

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name \_ Huff Memorial Library \_


other names/site number \_\_\_ Teton County Library \_\_\_

2. Location

street & number \_ 320 South King Street \_ not for publication \_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_ Jackson \_\_\_ vicinity \_\_\_  
state \_ Wyoming \_\_\_ code \_ WY \_\_\_ county \_ Teton \_\_\_ code \_ 039 \_\_\_  
zip code \_ 83001 \_

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 10/16/03  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

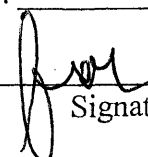
In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, Edson H. Beall, hereby certify that this property is  
 entered in the National Register 12/5/03  
 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): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: library

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: GOVERNMENT Sub: government office

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

vernacular

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete / concrete block

roof wood shingle

walls log

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  1938-1953 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates \_ 1938, 1940, 1945 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation \_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder \_\_\_ Paul Colbron, architect \_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_ Jackson Hole Historical Society \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property \_ less than one acre \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	12	519395	3		
2			4		

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title \_\_\_ Michael Cassity \_\_\_\_\_

organization \_\_\_ Michael Cassity Historical Research and Photography \_ date \_\_\_ February 4, 2003 \_

street & number \_\_\_ 304 West Albuquerque \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_ 918 451-8378 \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_ Broken Arrow \_\_\_\_\_ state \_OK\_ zip code \_\_\_ 74011 \_\_\_\_\_

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_ County of Teton \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_ 200 South Willow Street \_ / P. O. Box 3594 \_\_ telephone \_\_ 307-733-8094 \_

city or town \_ Jackson \_\_\_\_\_ state \_ WY \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_ 83001 \_\_\_\_\_

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Huff Memorial Library

Teton County, Wyoming

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Description

**Summary**

The impressive log building that housed the Huff Memorial Library, also known as the Teton County Library, in Jackson, Wyoming, located a few blocks southeast of the town square, is a single story log building with a partial basement. Constructed between 1938 and 1940, the unimposing, but finely crafted, building once faced the north, Hansen Street, or as it was originally called, South Street; as a result of expansion, however, the building's main entrance is now located on the west, facing King Street. Originally built in a T configuration with the top crossbar of the T on an east-west axis, the addition turned it into an H configuration by adding another crossbar at the bottom of the T. Total building dimensions are approximately seventy feet on the north and ninety feet on the west. Logs are saddle-notched and crowns are sawed straight; all chinking is with quarter-round. Because of the care taken in the library's additions and remodeling, the integrity of style and materials has been maintained, although the size and configuration (and direction) of the building changed with the expansion. The building possesses a high degree of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Exterior Description**

The impressive log building that housed the Teton County Library until 1997 contains three distinct segments, generally arranged in an H shape. The (1) original portion of the building is the northern-most (facing Hansen) with (2) the southern-most being the newest, and (3) the section connecting the two parts of the original construction that was then enlarged during the period of historic significance.

The original (north) section included a main entrance centered in the north elevation. This part of the building has a gable roof with wooden shingles on an east-west axis and the north elevation exhibits perfect symmetry. The entrance is the defining element of the elevation with a significant recession surrounding a wide concrete stoop approached by four steps. Originally a decorative gable rose above the entrance, but that

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was removed at an unknown date and the eave of the roof now is unbroken. Vertical six-light windows on each side flank paired doors in the center of the recessed area. On the main plane of the elevation, paired double-hung windows are centered in each section to the sides of the entry area. Although still functional and used informally, the entry on the north elevation is no longer the main entry. A rectangular bronze plaque is positioned between the entry and the window to its east with the legend: "HUFF MEMORIAL BUILDING ERECTED BY HIS FRIENDS IN MEMORY DR CHARLES W. HUFF 1940". The contents of that plaque's legend, in fact, are important since it reveals the private, voluntary, source of local funding for the project. Above the entrance a smaller shield plaque declares the library "BUILT BY WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION 1939-1940", also important since it documents the remainder of the funding for the building. Immediately west of the entrance a wooden covered slot remains as the vestige of a book deposit. Although one account notes the addition of the concrete steps to the front in 1955, a newspaper photograph of the building in 1945, at the time the deed transferring ownership was presented to the county commissioners, appears to show the concrete steps in place at that time. Within the last two years an access ramp for persons with disability has been added to the steps; constructed of unfinished wood, the ramp, with rails, obviously does not conform to the original design of the building (which indeed proved to be a problem during its years of use as a library) but its essential nature mitigates the impact; moreover, the construction of the ramp is designed to coordinate as well as possible with the building and the weathering of the wood will shortly cause it to blend with the wood of the original structure. While this access ramp thus is not a contributing feature, it does not compromise the integrity of the rest of the structure.

The west elevation includes the west gable of the north wing (approximately thirty feet across) and the west gable of the south wing as well as the connecting portion between the two. That connecting portion is topped by a gabled roof on a north-south axis. This section is a combination of original 1938-1940 construction, a 1945 addition, and a 1978 remodel. The 1945 work, based on the original design which had the building configured to resemble the cross-shape of the American Legion hall, added this south-projecting wing to the original building. In 1978, however, because of problems with ice build-up on the existing roof overhang and because the basement had no ground level entrance, and thus was in violation of code, the recessed elevation was brought forward,

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toward the street, and a new entrance and foyer created. Inside the entrance, steps leading up to the main level of the library and leading down to the basement, with a new children's section, were now protected from the weather and replaced the previous wooden steps which only went to the main level. In order to retain design consistency with the rest of the building, the materials were selected to match the existing structure and a decorative gable was added above the new entrance; that gable effectively echoes the (now removed) gable over the original (north) entrance in the earliest part of the building. In addition, although it should not be overstated, the slight recession of the central portion of the building from the projecting west elevations of the two wings also successfully echoes the original configuration of the entrance to the north. In this way, the 1978 remodel work does not compromise the original structure and its 1945 addition; it is non-contributing only in the sense that this portion of the building has not reached the fifty year requirement and when it does, it will be a fully contributing part of the building.

The newer main entrance in this west elevation consists of large paired doors, each with nine fixed lights in their upper half. Those doors are flanked by double-hung windows with eight lights up and eight lights down; in general configuration this arrangement again resembles that of the original north entry. (The original west elevation and entrance remain inside this entry.) On the north and south wings flanking the entrance section, the west elevations hold symmetrical double-hung windows. In a minor difference between the west elevations of the two wings, purlins are exposed on the newer south wing, but not on the original north wing.

The full extent of the newer south wing is evident from the south. This section—under the gabled roof with an east-west axis—was added in 1971. When the plans for addition were announced in 1970, the local press reported that “plans call for the new construction to match and complement the present building, adding 1600 square feet and almost doubling its size.” Indeed the project was successful and the new wing presents a consistent, harmonious, and effective combination with the earlier parts of the structure. Aside from the materials, the log work, and the general design, the south elevation also is reminiscent of the general configuration of the original north front by dividing the façade into three segments, the center presenting an illusion of being recessed through the use of

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extruding log crowns and four recessed vertical fixed light windows. There are no windows on either side of the elevation, a configuration that frames the central portion effectively. Exactly beneath the large fixed windows, smaller windows in the foundation open into the basement area. Because of its effective blending with earlier parts of the building, this section is non-contributing only because of date, not because it detracts or represents a style or materials different from the earlier building.

The east elevation is almost completely concealed by nearby foliage and is butted up against the property line, but the general pattern is again symmetrical with the two gables on the north and south extending beyond the central connecting portion. The south wing has one double-hung window on its east elevation. The central connecting section has, like its counterpart on the west elevation, been brought forward nearer the plane of the two projecting wings; the date of this modification has not been determined, although it clearly was done after the period of significance. That portion is made of vertical wood planks and includes four metal windows and a metal emergency / service exit. Because this section is effectively concealed by its location and by the adjacent shrubbery and foliage, it does not compromise the appearance of the other parts of the structure.

The Huff Memorial Library / Teton County Library was born in the circumstances of depression and community need and owes its origins to an ambitious plan that had to be pieced together from individual contributions and federal work-relief funds. In the same manner, the building itself has been pieced together over the years, but it has been done with a keen eye to integrity of purpose and function, and consistency with original design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The expansion of the library has caused significant alteration of the building, but the original portion, especially its familiar north elevation which served as the hallmark of the structure, retains its original appearance and the additions to the library have been crafted with sensitivity to its original character. Indeed, even though the address of the structure changed with the south addition so that now the building faces west instead of north, the original address numbers remain on the front elevation at the entrance, although they have been painted to blend with the door and window surrounds. Thus the building remains. And by some lights, as the community has grown and developed new styles of construction out of scale

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with its historic past, the old library may well remain in 2003, as it was judged in 1940,  
“Jackson’s most beautiful public building.”

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Huff Memorial Library

Teton County, Wyoming

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Narrative Statement of Significance

**Summary**

The building that housed the Huff Memorial Library, also known as the Teton County Library, until 1997 is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because of its association with events that have made a contribution to the broad patterns of history in the community. In the organization of the library and in the construction of the building to house it, both in the period 1937 to 1940, the library reflected the growth of the community and also the creative ways in which city, county, and federal agencies cooperated to complement private efforts committed to the development of this crucial resource for the community. During the remainder of the period of significance, 1940 to 1953, the library maintained that relationship to the community in its volunteer support, in its public involvement, and in its steady growth as it emerged as one of the central institutions in the community. The significance of this building rests in its association with the growth of the community in ways that reach beyond traditional conceptions of education, or even beyond economics and culture, ways that reflect community needs and participation and commitment. Many institutions such as libraries are public in name, but this one derived from the people throughout the community, including people from its most renowned leaders to its humblest citizens who shared in common their value of the written word. This process of historical change thus reflected the essential patterns of historical change at the local level.

**Historical Background**

A decade and a half into the twentieth century, the new community of Jackson was about the same age as the century. One of a handful of settlements spread around the valley known as Jackson's Hole (later, Jackson Hole), the economy was overwhelmingly agricultural and the population widely dispersed. The white settlement of Jackson Hole came late by national standards, with homesteads appearing in the land records and in the valley only in the 1880s and 1890s. A harsh climate limited the economic attraction of the area and the population remained small, with concentrations here and there in the

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southern end of the valley and the town of Jackson itself did not emerge until the turn of the century. At first the economy was almost exclusively ranching and in the second decade of the twentieth century the only indication of change in this was the establishment of a few ranches that catered more to bringing in dudes than to raising cattle—sometimes despite the original intentions of their owners otherwise—as the JY Ranch and then the Bar BC Ranch and then the White Grass Ranch on the west side of the Snake River brought in well-to-do people for adventure and relaxation. The town of Jackson, with its handful of merchants, catered to the needs of the ranchers but increasingly to the visitors to those ranches from outside.

The social, cultural, and educational institutions of the town were modest, although the people of the valley proved to be a sociable and cooperative group, gathering for entertainment despite the miles separating them, and the attractiveness of the area to outside elites brought an additional element of sophistication to what might otherwise have been a rusticated neighborhood. But those visitors from the outside world tended to stay for the summer only and the dispersed population remained a serious impediment to the development of institutions of education and literacy. The pattern tended, in fact, to be that of informal beginnings of schools, clubs, the hospital, and the library, in which interested citizens would utilize the facilities of an existing organization until it had sufficient means to develop on its own—a sort of frontier incubator process. In the case of private organizations—like the American Legion—sometimes they managed to generate sufficient resources so that they could strike out on their own supported by their membership and community contributions. In the case of public, and quasi-public, organizations, they started out as private institutions until they outgrew both their temporary quarters and their existing population base. Characteristically, moreover, at each step, even beyond the maturing of the institution into a permanent operation and facility, these organizations demonstrated more than casual dependence on the contributions—labor, money, leadership, and good will—of the wider public in the community. This is what happened with the hospital in Jackson, and this is what also happened with the county library.

The first library in Jackson Hole organized in 1915 and was known as St. John's Public Library; it was located in the Episcopal St. John's House. Because books had

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been sent to the Episcopal Church in Jackson in plentiful numbers, the church decided to make them available to the public and established a library board of prominent citizens like Dr. C. W. Huff, Genevieve Van Vleck, and Marta Winger, to administer the service. The rules were posted in the local paper and allowed anyone to participate in the library with annual payment of fifty cents per family. It would serve people throughout the valley and indicated that "special arrangements for the withdrawal of books may be made by ranchers living in remote districts." The sources do not exist that reveal how well this library system worked; doubtless the service remained small, was limited in space and staff, and two decades later had only developed a collection of probably six hundred fifty books. A substantial collection for a small community, that number, but the town and county were growing in these years of increased tourism activity that already appeared to be overtaking ranching as the dominant economic activity of the valley. And certainly the institutional and physical infrastructure administering the library system fell short of the needs of the expanding community. In that year, 1935, a movement was underway to establish a permanent public library. The local Lions Club, upon hearing that the county commissioners were contemplating the establishment of a public library, launched inquiries to determine if it was possible to create a Carnegie library, but the Carnegie program no longer existed.<sup>1</sup> Still, the discussions of the need for a library continued.

#### Creation of a County Library, 1937-1940

In 1937 a small group of people began to work for the creation of such an institution and solicited residents for the donation of books. "It was Mrs. Edith Mercill and Mrs. Helen Benson and me. . . . We were avid readers. We just thought now nice it would be to have a library. Of course, we didn't have a sou but we talked and talked . . .," explained Stella Weston many years later.<sup>2</sup> Their first impulse was to establish a subscription library, paid

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<sup>1</sup> "Carnegie Library for County, Hotel for Jackson Are among Important Questions Discussed by Lions Club," *Jackson's Hole Courier*, February 7, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> "Library Celebrates New Year with Fiftieth Anniversary Tea," undated newsclip [January 1988], Teton County Library file, Jackson Hole Historical Society Collections.



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for by those who joined the organization, but quickly realized the shortcomings of such an operation. Evidently, as Elizabeth C. Hayden, a former board member, recalled, "They interviewed the county commissioners and finally decided to take the plunge and start a county library."<sup>3</sup> The unusual nature of the residents of Jackson Hole assured a significant collection, as dude ranches like the White Grass and Three Rivers donated books and as wealthy residents like Elizabeth Hayden, Mrs. Stanley Resor, and Elena B. Hunt, donated their book collections to the library.<sup>4</sup> The library operated out of the north room of the American Legion building when it began to circulate books on January 8, 1938. Initially, the library was staffed by volunteers and funding came from community barbecues sponsored by the Friends of the Library.<sup>5</sup> With those funds, the committee was able to hire a librarian to assume the duties and Juliane Tanner, former teacher at the log school in South Park, and also former County Clerk of Teton County, took the position in 1938.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in important ways the emergence of the library reflected the growth of the county's public infrastructure. Teton County had separated from Lincoln County only in 1921 and even at that, for a considerable period had no county courthouse of its own and conducted business out of the home of the clerk—the same Juliane Tanner—until it could move into quarters rented from Charles Fox, the pre-eminent local builder. The courthouse was not constructed until the 1930s and then the county had its own building. This was the same pattern that the library followed—at first in the Episcopal church, then in the American Legion (also designed by Charles Fox), and then in its own building.

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth C. Hayden, "Teton County Library: Its Birth and Growth," *Wyoming Library Roundup*, X (December 1954), 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Library Celebrates New Year with Fiftieth Anniversary Tea," undated newsclip [1988], Teton County Library file, Jackson Hole Historical Society Collections.

<sup>5</sup> Fern K. Nelson, *This Was Jackson's Hole: Incidents and Profiles from the Settlement of the Jackson Hole* (Glendo, Wyoming: High Plains Press, 1994), 290.

<sup>6</sup> Nelson, *This Was Jackson's Hole*, 289-290.

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They received gifts for the library—a physician from town “gave us an old fashioned roll top desk for the library and that was the only desk we had.” Another resident built shelves for the books.<sup>7</sup> And the library served a broad public from the north wing of the American Legion. Edith Mercill, one of the board members volunteering to work at the library, as was the practice of board members, recalled once when she worked at the library and was told by a patron, “You don’t know what this place means to me. I love to read and I have never been able to buy one book but I can come down here and sit and read.”<sup>8</sup>

### **A New Building, 1938-1940**

At the same time, though, this arrangement was regarded as temporary and a committee also began to devise ways to finance and construct a building to serve as a permanent home for the library. The fundraisers continued—“by subscription, by tag days during rodeo, through benefit barbecues given by the White Grass and Bear Paw dude ranches”<sup>9</sup>—but more was needed to construct a separate building for the library. As Edith Mercill recalled, “we couldn’t get many donations because they thought we were crazy. They said, ‘There’s no need for a library in Jackson’. We had to fight that.” Mercill’s husband, Billy Mercill, however was one of the county commissioners and he ultimately persuaded the county to take on the library project.<sup>10</sup>

The movement for a new library building converged with another effort, the

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<sup>7</sup> Edith Mercill, interviewed by Jo Anne Byrd, 1983, Jackson Hole Historical Society Collections, transcript, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Mercill interview, transcript, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Hayden, “Teton County Library: Its Birth and Growth,” 2.

<sup>10</sup> Mercill interview, transcript, p. 2.

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desire to memorialize Dr. Charles Huff, longtime community physician, who died in the late summer of 1937. Charles Huff graduated from medical school at the University of Maryland, completed his internships in the East, and then accepted the invitation of the Episcopal bishop of Wyoming to establish a medical practice in Jackson, Wyoming, sponsored by that church. In 1913 Huff arrived and for nearly a quarter century, until he died, he served as the only physician in the community, and indeed, for some of that time as the only physician in a radius of more than a hundred miles.<sup>11</sup> He soon began construction of a hospital, made of logs at St. John's Episcopal Church, with the support of the residents, the church, and summering guests of the dude ranches, and that building then expanded several times with the same support, and became separate from the church in 1928. Stories abound of his exceptional service as a physician, including one description that summarizes his medical service as "almost 25 years of constant day-and-night practice, ministering to the sick, closing the eyes of the dead, ushering in new lives. By horse-and-buggy, by automobile, on skis or snowshoes, on horseback, by sled, and on foot, he called on the homes in the valley, and was to all the beloved 'country doctor' as well as the skilful surgeon."<sup>12</sup> Recognized nationally for his skill, his service to the community also received outside notice when *The Modern Hospital* noted that St. John's Hospital in Jackson "represents the confidence of practically the entire community in one man, Dr. Charles W. Huff."<sup>13</sup> That contribution to the community, however, was not restricted to his medical practice. Huff also served as long-time town mayor, as chair of the county Civil Works Administration in the Depression, as chair of the National Recovery Administration's operation in Jackson, and "he holds offices in the church, clubs, schools—wherever leadership is required."<sup>14</sup> Charles Huff, indeed, had been one

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<sup>11</sup> Raymond P. Sloan, "Log Cabin in Wyoming Serves as St. John's Hospital," *The Modern Hospital*, XLII (March 1934), 68.

<sup>12</sup> "Teton County Memorial Library," Jackson Hole *Guide*, April 21, 1966.

<sup>13</sup> Sloan, "Log Cabin in Wyoming Serves as St. John's Hospital," 67.

<sup>14</sup> Sloan, "Log Cabin in Wyoming Serves as St. John's Hospital," 71.

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of the initiators of the “public library” at St. John’s in 1915. As mayor, he played a key role in securing “an adequate sanitary water supply for the town.”<sup>15</sup> When Huff died—at age 49—in September 1937, the funeral “was without doubt the largest ever held in Jackson Hole,” and the town council and city employees followed the hearse to the city limits.<sup>16</sup>

The first proposal to establish a memorial to Dr. Huff was for some kind of memorial in the center of the town square, the recently landscaped George Washington Memorial Park. The original plans called for a fountain to be constructed at the center of the park, and some sentiment favored the building of a memorial, perhaps the fountain itself, in his memory at that place. The chairman of the fund donated in Huff’s memory, Mildred Buchenroth, however, had also chaired the committee to create Washington Park. Mayor Harry Clissold urged Buchenroth to consult Huff’s widow about the possibility of using that memorial money for a new library, and she agreed.<sup>17</sup> So the library committee then solicited more contributions, in Huff’s memory, for the new library.

As Mildred Buchenroth emphasized, according to one news story, “building the library was a community-wide project. Donations came from most every valley resident

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<sup>15</sup> “Teton County Memorial Library,” Jackson Hole *Guide*, April 21, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> “Funeral Services for Dr. C. W. Huff Held here Friday,” Jackson’s Hole *Courier*, September 22, 1938.

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth R. Brownell, “The Teton County Library: Past, Present and Future,” Report of a survey conducted in September – October 1964 at the request of the Teton County Commissioners and the Teton County Library Board, May 1965, p. 3, copy located in Jackson Hole Historical Society collections; Mildred Buchenroth quoted in Nancy Kessler, “The Teton County Library: 50 Years Serving Jackson,” Jackson Hole *Guide*, January 6, 1988.

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in honor of the doctor.”<sup>18</sup> The committee was able to purchase land at the corner of King and South Streets for a reasonable sum from Wilfred Neilson. Paul Colbron, a New York architect who summered at the Aspen Ranch near modern Teton Village (and who may even have designed the ranch),<sup>19</sup> donated plans for the building—a design based on the American Legion building with reading rooms to each side of the foyer. Grand Teton National Park (still the smaller, original park and not yet the modern park) Superintendent Samuel Woodring donated logs from the park for the building—the trees evidently having been cut for road and trail construction—provided that the library committee would haul them to the work site. In addition, the committee borrowed money to build the library, securing a special low interest rate from the bank’s president, Mildred Buchenroth’s husband Felix.<sup>20</sup> This was an impressive beginning and the library had a firm footing in private donations, but that was not enough to build the structure.

As early as January 1938, in fact just three weeks after the make-shift library in the north wing of the American Legion home opened, Mayor Harry Clissold submitted a proposal for a project to be supported by the Works Progress Administration for the “construction of Library building within limits of Town of Jackson.” The Town of Jackson would be the official sponsor and the mayor, Harry Clissold himself, was designated the superintendent of the work. As the application stated, “this would be a very worthwhile project, and a library at this time is badly needed, due to the fact that at the present there is no library in the County.” The initial application indicated that the building would be constructed on property owned by the town, in a city park, and asked the federal government for \$7,132, or two-thirds of the total cost.<sup>21</sup> Within two months,

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<sup>18</sup> Kessler, “The Teton County Library.”

<sup>19</sup> Connie Wieneke, “Library Celebrates New Year with Fiftieth Anniversary Tea,” undated newsclip [January 1988], Teton County Library file, Jackson Hole Historical Society Collections.

<sup>20</sup> Kessler, “The Teton County Library.”

<sup>21</sup> WPA Project Proposal Local No. 20-18, January 28, 1938, in National Archives and

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on March 26, 1938, the WPA approved the project and authorized the project to go forward "any time there are men available to work."<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, after review and revision, the WPA allocated \$7182 for the construction of the library, an amount that was almost exclusively designated for labor); the town was committed to donate \$3593, of which only \$400 would be labor and the remainder going for non-labor items. At the time the WPA approval was announced, the local newspaper indicated that the building committee had already raised the balance beyond the federal funds. It also noted that the location had not been selected yet, although two lots between the C. R. Van Vleck and H. G. Weston homes "are given the edge at present." The building would be "a log construction similar to that of the American Legion hall."<sup>23</sup>

With the WPA contributing the labor, the Forest Service contributing the logs, private donations (although the town was the ostensible donor) providing other material, virtually the entire community came together to create the library. Cash donations and work donations made up the bulk of the total effort. The city appears to have provided landscaping of the grounds and the county provided a small operating budget. It would seem that everybody in the county contributed, and that may not be far off. Certainly that was what the committee (chaired by H. E. Clissold) had in mind. As one news account of the project noted, "It is the plan of the committee to contact every individual in Teton County."<sup>24</sup>

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Records Administration, RG-69, Official Project No. 465-83-2-49, Works Progress Administration.

<sup>22</sup> F. M. Strong to Carl Long, Supervising Timekeeper, WPA in Rock Springs, March 26, 1938, in National Archives and Records Administration, RG-69, Official Project No. 465-83-2-49, Works Progress Administration.

<sup>23</sup> "Grant of \$7182.00 Approved for Library Building," Jackson's Hole *Courier*, March 24, 1938.

<sup>24</sup> "Work Started Tuesday on Huff Memorial Library," Jackson's Hole *Courier*, October 27, 1938.

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Thus it was that in October 1938 the local welfare board certified a crew to perform the work and construction of the library began. At that time, logs were already on the ground, men were working to peel the logs, and excavation for the basement was set to begin the following week.<sup>25</sup> Exactly how much construction took place during the winter is unclear, but by spring another force had intruded. On April 27, 1939, the Timekeeper / Foreman of the project filed a change of construction, certifying that work on the library had been suspended as of that date. The reason was simple: "Not sufficient workers to warrant operation at present. Workers transferred to more necessary project."<sup>26</sup> One report, however, indicates that an estimated sixty-five percent of the building was complete by that date.<sup>27</sup> After that the construction appears to have languished and was not resumed on a regular basis until the spring of 1940. In late February 1940, it is clear that workers were focusing on the septic system drain, preparing the concrete basement floor and steps, installing doors and windows, and insulating the ceiling.<sup>28</sup> Even so, at least a portion of that labor was donated. Edith

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<sup>25</sup> "Work Started Tuesday on Huff Memorial Library," Jackson's Hole *Courier*, October 27, 1938.

<sup>26</sup> "Notice of Change in Project Status," Carl Long, Supervising Timekeeper, April 27, 1939, in National Archives and Records Administration, RG-69, Official Project No. 465-83-2-49, Works Progress Administration.

<sup>27</sup> Work Projects Administration [the Works Progress Administration had been renamed], Report of Accomplishment for period October 25, 1938 to April 27, 1939, in National Archives and Records Administration, RG-69, Official Project No. 465-83-2-49, Works Progress Administration.

<sup>28</sup> WPA Report of Progress and Cost for period February 20 to March 4, 1940, in National Archives and Records Administration, RG-69, Official Project No. 465-83-2-49, Works Progress Administration.

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Mercill reported that “when they built the library our husbands went down there and insulated the whole building. Olaus Murie, my husband [Billy Mercill], and Walt [Spicer?] and a couple of others insulated the building.”<sup>29</sup> The work went quickly in the spring, and on May 16, 1940 the work was certified as completed.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Huff Memorial Library, 1940-1953**

Once the building was completed, the library continued to demonstrate the same broad range of support from citizens and public agencies that had been responsible for its creation. Before it opened, the library had to be organized and its administrative apparatus developed. The State Librarian traveled to Jackson to assist the board in organizing the library so that it would conform to state laws and procedures.<sup>31</sup> Reportedly, the National Youth Administration donated the effort to catalog books. Since the new library did not even have chairs, Mrs. Hammond of the White Grass Ranch hosted a barbecue to raise money for “a set of beautiful rustic chairs” that were then purchased.<sup>32</sup> When the library opened in its new building, it had seven hundred volumes.

On August 8, 1940, the library opened in a grand dedication at which Struthers Burt, celebrated author and dude ranch owner in the valley, presented the main address; at least a portion of that address was a eulogy for Dr Huff.<sup>33</sup> When it opened, the local

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<sup>29</sup> Mercill interview, transcript p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> WPA “Notice of Initiation of Change in Project Status,” May 20, 1940, in National Archives and Records Administration, RG-69, Official Project No. 465-83-2-49, Works Progress Administration.

<sup>31</sup> Hayden, “Teton County Library: Its Birth and Growth,” 3.

<sup>32</sup> “Teton County Memorial Library,” Jackson Hole *Guide*, April 21, 1966.

<sup>33</sup> “Dedication for Library to be Held Here Thursday, August Eighth,” Jackson’s Hole



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newspaper proclaimed “the library, without doubt, Jackson’s most beautiful public building.”<sup>34</sup>

The building is significant for the circumstances of its construction, inasmuch as it represented a community-wide cooperative effort, the coordination of various agencies, the contributions of private individuals, and a voluntary effort reflecting wide support. After the completion of construction, however, it still demonstrated that continuing relationship with the community. First of all, there were financial loose ends to be addressed. Despite the application and official records of the WPA, the library was not constructed on city property, private funds provided much of the material for construction, and the county did not own the building. Legally, the library was not exactly public. Secondly, money was still owed. By the time the building was completed, the cost had climbed to around twelve thousand dollars and almost two thousand dollars (one report indicates \$1600) in debt remained outstanding. Despite the fact that the project had been “subscribed to by dudes and residents in all walks of life,” payment was not complete. Moreover, the members of the building committee had “personally underwritten notes for the balance.”<sup>35</sup> A fund-raising campaign was launched after the building opened, and, Mildred Buchenroth explained, “the building committee continued to ask for donations to pay off the interest every year.”<sup>36</sup>

The fundraising continued and ultimately generated enough money to pay off the notes. In 1945, the Library Board, now known as the Trustees of the Huff Memorial

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*Courier*, August 1, 1940; Hayden, “Teton County Library: Its Birth and Growth,” 2.

<sup>34</sup> “Dedication for Library to be Held Here Thursday, August Eighth,” Jackson’s Hole *Courier*, August 1, 1940.

<sup>35</sup> “Dedication for Library to be Held Here Thursday, August Eighth,” Jackson’s Hole *Courier*, August 1, 1940.

<sup>36</sup> Buchenroth in Kessler, “The Teton County Library: 50 Years Serving Jackson,” 11.

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Building, and consisting of Harry Clissold (chair), Mildred Buchenroth, George Lamb, and R. Bruce Porter, familiar names and leaders in the community each one, presented the deed to the property to Teton County, with the provision "that this building will always house the Teton County Library." The commissioners, quite pleased with the developments undertaken by the board and the community's volunteer actions, noted that they "express the gratitude of the entire community to the Trustees of the Huff Memorial having so successfully carried thru to a conclusion the building of a fitting Memorial to our late dearly beloved benefactor, Dr. Chas. W. Huff."<sup>37</sup>

Another indication of its close relationship with the community it served was the staffing of the library at first by dedicated individuals, even though those people were not professionally trained and certified librarians; the paid staff members thus, in one library history, "were considered more clerical than professional." As that document reports, "This situation led to a practice which seems unusual among libraries, namely, that the board members have performed certain functions ordinarily the duties of the librarian."<sup>38</sup> (One subsequent library director, in fact indicated the extent of board participation in library administration by questioning the choices of board members in identifying books to be added to the library's collections.) This is not to say that the library ran as an amateur organization, for it clearly did not. After the initial organizational advice and consultation from the state librarian, the Teton County Library began to use the American Library Association list and the *Horn Book* as guides for acquisition and collection development. It also became a member of the Bibliographical Center for Research—an interlibrary loan system, which by the end of the period of historic significance had become in the words of one board member "the tail that wags the dog. Ordering books from the Center and returning them is now one of the librarian's most important jobs." Within a decade and a half, the library was part of a professional network that enabled it

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<sup>37</sup> Official Proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners of Teton County, Wyoming, volume 2, p. 403; February 5, 1945.

<sup>38</sup> Brownell, "The Teton County Library: Past, Present and Future," 4.

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to reduce the geographic isolation of this community.<sup>39</sup> The contribution of community members thus continued well past the construction of the building and remained an integral part of the functioning of the library. Exactly how long the board members provided their participatory service function is unclear, although it appears to have endured throughout the period of historic significance. In 1943 the county commissioners reduced the size of the library board from six to three, after three members left town during the war. A 1954 history of the library reported that "The library has so operated ever since, though the board members feel that there is work enough to do to warrant a six-man board."<sup>40</sup>

In the years following the opening of the library, the library served a wide variety of needs in the community and, reflecting the growth of the town and county, it also grew dramatically. One of the first substantial developments of the library was a separate children's section, including not only a separate collection of books and periodicals, but also appropriate furnishings. The library also continued to generate a significant portion of its own funding with activities such as the silver tea during Book Week, "the proceeds from which furnish the periodicals or any other purchase of books ordinarily too ambitious for the budget." It also created an additional bond with the community in its memorial book system, an arrangement by which the holdings were increased by encouraging patrons to donate books in the memory of a deceased friend, family member, or colleague, and which resulted in the acquisition of items, especially more expensive publications, that would not otherwise have been possible.

The library launched a variety of programs to generate more interest, to encourage reading, and to make the collections of the library more accessible. Dr. Elizabeth Brownell chronicled some of these programs that involved building strong ties with the Jackson Hole community and beyond: In 1949 it established its first book club; in 1944 it sponsored for the first time poster and art competitions; in 1949, book reading contests;

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<sup>39</sup> Hayden, "Teton County Library: Its Birth and Growth," 3.

<sup>40</sup> Hayden, "Teton County Library: Its Birth and Growth," 3.

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in 1946 it dedicated a special shelf of books for boy scouts; in 1953 it held book review contests in the schools. Moreover, in 1946 it began sending books to the community at Alta, by a quirk of geography and state borders a community that can generally be reached only by going through Idaho. By 1953, clearly, the Huff Memorial Library had established itself as one of the central public institutions of Jackson Hole.

**Teton County Library, 1953-1997**

Since the end of the period of historic significance of the library, the library, of course, has grown with the community and required expansion until the physical limits had been reached and a new facility was required. At some point the library came to be referred to more as the Teton County Library and less often as the Huff Memorial Library. In 1945, a small addition on the south of the building increased the space for the library's holdings, and that served well until 1971 when a major expansion added 1600 square feet to the building in a new east-west rectangle that turned the T configuration into an H.

Along the way various milestones reflected the growth and the changes at the library. One measure of that maturing process is the receipt in 1962 by the library of the Dorothy Canfield Fisher award for best library in Wyoming. Of course, other measures confirm the growth. In 1944, the library's circulation totaled 8118. By 1967 circulation had climbed to 24,425 and in 1987, circulation through November had reached 91,560. The first year the library counted its users, 1944, 4439 had visited the library. In 1987 that number reached 59,405. In 1987, in other words, it was clear that the library use was continuing to grow at an accelerating rate, and that the building housing it could not accommodate further expansion. This presented a thorny issue. In 1987 Nancy Effinger, Director of the library since 1982, reported that she and others preferred the small size of the library, but she also noted that "at the same time this library is strapped for space. We did an in-house survey and most of the people said they are happy with the library. . . . They are attached to this building. Of course, they want more books, but in the same amount of space." The attachment to the building, to the old library, was indeed strong. When, a decade later, the decision was made to move to a new, larger building in another

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part of town, some in the community found it difficult to make the adjustment and even opposed the move. Effinger, who was still Director, noted that "we're very attached to this building . . . . There are a lot of memories, but it's just becoming impossible to work and grow in here." A reporter added that "it's not just the books but the spirit inside the tiny log cabin many people are afraid won't make the trip across town."<sup>41</sup>

Ultimately, however, the new library was constructed and in 1997 the library vacated the building that had emerged from the sweat and toil of individuals, from the monetary contributions of people of all walks of life in the county, and from the creative alignment of town, county, and federal agencies in the years of economic depression. Upon the departure of the library from the building, other county offices proposed their relocation to the log structure and ultimately the office of the County Engineer moved to the building. A ramp was added for access by people with disabilities, long a need recognized by library officials, but the building otherwise remains the same. The wooden-flapped book drop on the north portico, the medallion indicating the work performed by the Work Projects Administration, and the street numbers remain visible, though unobtrusive, on that original main entrance elevation. While the building has to some extent taken on a new identity, its appearance remains the same, and the common reference to it is simple: the old library building, a name that it will continue to bear into the future.

The significance of Huff Memorial Library, or Teton County Library, is at once complex and obvious, for it is an institution and building easily taken for granted yet vital in the smallest details. It is an institution that conveys knowledge and thereby fulfills the promise of education in the community, but it is more than that. The library ostensibly provides books for people to read, but it also provides paths to intellectual growth charted only by the man, woman, or child who seeks to grow; it is also a refuge, physical, intellectual, and social. As Director Nancy Effinger once observed, "The library is a comfortable place, . . . Lots of people, especially in Jackson, might find it more spacious and comfortable than their own home. It's a stimulating environment." And it is a connection to the past that is valued throughout the community. As Nancy Effinger

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<sup>41</sup> Peter Brace, "Library Opens New Chapter," *Jackson Hole Guide*, April 5, 1995.

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described it in 1988, "The library should be a cornerstone of the community. The building represents not just the library, but the whole community." That is the way it has been historically in Jackson and that is the central reason for its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1 and 2 of Block 11 of the Second Cache Creek Addition to the Town of Jackson, Wyoming.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with Huff Memorial (Teton County) Library.