

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Mill House

other name/site number: Stone building #310

2. Location

street & number: 4.5 miles southeast of Lewistown

not for publication: n/a  
vicinity: X

city/town: Lewistown

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Fergus

code: 027

zip code: 59457

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide X locally. (   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maude Long SHPO 12-11-93  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency or bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
   see continuation sheet

determined eligible for the  
National Register

see continuation sheet  
determined not eligible for the  
National Register

see continuation sheet  
removed from the National Register  
   see continuation sheet

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Patrick Andrews

Date of Action

1/27/93

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building(s)

Number of Resources within Property

|              |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Contributing | Noncontributing          |
| <u>  2  </u> | <u>  1  </u> building(s) |
| —            | — sites                  |
| —            | — structures             |
| —            | — objects                |
| <u>  2  </u> | <u>  1  </u> Total       |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Stone Buildings in Lewistown, Montana and Vicinity

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Industry/Processing/Extraction - energy facility

Current Functions:

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Other: Gable front and wing mill

Materials:

foundation: stone  
walls: stone  
roof: wood shingles  
other: built-up asphalt roof on flat portions

Narrative Description

Converted from an electric power mill, this coursed ashlar building is uniquely sited as it partially bridges upper Spring Creek in Fergus County. The form of the house is composed of two central original masses with some newer additions projected from the strength of the original design. The dominant original mass is a stone, two-story, steeply gabled-roofed, rectangular volume that is immediately adjacent and parallel to the creek. It extends over a deep eddy that was once the outlet for the water that drove the water wheel.

Running perpendicular to the two-story portion is a one-story medium slope gable-roofed stone wing that is approximately half the width of the larger wing and extends from the dominant mass into the bank of the south-facing valley formed by the stream. This extension sits upon a concrete foundation. There is a central stair at the intersection of the two wings

United States Department of the Interior  
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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Mill House/Stone Buildings of Lewistown MPD

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that extends up under a projection of the two-story roof; exterior walls around the stair above the one-story roof are of wood frame and are sided with vertical cedar siding. One-story flat roof elements, covered with tar and gravel, have been added across the front (streamside of the two-story volume) and turn the corner of the downstream elevation to extend the full length of the combined wings. The flat roof parallel to the stream covers a deck only; the deeper dimension of the flat roof additions along the side houses rooms and the greater depth created by the difference in width of the two wings serves to house a recessed entryway and carport. A full-width one-story shed roof addition extends across the upstream end of the two-story volume only to complete the basic shape of the structure and its modifications. The gable roofs are parallel to the long dimension of the wings and are of wood shake with shake ridges. The medium width wood fascia is plumb and the soffit is boxed.

The stone walls are equally coursed cut stone at lower walls that blend into smaller squared stone in upper gable walls. Mortar joints are raised, wide and flat. Evidence of minor repointing exists along the northeast wall of the residence. Repointing was done using a gray mortar containing a high content of Portland cement. Lintels are simple jack arches constructed with voussoirs and keystones that are flush with the plane of the wall; window sills are single stone pieces that project very slightly from the plane of the wall; they are not troughed but are downsloped for drainage. All exposed stone faces are pitched. Walls on the addition are wood frame and surfaced with vertical wood siding.

Windows in the upper story of the stone walls are original wood double-hung, 6-over-6 units. They are flanked with more recent wood shutters that are decorative only. Newer windows in lower story additions are fixed or casement. A pair of wood French doors with full rectangular lights is centered on the bottom floor of the stream side elevation and access the deck. Window placement on the streamside elevation is symmetrical with three equal spaced upper individual openings; the French doors have a large individual opening on each side that is midway between the doors and the end-walls. A single brick chimney projects from the ridge of the one-story stone wing; a larger pair of metal chimneys project from the two-story roof near the intersection of the two wings. They are housed in wood enclosures. The two wings, although they are modern constructions and are large, do not seriously detract from the rectangular stone buildings. In essence, they open up the house and give feeling to the building. While this residence was originally used as a power generating plant, no evidence of electrical generation has been retained.

There are two outbuildings, in addition to the residence, that lie upon the property. The first outbuilding, northwest of the residence, is a single story, wood frame garage. This building has been utilized as a shop and is a noncontributing building. The garage has a gable roof with composition asphalt shingles, a single, overhead four-light garage door, and plywood siding with decorative wooden plats. The building sits upon a concrete foundation.

The second outbuilding, located northeast of the residence, is a contributing building. This half-enclosed/half-open garage is gabled with asphalt shingles and has a wood frame. The garage is sided with board and batten siding and has a wood-pier foundation. Novelty siding encloses the gable ends, and the building houses a four-panel wood door.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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**Applicable National Register Criteria:** A, C

**Areas of Significance:** Architecture  
Industry

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):** n/a

**Period(s) of Significance:** 1903 - 1928

**Significant Person(s):** n/a

**Significant Dates:** 1903

**Cultural Affiliation:** n/a

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

This stone mill house derives significance from its association with early stone building traditions in Lewistown as well as from its association with early power generation in the area. This building was constructed with locally-quarried sandstone from the Big Springs Stone Quarry, a few miles north of the property. The stone building traditions imported by Croatian immigrants are readily displayed by the stonework of the Mill House.

The Mill House has been carefully converted to residential use, and although contemporary additions are evident and do compromise the historic integrity of house to a small degree, its design and location speak strongly to its original use. These alterations are reversible. The original design and stone construction are intact and this house remains a strong contributor to Lewistown's stone resources.

The Mill House served as the first power plant in the Lewistown area designed specifically for the purpose of electrical power generation. This house was built in 1903 when Lewistown was just beginning its boom years. Population grew rapidly during the early years of the twentieth century, increasing the demand for electricity. Early in the history of the Lewistown area, the benefits of Big Spring Creek were seen to extend beyond the pure water it offered. The spring is located above the city and, as a result, was seen as an ideal source for hydroelectric power.

In 1891, several residents of the city gathered to form an electric company. The Lewistown Electric Light Company was incorporated on February 8, 1893 by N.M. Erickson, Cyrus Stiles, and W.C. Walldorf. The first electric service in the city was provided to the Court House in September 1893. The Power Brothers Store (owned by T.C. Power of Helena) was the first business to install electricity during the same year. Service was provided from dusk to midnight.<sup>1</sup>

A new electric company was formed in Lewistown in 1898. This was the Citizen's Electric Company, incorporated on January 18, 1898. Expansion of this company occurred rapidly. John L. Bright, an important figure in the region, purchased controlling interest in Citizen's Electric Company in June of 1903 and immediately increased the capital stock even further in order to build the main powerhouse 6,300 feet below the Big Springs. This site produced 450 kilowatts of electricity for the city of Lewistown. Power generating equipment occupied the main floor of the mill, while the upper level served as living quarters for the operators.

In 1909, Mr. Bright's interest in the Citizen's Electric Company was bought out by S.W. Gebo, owner of the Lewistown Coal, Gas, and Light Company and regional entrepreneur. Creditors, however, soon caught up with Mr. Gebo, and his shares in Citizen's Electric and the plant at Big Springs Creek were seized and sold at public auction to Max Hebgen and Con Kelly.

On April 14, 1914, at a stockholders meeting of the Montana Power Company (formed through a series of mergers in 1912), record was made of the sale of the Lewistown Electric and Power company (formerly the Citizen's Electric Company) to the MPC for \$300,000 and the assumption of a \$100,000 mortgage. The Lewistown Electric and Power Company was officially dissolved by an order of the court on December 9, 1915.<sup>2</sup> The Upper Spring Creek Power Plant continued operation as a Montana Power facility until 1928.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Babbie Deal and Loretta McDonald. The Heritage Book of the Original Fergus County Area (self-published, 1976.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Cort Freeman. Letter containing copies of Montana Power archive materials (April, 30, 1992).

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

Abstract of Title

Tax Cards

Deal, Babbie and McDonald, Loretta. The Heritage Book of the Original Fergus County Area. self-published. 1976.

Freeman, Cort. Letter containing copies of Montana Power archive materials. April 30, 1992.

GCM Services, Inc. (Dale Gray, Garren Meyer, Jim Durran). Montana Cultural Resources Inventory for the Mill House. March 21, 1992. Report located at Helena, MT: SHPO.

Johnson, R.L. and Anita, interview, 3/87, by Ellen Sievert.

The Heritage Book of Fergus County, page 517.

Sievert, Ken and Ellen, "Historical and Architectural Survey of Sandstone Resources of Lewistown, Montana," unpublished manuscript, March 31, 1987. Available at State Historic Preservation Office.

**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

|                        |             |                |                 |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>UTM References:</b> | <b>Zone</b> | <b>Easting</b> | <b>Northing</b> |
| A                      | 12          | 624840         | 5208420         |

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The site lies in the NE¼ of the SE¼ of Section 31, T15N, R19E. It is reached by proceeding on State Route 466 five-tenths of a mile from the junction of State Routes 466 and 238. It is described as follows: Starting at a point from which the quarter corner on the East side of said Section 31 bears N 85 degrees 55'30" E 842 feet and running thence West 511.4 feet to the East Bank of Spring Creek; thence running southeasterly along the East Bank of said Spring Creek 857 feet more or less; thence East 310 feet; thence N 35 degrees 23" W 200 feet; thence N 23 degrees 08' W 307 feet to the place of beginning, less that certain right-of-way conveyed to the State of Montana for the benefit and use of its State Highway Commission by instrument recorded in Book 164 of Deeds at page 712, Fergus County, Montana.

**Boundary Justification**

This site is part of a discontinuous multiple property nomination. This specific parcel includes only the land upon which the building is located.

**11. Form Prepared By**

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>name/title:</b> Jeff Sheldon, Lewistown Historic Preservation Officer/edited by Kim Currie, SHPO Intern | <b>date:</b> 2/23/89, Rev. 5/29/91 |
| <b>organization:</b> Lewistown Historic Preservation Office  |                                    |
| <b>street &amp; number:</b> Box 626  | <b>telephone:</b> 406/538-2201     |
| <b>city or town:</b> Lewistown <b>state:</b> MT  | <b>zip code:</b> 59457             |

**Property Owner**

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>name/title:</b> Bob and Anita Johnson                               | <b>telephone:</b> 538-5378 |
| <b>street &amp; number:</b> Southeast of Lewistown, Upper Spring Creek |                            |
| <b>city or town:</b> Lewistown <b>state:</b> MT                        | <b>zip code:</b> 59457     |