

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**RECORDED**

MAR 19 1990

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Missoula Mercantile

other names/site number The Bon

### 2. Location

street & number 114 North Higgins Avenue

n/a not for publication

city, town Missoula

n/a vicinity

state Montana

code 030

county Missoula

code 063

zip code 59802

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property

building(s)

district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

       buildings

       sites

       structures

       objects

1

       Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historical Resources in Missoula, 1864-1940

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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.

Signature of certifying official Maude Sheriff

Date 3-14-90

State or Federal agency and bureau MT SHPO

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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Melanie Byers

4/30/90

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Mercantile Store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Department Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Vernacular

foundation concrete, stone

walls brick, cast iron

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Missoula Mercantile is a large, generally rectangular, two-story stretcher bond brick commercial building with flat parapeted roof with arcaded and dentilated cornice, eight south side bays and five west-side bays, historic metal frame commercial windows, brick infill in some of the upstairs windows, southside canvas awnings, and a fixed metal awning over the entryway on the Higgins Avenue facade. The building is located on the northeast corner of Higgins Avenue and Front Street, the historical center of the Missoula central business district, which still retains a good share of its historic fabric. The front or west side of the building has a large wooden cornice with scrolled brackets and dentils over brick dentilation. Upstairs windows on the west side of the building have been filled in with brick. The west side of the building features a large, recessed, cast iron entryway topped by a large, projecting, molded cornice with dentilation, and flanked by massive pilasters with Ionic capitals. A semicircular canopy covers this entrance and features a sloping, fan-shaped roof consisting of spokes separating triangular glass panels. The west side of the building also features a projecting hip roof commercial bay with glass display case and multi-pane leaded glass panel bands above the street-level display windows. The southwest corner pier of the building is ornamental cast iron with a variety of decorative detailing.

The cornice of the south side of the building is arcaded with corbelling and dentilation above a concrete belt course. Two large second-story windows have been bricked in on the west half of the south facade. Existing second story windows are vertical and narrow with Colonial Revival style ornamental hoods and sills. The south side of the building consists of commercial windows and bays separated by brick pilasters and round cast iron support posts. Some of the pilasters feature granite bases and mid-section granite blocks. The apron between the windows and the commercial windows is recently added polychrome brick.

The east half of the south facade is about one foot taller than the west half and has the same kind of cornice. The second story of the east side section has four bays separated by pilasters. Windows also

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are wood frame with fan shaped terra cotta hoods. Molded metal banding separates the first and second stories of the east side section. South side of the building has two recessed entryways and a canvas awning over an iron rod frame.

The north side of the building, visible along the alleyway, is divided into three sections: one 60 feet in length, which is the north side of the Garden City Drug Building (a separate building); a middle 50-foot section built in the late nineteenth century; and a 120-foot section at the east end of the building, also built in the late nineteenth century. The latter two sections are a part of the Mercantile proper. The west end two-story, 60-foot section consists of four ~~dentilated bays~~ separated by brick pilasters, molded, metal crown cornice, and sandstone and stretcher bond belt courses separating the first and second stories. The two-story, 50-foot middle section has six upstairs bays with wood-frame double-hung, one-over-one windows, with three-tiered header relief arches and concrete sills. The first floor has been infilled with concrete blocks. The two-story east-end section has 14 upstairs bays, with narrow wood frame double-hung, two-over-two windows with three-tiered header relief arches and iron plates the size and shape of the window openings hanging from iron track located above the windows. The first floor of this section has arched entryways and windows with iron plate covers suspended by large side-mounted hinges. A large, corrugated metal shed roof storage and loading enclosure framed by 2x4's and 2x6's with 4x6 supports is attached to the rear of the building.

The east side of the building along Pattee Street is stretcher bond brick with three-tiered header arched windows on the second floor and two-tiered header arched windows located on the first floor. Windows are wood-frame, double-hung, two-over-two.

This building has lost some integrity of design and materials with remodeling on the first floor and the addition of some south side brick pilasters between the original cast iron posts. Removal of the south-side parapet that included a Missoula Mercantile sign, and infilling of several second floor windows further compromises the historic appearance. In addition, many of the original second story windows have been replaced with single sheets of glass. However, the building still conveys a strong sense of historical association, with cast iron entryways and cast iron posts dividing the windows, the extending copper commercial bay on the Higgins Street side of the building, the terra cotta hoods on the second story windows, and the northside iron-plate-covered arched doorways and windows.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1882-1940

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1882

1884

ca. 1889

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

A.B. Hammond, E.L. Bonner, C.H. McLeod

Architect/Builder

Edward Selander and others

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Missoula Mercantile is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A, B, and C. The company that constructed it was founded in 1866 and was a major mercantile establishment in Missoula and western Montana for 100 years, at one time being the largest mercantile between Minneapolis and Seattle along the Northern Pacific route. It and the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad to Missoula in 1883 made Missoula the predominant wholesale and retail trading center within a radius of about 75 miles. The growth of the city of Missoula directly reflected the development of the Mercantile as it became the dominant mercantile establishment in the region. The building is eligible for listing under criterion B due to its association with E. L. Bonner, A. B. Hammond, and C. H. McLeod, all men who not only exercised a major influence on the formation, development, and operation of the Mercantile, but also were principals in companies that were tied to the Mercantile and had a major impact on the development of Missoula and western Montana (e. g. the Montana Improvement Company, the Big Blackfoot Milling and Manufacturing Company, and the First National Bank of Missoula).

The building also qualifies for listing under criterion C. It is a large, pivotal building at the intersection of Higgins Avenue and Front Avenue (the axis of the original townsite) and still covers almost one-half a block. It is constructed in the vernacular commercial style, and features distinctive and elaborate design elements, including the large metal cornice, the cast iron store front and support posts, Colonial Revival window hoods, and numerous cast iron window and door covers on the north (alleyway) side of the building.

Most of this building was constructed between 1882 and 1904 when the property was owned by the Missoula Mercantile Company. The Missoula Mercantile originally was known as Bonner and Welch, being founded by E. L. Bonner, D. J. Welsh, and Richard Eddy in 1866, and was located

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west of the present building site. The firm became known as E. L. Bonner and Company when D. J. Welsh retired in 1871 and as Eddy, Hammond and Company when Andrew B. Hammond joined the firm in 1876. The company moved its store to its present location in 1877 and incorporated as the Missoula Mercantile Company in 1885, which owned the building until 1959, when it was purchased by Alstores Realty Corporation.

The Missoula Mercantile quickly secured the largest share of Missoula's wholesale and retail trade after Andrew B. Hammond joined the firm in 1876. Critical to this predominance was Eddy, Hammond and Company forming the Montana Improvement Company and securing a contract with the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1881 to provide the railroad with supplies and materials, including sawmills, timber, clothing, during the construction of the railroad. The awarding of this contract provided the Mercantile with the markets to enable it to outstrip C. P. Higgins and Francis L. Worden interests and assume the wholesale and retail trade leadership in Missoula and western Montana in the 1880s. In turn, Mercantile owners, especially A. B. Hammond, used capital generated by the Mercantile to secure loans to finance other ventures, such as the First National Bank of Missoula and Hammond's lumber and shipping interests in Montana and Oregon, including the Bonner mill and lumber schooners on the Pacific Coast.

Between 1880 and 1890, the company was a barometer of the nature and size of the commercial growth Missoula experienced during this period. Its retail trade increased from \$180,000 in 1880 to \$1.5 million in 1890 and to \$2.6 million in 1910. In 1900, it employed 100 persons and operated stores in western Montana from Eureka to Bozeman. By 1920, the Mercantile accounted for 40 percent of the retail sales, 75 percent of the wholesale sales, and 55 percent of the combined wholesale and retail business in the markets in which it competed. At the turn of the century, it was the largest mercantile enterprise between Seattle and Minneapolis and dominated the wholesale trade in all lines of business, including grain dealing and farm implements.

The firm is associated with individuals who played key roles in the development of Missoula, including E. L. Bonner, Andrew B. Hammond, and C. H. McLeod. E. L. Bonner, the cofounder of Bonner and Welch, was born in Oswego County, New York, in 1834, was in charge of one department at Lord and Taylor in New York City, before traveling to Walla Walla in 1858, where he established a business, and worked on and operated a

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ferry on the Kootenai River at a town that now bears his name. From Washington, he journeyed to Montana, and co-founded the Bonner and Welch Company in Missoula, which became the Missoula Mercantile. He was a principal in the Montana Improvement Company established by him, Richard Eddy, and A.B. Hammond in 1881. He established the E. L. Bonner Company, with large mercantile stores in Deer Lodge and Butte. Bonner also was deeply involved in railroad building, constructing several portions of the Northern Pacific in Montana, including the Bitterroot branch line from Missoula to Hamilton, the branch line from Drummond to Philipsburg, and the Rimini and Red River branches. When receivers were appointed for the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1893, Bonner was one of those placed in charge of the company's operations in Montana. Bonner built a mansion in Missoula, which has been demolished.

A. B. Hammond, was born in New Brunswick, Canada, in 1848 and arrived in Missoula in 1872, when he began to work as a clerk for the E. L. Bonner Company. In 1876, he became the second partner of Eddy, Hammond and Company, incorporated in 1885 as the Missoula Mercantile. In 1881 he joined with E. L. Bonner and Richard Eddy to form the Montana Improvement Company, which later became the Big Blackfoot Milling and Manufacturing Company. In 1886, the Company built the Big Blackfoot Lumber Company at Bonner, seven miles east of Missoula. At the time, the mill was reputed to be the largest in the world and was a major pillar of the Missoula-area economy. Hammond sold it to Marcus Daly, the Butte copper king, in 1902. Hammond also came to hold a controlling interest in the First National Bank of Missoula, Missoula's first bank. He also built three major business blocks in Missoula, including the Mercantile, the Hammond Block, and the First National Bank Building. The latter two have been demolished. So, too, has the Hammond residence. Hammond left the Missoula area in the late 1890s to concentrate on his investment and development efforts in Oregon and California, which were financed, at least in part, by the Mercantile's assets serving as collateral for his loans.

C. H. McLeod was born New Brunswick, Canada, in 1859, and came to Missoula in 1880, beginning as a clerk for the Hammond, Eddy and Company. When the company incorporated in 1885 as the Missoula Mercantile, McLeod became vice-president and general manager. In 1906, he became the president of the company, serving in that position until 1941. He also was the President of the Missoula Light and Power Company and was Director of the First National Bank of Missoula. The Mercantile grew under McLeod's leadership and, because of it, maintained its

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commercial predominance in western Montana well into the twentieth century.

The building was constructed in stages between 1882 and 1904. The original building occupied blocks 11-14 and had a large canopy on its south and west sides. By 1884, a second floor had been added to the west side of the original one-story building (lot 11), and the west awning had been removed. Between 1888 and 1890, a major remodeling of the building took place, which extended the building to its present dimensions. A second floor was added to the rest of the original one-story building and a second, major two-story section was constructed on lots 15-18, to the east of the original building. The architect of these additions was Edward Selander. Sometime between the 1930s and the 1950s, the adjacent Garden City Drug Company building became an integral part of the Mercantile store. The Mercantile building has experienced several remodelings since the construction of these major additions, including the brick infill in the second story windows on the west side and the addition of the first floor brick pilasters and polychroming of the south side apron between the plate glass windows and the sidewalk. The pilasters replaced some of the original cast iron posts.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

McDonald, James, and Gary Williams, Missoula Historical Resource Survey. Missoula: Porky Press, 1980.

McLeod, Paul. "Significant Architecture in Downtown Missoula, Montana," unpublished brochure, n.d.

Progressive Men of the State of Montana. Chicago: A. W. Bowen and Company, 1900.

Toole, John. Men, Money and Power. Missoula: Mountain Press, 1986.

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:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	2	2	7	1	8	3	0	5	1	9	4	8	9	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Original Townsite, Block 2, Lots 11-20.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots upon which the historic building was erected.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title William A. Babcock, Jr., Missoula Historic Preservation Officer  
organization City of Missoula date August 1989  
street & number 201 West Spruce St. telephone 406/721-4700 ext 250  
city or town Missoula state Montana zip code 59802