

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received NOV 28 1984
date entered OCT 18 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Eureka Community Hall

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Cliff Street n/a not for publication

city, town Eureka n/a vicinity of

state Montana code 030 county Lincoln code 053

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Elementary School District #13, Lincoln County, Montana

street & number Box 2001

city, town Eureka n/a vicinity of state Montana 59917

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lincoln County Courthouse

street & number 512 California Avenue

city, town Libby, state Montana 59923

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title none has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Eureka Community Hall is a large, one story, log structure built with the assistance of the Works Progress Administration in 1942. The siting of the building contributes to its significance. Situated at the southern entrance to Eureka near a rocky outcropping on a small rise and overlooking the Tobacco River, the Community Hall occupies a prominent location above Eureka's main business district. Originally the Eureka Elementary school was located on the site, but it burned leaving the land in the school district's ownership. The Hall's expansive, gently pitched, clipped gable roof is covered with cedar shingles. High quality workmanship is evident in the building's construction.

Hand-peeled logs were carefully fit together to create an aesthetically pleasing as well as multi-purpose public building. Textural interest of the facade was enhanced by the use of varied techniques of log construction. The lower portion of the walls were laid in typical horizontal, cribbing, with log verticals set at the corners and at regular intervals down the length of the walls. The center portion of the sides of the building feature rows of vertically placed logs and the clipped gable ends are finished with cedar shingles. The building remains in fair condition and has retained excellent historic architectural integrity.

The Hall is set on a concrete foundation and has a full basement. There is a 22'x42' stage on the main floor with a 64'x42' hardwood floored auditorium with the open ceiling. The supporting roof trussing system was left exposed and remains a particularly handsome feature of the auditorium.

To the side of the main auditorium is a 20'x42' meeting room that features an open fireplace, rest rooms, concession room, and small kitchen.

There are three entrances to the main floor: the main, double door entrance to the auditorium, a side entrance to the meeting room, and a back entrance to the stage area that also leads to the stairway to the basement. Because the building has not been used during the past few years, all of the window openings have been boarded over. The original windows remain in place.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1942 **Builder/Architect** Architect: Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Eureka Community hall is of exceptional local historical and architectural significance because it is the primary building in this remote, northwestern Montana community that represents the conscious decision of the community to build a structure that serves both its social needs and as an expression of the citizens' cultural values. This finely detailed, Rustic Style, log building stands in a commanding position on a hill overlooking the commercial district of the small northwestern Montana town of Eureka. It is the most substantial and well crafted building in Eureka and is a major visual component of this community's identity. The Community Hall is a large T-shaped building. Its walls are composed of an interesting pattern of horizontally and vertically laid logs that remain exposed on both the exterior and interior. Other outstanding Rustic stylistic feature of the hall are the exposed interior log roof trusses, the large field stone fireplace and the most unusual proscenium log theater built at one end of the meeting hall. Financed by the Works Progress Administration and built by local craftsmen in 1942, a time when the community was coming out of a major economic depression, the Community Hall represents the economic and social revitalization of a small community at the end of a twenty year period of depression. The Eureka Community Hall is the only early major log building between Whitefish, Montana and Fernie, British Columbia, a region where logging prevails as the primary industry and the only building in this area of the state that represents the Rustic Style of architecture that was promoted and financed by the WPA. Although less than fifty years of age, the Eureka Community Hall is of exceptional local significance because it reflects the community's strong commitment to social and economic survival after a prolonged period of economic depression.

Since the initial settlement of the region at the turn-of-the-century, when the Great Northern Railroad built a spur line through Eureka and thereby connected the Tobacco Plains to the mainline, the lumber industry dominated the local economy. In 1923, the mill of the Eureka Lumber company burned and was not rebuilt. What had been a small but relatively prosperous community quickly discovered itself in the midst of a depression that would last until the Second World War. In 1925, the local state bank failed; by the beginning of the "Great Depression" four years later, many of the houses of Eureka were abandoned. A town that once had 2000 residents now had only 900. One local historian remembered that "although the citizens who remained in Eureka never thought of their town as a ghost town, they could not help being depressed at the sight of so many empty buildings."

The Eureka Community Hall dates to a period of economic recovery, when the "boom" created by the wartime demand for lumber products lead to a revitalized local economy and community spirit. The location of the community hall is the key to unraveling the building's symbolic place in the minds of local citizens. The Community Hall stands in a most prominent position overlooking the entire business district on the site where a large two-story frame elementary school stood before it burned shortly before Eureka's economic downturn. Photographic evidence and first-person accounts indicate that the school was a great source of pride for local residents and the scene of every many community celebration. Understandably, those who had remained in Eureka during the lean years wanted to locate the new community hall--a physical manifestation of the revitalized community--at the place where past celebrations, during Eureka's initial prosperity, happened with regularity.

9. Major Bibliographical References

WRITER RECALLS HISTORY OF EUREKA COMMUNITY HALL. Winton Wedemeyer in Tobacco Valley News, Vol. 15, Number 40, pp. 4-5, 1975.
Montana Projects Folders, Works Progress Administration, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Microfilm Series RG69, reels #436, #439, and #453. (see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Eureka, North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	2	6	4	2	9	8	0	5	4	1	5	7	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the intersection of easterly line of Cliff Avenue with the northerly line of First Street of Eureka, Lincoln Co., Montana; thence N75° 48' E 300.0 feet; thence N32° 34'W 543.7 feet to the northeast corner of Lot 4 of Block 12 of the 1st addition to Eureka, Lincoln County, Montana. (see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Steward and C. Van West

organization Lincoln County Park/Recreation Board

date August 12, 1983

street & number Box 503

telephone (406)296-2091

city or town Eureka

state Montana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Maull

Shuff

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date November 19, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature]

84067

date

10/18/85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Attempts were made to secure funding to construct a community hall in Eureka starting in 1935; however, it was not until 1942 that construction was underway. Numerous community groups, including the Grange, the Vets' Club, the American Legion, the Little Theater Guild, the Community Club, the Farmer's Union, and the Town of Eureka, itself, were involved in the preparation of two applications to the WPA for funding. The first application to the WPA matched federal dollars with the donation of salvaged construction materials from the old mill building in town that had burned in 1923. The WPA did not support this project because the program apparently had no accident insurance to cover the workers in the course of salvage work. A few years later, the Eureka School Board submitted another application, proposing the use of locally cut and prepared logs for construction. This application was readily approved, a WPA architect was assigned to complete the building plans and specifications and local craftsmen were hired to begin work immediately.

Ten to fourteen local men worked on the building of the Eureka Community Hall. The Community Hall exhibits extraordinarily high quality craftsmanship in the use of locally procured materials. The logs used in its construction in a sense represent the town's faith in the newly viable local lumber industry and the people's optimism that the lean years were over. In fact, the lumber industry remains the largest employer in Eureka today, suggesting that the citizen's faith was not misplaced.

Since its completion, the Eureka Community Hall has been the center of innumerable community activities: weekend dances, theater presentations, lectures, roller skating derbys, school performances, political meetings, and local club meetings. These events are not only attended by Eureka citizens, but by residents throughout the Tobacco Plains. The Community Hall has served as civic center, a gathering place for forty years where people could enjoy the companionship which is necessary in any society, but particularly important in the rural and isolated areas which characterizes this region of Lincoln County, Montana.

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"History of Eureka Community Hall", Attributed to Fred Scott, ca. 1975.

Good, Albert, Park and Recreation Structures, Part I: Administration and Basic Facilities,
USDI, NPS, GPO, 1938.

Tweed, William C., et. al. National Park Service Rustic Architecture: 1916-1942, NPS, 1977.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY (continued)

thence S75°48' along the northerly line of said Lot 4 a distance of 93.3 feet; thence, S14°12'E 150.0 feet; thence S 75°48'W 192.21 feet to the easterly line of Cliff Avenue; thence, along said easterly line the following six courses: S17°32'E 16.04 feet; thence S25°32'E 51.0 feet; thence S 30°54'E 104.0 feet; thence S31°51'E 53.0 feet; thence S51°04'E 125.0 feet; thence s40°46'e 55.75 feet to the point of beginning.