole adorned with deer antlers are located in the area to the east of the store.

The store itself is comprised of a tall two story gable roofed central portion with flanking one story shed roofed wings on the east and west and a shed roofed addition on the north. The main gable roof is covered with brown wood shingles, while the flanking shed roofs are covered with grey rolled asphalt. The roof's perimeter finish is of boxed eaves. The building is of wood frame construction with red clapboard cladding; the addition is of board and batten siding. The building measures approximately forty-two feet north to south, by fifty-seven feet east to west. A notable feature of the building is its classic false front facade located on the south elevation. A wooden porch here covers six of seven bays on the facade. The porch flooring is built of unpainted 2 by 6s and is covered by a low pitched shed roof which projects between the first and second stories. The porch roof is covered with weathered wood shingles, and is supported by seven wood posts of six by six construction. The posts are painted white, and are chamfered at the top and bottom. Fenestration on the facade is as follows from west to east: a large nine light fixed pane window; the main entry (described in greater detail below); a large nine light fixed pane window; A set of paired two over two double hung sash windows; a single two over two double hung sash window; and a single door providing entry to the post office. The main entrance is comprised of two red wood paneled doors. They each have a

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Wyoming Mercantile Page #2

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single cross panel in their lower portions, and two panes of light in their upper portion. Both doors are topped by a two light transom. The door leading into the post office is also painted red. It has three cross panels in its lower portion, and a single pane of light in its upper portion. One other door is located on the west end of the facade. It is situated off the end of the porch, providing entry into the liquor store. It is identical to the door leading into the post office. The entrance on the north elevation consists of a wooden stairway to the second floor and is the only entrance to this floor on the exterior or interior. All doors have white painted wooden screen doors. Signage and motifs on the front facade provide a strong sense of time and place as they relate to the period of significance. A set of elk antlers are affixed high up on the gable end. Below this is a wooden sign board with black letters painted on a white background stating "ALADDIN, WYO." Below this is a separate sign board with the year "1890" written in red in relief, on a white background. Two other small wooden signs hang from the porch roof proclaiming "PACKAGE LIKKER" and "PACKAGE BEER".

The interior of the first floor consists of 5 rooms: the general store, liquor store, post office, store room, and the addition (used for storage). Tongue and groove wood floors and ceilings and plaster wood lath walls comprise the interior surfaces of the general store, liquor store, and store room. The plaster walls are painted green. The walls and ceiling in the post office are entirely matchstick type paneling. The oak and matchstick type paneled counters and wooden oak food bins and shelves are significant interior furnishings which convey the historic function of this general store. These furnishings are original to the store. The addition has dirt floors; the board and batten exterior walls are also the interior surface. There are five rooms plus a hallway upstairs, all used for storage. The rooms have plaster wood lath walls and ceilings with tongue and groove wood flooring. The walls are covered with wallpaper. Both the upstairs and downstairs have high ten foot ceilings.

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Wyoming Mercantile Page # 1

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The Aladdin Store and Post Office is significant for its association with the settlement and economic development of the town of Aladdin. Aladdin Store is also a rare and extremely well-preserved example of late 19th century vernacular mercantile architecture. Windshield surveys conducted by the State Historic Preservation Office staff and preservation community indicate that this is only one of five 19th century mercantiles left in the state which represent this settlement and economic development period. Modifications have been made to three of the other five examples. The building itself is a two story vertical wood structure with a false front; it is painted a bright red with white trim on windows, doors, and porch posts. It is located in the beautiful Black Hills area of northeastern Crook County, Wyoming; and the Hay Creek Valley in which it stands exhibits cottonwood, oak, and evergreens as well as long stretches of cultivated bottom land.

Historically, the Wyoming and Missouri Valley Railroad ran north of the structure and the store served as a depot and post office. Today, U.S. Highway 24 passes south of the Aladdin Store and Post Office.

Records show that the property now known as the town of Aladdin was originally patented by Amos Robinson on November 12, 1894. Robinson built the store in 1896 as the WYOMING MERCANTILE. At Robinson's death in 1896 the court transferred title to Mahlon S. Kemmerer. Kemmerer was from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania and a partner of P.J. Quealey, long associated with the Union Pacific Railroad. The town of Kemmerer, Wyoming was named in honor of Mahlon S. Kemmerer.

Kemmerer became the first president of the Wyoming and Missouri Valley Railroad, a line which extended about 18 miles from Aladdin to Belle Fourche, South Dakota. A map of Aladdin, prepared by the Sanborn Map Co. in 1923 states that all of the properties on the map, including the Wyoming and Missouri Valley Railroad were owned by the WYOMING MERCANTILE. Population of Aladdin at that time was shown on the map as 50.

Coal was responsible for the building of Aladdin. Land for coal had been surveyed in and around Aladdin in April of 1882. Information compiled by the Aladdin Homemakers Club in 1969 shows that Professors Robbins and Hemingway first discovered coal on the Moeller Ranch south of Aladdin before 1884. The report states that Robbins and Hemingway set up a "tent city camp" and hauled coal by ox team to Belle Fourche via Sand Creek. When the coal petered out, the

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report says that the professors left for California. No further information is available at this time regarding Robbins but Hemingway (Joseph L. Hemingway) was in Cambria, Crook County, Territory of Wyoming (now Weston County) in 1888 where he was superintendnet of the Cambria mines. Hemingway became world famous and was known as the "father of modern mining machinery". He installed machinery in Pennsylvania, in the gold mines at Lead and Deadwood, South Dakota as well as at Cambria and Aladdin.

The store at Aladdin has always been the heart of the community and its center of activity; it continues to be such today. The Wyoming and Missouri Valley Railroad came to Aladdin in 1899 and continued operation through 1927. The hauling of coal, mining props, and supplies contributed to the economy of the railroad which was actually owned by the store. During this time two additions were built onto the store, one on the east side, the other on the west. Later, after operation of the railroad to Belle Fourche was discontinued, an addition was constructed on the north side of the store. This addition was built to house a motor car which transported passengers from the area to and from the South Dakota town. It was constructed with board and batten siding instead of vertical board siding like the other parts of the building.

Through the years the Aladdin Store and Post Office has been many things to many people. It has housed a general store, a bar (originally known as a saloon), a post office, a barber shop, telephone office (upstairs), and served as a depot, freight station, and gas station. Gas pumps now replace hitching posts where customers tethered their mounts, but the same hospitality exists today as in days gone by. In 1914, a "gold rush" brought an increase in population and in the economy for a brief period, but the gold was mostly "on paper". Stock was sold and development work was begun; but little of the precious metal materialized.

Title to the store changed a number of times during the Depression and World War II. In the fall of 1966, Gayle Weaver moved to Aladdin and purchased the Aladdin Store and Post Office, also the Cafe and Motel. He loved the place and did much to restore it to its present condition. Crook County is known as the "white tail [deer] capital" of the nation and "Skid", as Gayle Weaver was fondly known, brought many hunters and other visitors to the area. He was a licensed guide and outfitter.

In 1986, Weaver sold the Aladdin property to Rick and Judy Brengle. Weaver was appointed to the Wyoming Centennial Commission by Governor Mike Sullivan and was serving as representative of Weston, Crook, and Niobrara Counties at the time of



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his death. He died September 18, 1989 in a hospital in Rawlins, Wyoming after suffering a heart attack while on a hunting trip in that area. The Aladdin Homemakers are building a Centennial Park in his honor. The Park has been sanctioned by the Wyoming Centennial Commission and will be preserved as a "Lasting Legacy of the Centennial".

The Brengles continue to operate the Store and Post Office as it has been in years gone by. One can still stop in and purchase needed groceries, supplies, snacks, caps, gloves, etc. In the spring, "seed" potatoes are available along with packaged seeds for the garden. In the fall, hunters may buy licenses, ammunition, etc.; and, of course, the bar offers entertainment and refreshments. Tourists passing through the area are attracted by the obviously authentic old country store and stop by to experience a taste of the "good old days." Throughout the history of the community, the appearance and use of the Aladdin Store has clearly reflected the economic development of the area. To date it has been remarkably well preserved as a small town mercantile store and one needs only to step onto the porch and enter the door to be transported into an era where life was less harried and somehow not so complicated.

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Wyoming Mercantile

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SOURCES

Homestead-Pre-Emptions, Book 1, #231, Crook County Courthouse  
Wyoming Historical Blue Book, Volume 2  
"BITS AND PIECES", Volume 3, Number 2 (Hemingway)  
"BITS AND PIECES", Volume 5, Number 3 (Aladdin  
Crook County Monitor--Sundance, Wyoming, April 2, 1914 (front page)  
Newcastle News Letter Journal - October 5, 1989

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Wyoming Mercantile

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Verbal Boundary Description: The Crook County Assessor's Office was consulted to determine the legal description for this property. The legal description is Township 54 North, Range 61 West, NE 1/4 SW 1/4 of Section 28. The town of Aladdin was never platted.

Boundary Justification: The boundary is arbitrary extending 10 feet from the north, east, and west elevations of the building. The south elevation and boundary extends to the Highway 24 right-of-way. The historic legal description includes excessive acreage; therefore this arbitrary boundary has been defined to include only the historic resource being nominated.