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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

DEC 14 1992

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: I.O.O.F. Hall and Fromberg Co-operative Mercantile Building

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 123 W. River Street

not for publication: n/a

vicinity: n/a

city/town: Fromberg

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Carbon

code: 009

zip code: 59029

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.)

Maurell Stuy JHPO 12-11-92  
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:

Signature of the Keeper

entered in the

National Register Date of Action

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

William Byers 1/28/93

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### 5. Classification

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<b>Ownership of Property:</b> Private	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
	Contributing	Noncontributing
<b>Category of Property:</b> Buildings	<u>  1  </u>	<u>    </u> building(s)
<b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:</b> 0	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
<b>Name of related multiple property listing:</b> Historic and Architectural Properties in Fromberg	<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

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### 6. Function or Use

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<b>Historic Functions:</b>	<b>Current Functions:</b>
Social: meeting hall	Government: post office
Commerce/Trade: department store	

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### 7. Description

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<b>Architectural Classification:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>
Other: Flat roof two-story brick bearing	foundation: concrete
	walls: brick
	roof: other: composition
	other: sandstone sills

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#### Narrative Description

The I.O.O.F. Hall and Fromberg Co-operative Mercantile Building is located in Fromberg, Montana, a small rural community in the southcentral portion of the state. The building prominently stands at the west end of the downtown, occupying the northwest corner of W. River Street and Montana Avenue. It faces south onto W. River Street.

Constructed in 1906, the rectangular-shaped, two-story building rests on a concrete foundation, has brick walls laid in English bond, and is topped by a flat roof. Brick parapets with concrete coping rise above the roof on the front and side elevations. Parapets on the front and west sides are flat and feature a corbeled cornice; the east side parapet has four elongated steps. A concrete medallion is inset at the center of the front parapet, just below the cornice. The medallion holds metal figures "IOOF," "1906," and the Odd Fellows emblem. Door openings have segmental arch lintels. Two wood-paneled doors are located on the upper level of the east wall towards the north end; neither is accessible. Door openings at ground level on the north and west sides have been altered with modern slab doors. Window openings are accented by sandstone sills and segmental arch lintels, and hold one-over-one, double-hung wood-sash. The upper level of the building has single windows; two paired windows are located at lower level on the north wall.

The storefront of the building originally featured a recessed central entry and large display windows with a transom on the south side towards W. River Street; the windows wrapped a few feet around the west wall along Montana Avenue. When the U.S. Post Office moved into the building in 1964, the storefront was replaced with smaller windows on the south and brick infill.

The I.O.O.F Hall and Fromberg Co-operative Mercantile Building retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Although altered with new windows and brick infill, the storefront still manifests a central recessed entry flanked by commercial windows, an important aspect of its original tri-partite configuration. The building has sustained only a few minor alterations elsewhere and still clearly exhibits its original form, scale, massing, and construction materials. Furthermore, key stylistic details remain intact such as corbel work on the cornice, the concrete medallion, and the brick and stone work at the window and door surrounds.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Exploration/Settlement  
Commerce  
Social History  
Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1906-1918

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1906

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Gibson, John

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The I.O.O.F. Hall and Fromberg Co-operative Mercantile Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under the "Historic and Architectural Resources of Fromberg" multiple property listing. The significance of the building is established locally under the historic contexts of "Transportation and Commerce in Fromberg, 1899-1936," and "Religious, Educational, Civic, and Social Activities in Fromberg, 1906-1925." The building meets registration requirements developed for the associated property type "Commercial Buildings." It is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its association with growth and emergence of Fromberg, and under Criterion C as an example of a commercial building constructed during the town's boom period and as a representation of the work of John Gibson, a prominent local builder. The building retains integrity and clearly conveys its important associations.

The I.O.O.F. Hall and Fromberg Co-operative Mercantile Building derives significance under Criterion A as an important reflection of the emergence and growth of the local economy in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The building also serves as a representation of the development of cultural and social institutions in the community during this era. The building was constructed in 1906 at the onset of the agricultural boom in the surrounding region. It was financed by the local chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.), the first fraternal organization in Fromberg. Typical with other fraternal organizations, the I.O.O.F. located the two-story building on Main Street, used the upper level for their meeting hall, and rented the lower level to Fromberg's Co-operative Mercantile. Founded by a group of local businessmen, the co-operative was owned by its patrons, with all profits divided among them according to the amount of goods purchased. The co-operative went out of business in 1911.

The I.O.O.F. Hall and Fromberg Co-operative Mercantile Building derives significance under Criterion C because it embodies distinctive characteristics associated with small-town commercial architecture of the Northern Plains. Typical components of the era that distinguish the building are its rectangular plan, the lack of setbacks, brick masonry construction, limited brick corbeling at the cornice, segmental arches at openings, and the presence of a name and date plate. The building also is significant under Criterion C as a reflection of the technical and aesthetic achievements of John Gibson, a local contractor. The building represents the first use of masonry construction in Fromberg and is the most substantial and architecturally sophisticated building ever to grace the town's main street. It apparently was one of Gibson's first construction projects in Fromberg and the only commercial building remaining in town that has been clearly documented as his work. Gibson later achieved prominence in the early 1910s for manufacturing concrete products for a variety of construction purposes.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Carbon County Republican. 8 September, 12 October, 9 November, 7 December 1906; 8 May 1911.  
Fromberg Herald. 20 April, 25 May 1911.  
Polk's Directories. 1907, 1909, 1914.  
Turner, H. Haines. Case Studies of Consumers' Co-operatives. New York: AMS Press, 1968.  
Stillson, Henry, ed. The Official History of Odd Fellowship. Boston: Fraternity Publishing Company, 1908.

### 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:

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property:** less than one acre

**UTM References:**

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	663710	5028400

### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses Lot 17 and the west 8' of Lot 16, Block 2 of the Dudley First Addition to Fromberg (SE $\frac{1}{4}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 17, T05S, R23E).

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all property historically associated with the I.O.O.F. Hall and Fromberg Cooperative Mercantile Building.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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**name/title:** Mary McCormick (Erika Kuhlman of the Fromberg Historical Society did the initial research and wrote the first draft in 1989.)

**organization:** Renewable Technologies, Inc.

**date:** April 1992

**street & number:** 511 Metals Bank Building

**telephone:** 406/444-7715

**city or town:** Butte

**state:** MT

**zip code:** 59701

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### Property Owner

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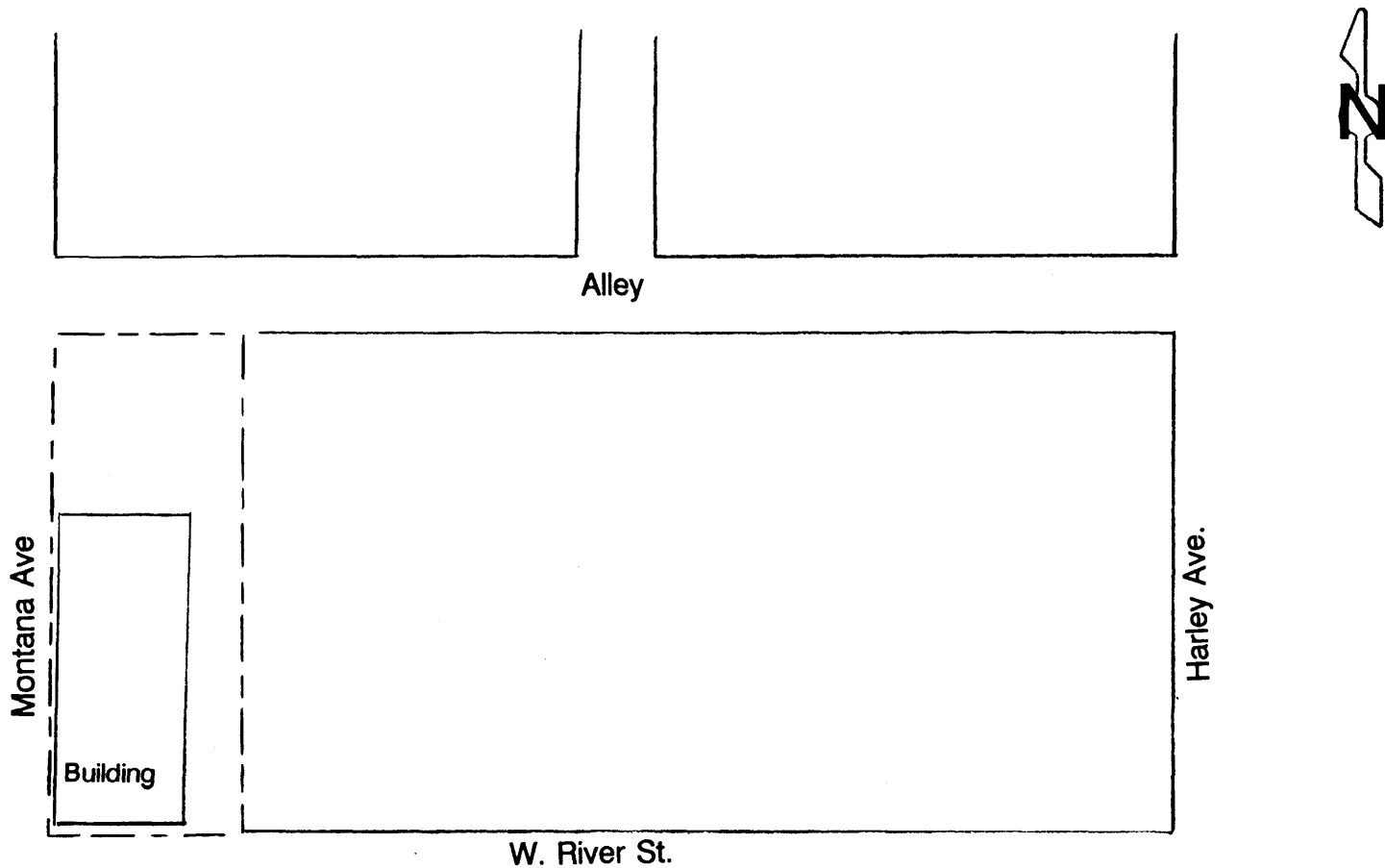
**name/title:** W.W. Poulston and John A. Poulston

**street & number:** Route 1, P.O. Box 46A

**city or town:** Joliet

**state:** MT

**zip code:** 59041



**I.O.O.F. Hall & Fromberg Co-operative Mercantile Building**

**Fromberg, Montana**

**Lot 17 & West 10' of 18, Block 2  
Dudley First Addition**

**National Register Boundary:**



**Scale: 1 inch = 50 feet  
August 1992**