1377
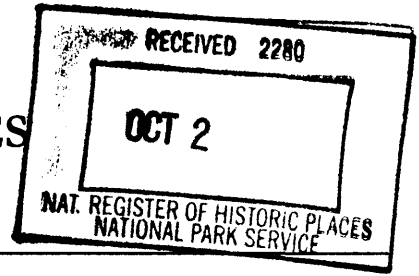
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

RECEIVED 2280

OCT 2

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

historic name: **Adams Hotel**

other name/site number: **Lehfeldt Hotel; Lavina Lutheran Church; 24GV0161**

2. Location

street & number: 1 Main Street

not for publication: na
vicinity: na

city/town: Lavina

state: **Montana**   code: **MT**   county: **Golden Valley**   code: **037**   zip code: **59046**

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.

Signature of certifying official/Title   Date   *October 26, 2005*

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau   (__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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   Date of Action   12/6/05

_X_ 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): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

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

Name of related multiple property listing: na

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing   Noncontributing

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	building(s)
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: DOMESTIC/hotel   **Current Functions:** DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:
LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Colonial Revival

Materials:
foundation: STONE/sandstone
walls: WOOD/clapboard
roof: ASPHALT
other:

Narrative Description

Lavina, Montana is located in the eastern section of Golden Valley County, an area of Montana called the Western Sedimentary Plains. The region is characterized by rolling and rough grasslands watered by intermittent streams, the most substantial of which is the Musselshell River. Precipitation averages 12-14 inches annually, and only about 5 percent of the county is woodland. Predominant vegetation in the region consists of a variety of native grasses and shrubs, especially silver sagebrush, and domestic crops such as wheat, rye, and hay.[1]

The Adams Hotel consists of a building on four lots at the north end of Main Street, just south of the old Milwaukee railroad grade and Railway Avenue. The hotel faces east toward Main Street, and the north elevation, which faces the old grade of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad, is designed as a secondary façade. City streets and sidewalks border the building on the north and east sides, and grass and dirt border the west and south walls.

The hotel is a large, two-story, wood-frame building with a sandstone foundation, constructed in the Colonial Revival style. It has a trapezoid footprint: in order to create the illusion that the hotel is parallel to the railroad, the north wall is constructed at an irregular angle. To accommodate this angle, the west (rear) wall is ten feet longer than the east (façade). The exterior walls are covered with clapboard siding. The shed roof has a parapet wall around the south, east, and north sides. The east and north parapet walls each have a pair of decorative towers that frame the hotel's painted sign boards, which are centered within the elevations. The signboard on the north still reads "The Adams," while the east signboard was never painted. Lower square towers are located at the southeast, northeast and northwest corners of the roof. A decorative pent roof with exposed brackets runs the length of the east and north elevations immediately below the parapet wall. On the west elevation the parapet wall is stepped.

Windows throughout the building have wooden sashes, and existing mullions suggest that most openings contained large, one-over-one double-hung windows. Until recently, most of the glass was missing and replaced with boards. In 2004, the windows on the second story were repaired and/or replaced with vintage one-over-one double-hungs. All the window and door openings in the building retain their original decorative trim.

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1 Montana Agricultural Experiment Station 1973:8-9; Soil Conservation Service 1976: 18-23,51, 57

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7   Adams Hotel   Page 1

Golden Valley County, Montana

The front (east) elevation contains a full-length open porch, the roof of which originally formed the floor of a second-story balcony. The balustrade that once enclosed the balcony is dismantled, but four original sections will be reinstalled at a later date. The flat roof of the porch is supported by painted telephone poles that replaced the original round wood columns. East elevation fenestration on the first floor consists of a central entrance filled with a pair of glazed-and-paneled doors beneath a single transom. The wall to the north of the entrance contains four windows, three adjacent to one another, and the fourth at the north edge of the wall. The wall to the south of the entrance contains a single glazed-and- paneled door with a glass transom above, and three window openings which mirror the pattern in the north portion of the wall. Second-story fenestration is also arranged around a central doorway. The doorway contains a one-light over two-panel door beneath a transom and is flanked by two openings on either side, one filled with two windows and one with a single window. A narrow overhang supported by decorative brackets is located above the entrance and the first window openings on either side.

The north (side) elevation, which historically paralleled the Milwaukee Road tracks, is formal and symmetrical-like the front of the building. It features twelve single window openings on the second story, and twelve openings on the main floor in the same pattern. Eleven of the first floor openings are filled with single windows, and the easternmost opening contains a pair of glazed-and-paneled doors beneath a single transom. A narrow overhang, like the second- story overhang on the front elevation, is located above the two central window openings at both the first and second stories.

On the west (rear) elevation, first-floor features include a window, a wood-paneled door beneath a transom, a wood-paneled door, a window opening filled with three, single-light fixed- sash windows, a second regular window, and a door opening that has been covered with siding. The second floor was originally accessed by two exterior stairways that no longer exist. Fenestration includes a window, a doorway filled with a wood-paneled door beneath a transom, two pairs of windows, a second wood-paneled door beneath a transom, and another (single) window.

The south (side) elevation contains seven windows in the second story. The first story has two windows, a doorway that has been sided-in below its transom, and a small window opening that has been boarded over.

Integrity

The Adams Hotel has not been modified in any significant way, and it retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, workmanship, design and materials. As a result, the Adams effectively conveys its association with the locally significant theme of the development of Lavina's commercial district and the short-lived economic boom that follow the construction of the Milwaukee Railroad through town. It also stands true to the Colonial Revival design of prominent Montana architects Link and Haire.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):   n/a

Significant Person(s):   n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Areas of Significance: EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT; COMMERCE; ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1908-1929

Significant Dates: 1908, 1929

Architect/Builder: Link and Haire

Narrative Statement of Significance

One of the first and most substantial commercial buildings erected in new Lavina, the Adams is representative of the construction boom that accompanied the arrival of the Milwaukee Road. The hotel attests to the historical importance of the railroad not only by its very existence but by its peculiar appearance, which is characterized by two facades -one facing Main Street and the other facing the railroad tracks. Completion of the railroad and The Adams ushered in a period of commercial growth in Lavina that gave Main Street the form it took during the historical period and, for the most part, the form it takes today. The Adams has not been modified in any significant way, and effectively conveys its association with the locally significant theme of the development of Lavina's commercial district and the short-lived boom that followed the construction of the Milwaukee Road. During this boom, before environmental and economic disaster forced an exodus from the surrounding farms, Lavina served as the social and commercial center for the region's agricultural population, and The Adams was one of the most important establishments in town. For these reasons, this building is eligible for listing under Criterion A. The property gains additional significance under Criterion C, and an excellent local example of Colonial Revival architecture and its association with the prominent Montana architecture firm, Link and Haire.

Native American Use and Euro-American Exploration of the Lavina Area

Prior to permanent Euro-American settlement, central Montana predominantly served as hunting grounds for the Blackfeet, Crow and Sioux tribes. These three tribes used the region most frequently, but groups of Flatheads, Gros Ventre, Metis, Nez Perce, Northern Cheyenne, and Shoshone also made occasional forays into central Montana on hunting expeditions.[2] Shortly after the Lewis and Clark expedition traveled through the Missouri River country north of Lavina, American fur companies turned an eye to the upper Missouri and its tributaries. In 1809, a party of 150 men working for the St. Louis-based Missouri Fur Company began plying the streams of central Montana for beaver and other fur-bearing animals. In the course of their travels they probably worked the banks of the Musselshell River in what would become Golden Valley County. Although its trapping efforts proved successful the party faced violent opposition from the Blackfeet. The trappers sustained heavy losses of life and pelts at the hands of the Blackfeet and their allies, and in subsequent decades trapping along the upper Missouri and its tributaries consisted of infrequent expeditions by small groups of men.

Sustained, large-scale trapping by Euro-Americans in the region would not reappear until the 1830s-1840s with the establishment of a series of trading posts in Blackfeet territory. The last and most enduring of these posts was Fort Benton, founded in 1846.[3] In subsequent decades, Fort Benton would prove to be important to the development of central Montana, as it grew into a trade center that influenced the growth of communities throughout the surrounding region. For the time being, however, most of central Montana remained undeveloped.

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2 Montana State Engineer's Office 1949:6; Steams 1966:6
3 Malone and Roeder 1976:38-46

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been   requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone 12   **Easting** 658842   **Northing** 5128714

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): SE ¼ NE ¼ SW ¼ Section 2, T6N, R22E

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 1, Lots 1-4, Lavina Original Township.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn, based on legally recorded boundary lines, to include the land surrounding the building that has been historically associated with the building and conveys the property's historic setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title:	Delia Hagen	
organization:	Historical Research Associates, Inc.	date: August 2003
street & number:	125 Bank Street	telephone: (406) 721-1958
city or town:	Missoula state: MT	zip code: 59802

name/title:	Kate Hampton	
organization:	MTSHPO	date: August 2005
street & number:	1410 8th Ave.	telephone: (406) 444-7715
city or town:	Helena state: MT	zip code: 59620

Property Owner

name/title:	Raymond A. Barry	
street & number:	1 Main St.	telephone: (406) 636-2106
city or town:	Lavina state: MT	zip code: 59046

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8   Adams Hotel   Page 6
                                        Golden Valley County, MT

the finest liquors and cigars, hot baths, and twenty-two rooms. Actually, there were only twenty-one rooms since superstition and protocol demanded that the room numbers skip from 12 to 14; there was no Room 13. Each guest room was beautifully appointed with carpeting, nice furnishings, and a matching china washbowl and pitcher for the convenience of the guests. Pure linen sheets and down comforters promised a good night's rest even in the coldest winter weather. Once settled at the hotel, stage passengers, rail travelers, and other guests enjoyed fine meals prepared in the kitchen at the back. The spacious central dining room was popular among guests, local ranchers and Lavina residents. A ladies' parlor at the top of the stairs awaited guests who wished to quietly read or catch up on letter writing. There was often dancing in the hotel lobby after dinner.

Intended from the outset to cater to railroad customers, the hotel, designed by prominent Montana architects Charles. S. Haire and John G. Link, was built in an irregular shape with two formal "facades" -one that paralleled the tracks and faced the depot and one that paralleled Main Street. Despite a few setbacks, including a drunken goat causing damage to the saloon in 1909, a fire in the basement in 1910, and an acetylene lighting plant explosion in 1912, the business continued to improve its facilities. Lehfeldt dug an artesian well for fire suppression in 1910, and converted to electric lighting in 1917. There were only three telephones in Lavina in 1913, one at the Slayton Mercantile, one in the hotel, and one at the livery barn.[31] The hotel had its own livery barn (constructed 1908), icehouse, and carbide plant (both in place by 1912). All of the outbuildings were located behind the hotel on the west side of the present-day alley, but are no longer extant.

The hotel's early success inspired its owner to expand, and by 1911 Lehfeldt opened the Adams Annex. Constructed across Main Street from the Adams, the Adams Annex was a smaller, two-story wood-frame hotel that was known in later years as the Hotel Clermont and the Radford Hotel.[32] The hotel did a brisk business as the trains rumbled into the depot and screeched to a halt, unloading the homesteaders that flocked into Montana. Lavina took pride in its nickname, "The White City," a name bestowed on the town by Dr. Hugh Heaton in 1911. The buildings along Main Street were at that time all painted fresh white, like the Adams Hotel.

Drought, crop failures, and bank closures prompted an exodus of disappointed, destitute homesteaders during the 1920s. Montana lost population, and the Adams struggled to survive. The Adams Hotel Annex across the street became the Clermont Hotel. Mrs. E.C. Olcott who kept the rooms served her guests homemade bread and first-class home cooked meals. It was less grand, but more comfortable, easier to heat, and suited a less pretentious clientele than the Adams had a decade before. The Adams began to deteriorate, and few guests climbed the stairway to stay in its once-opulent rooms.

The Adams closed in 1922, after struggling to remain profitable through Prohibition and the drought years.[33] Lehfeldt was vice president of the local bank, and when it failed that year, Louie and his family sustained severe financial losses. Once one of the most wealthy and powerful men in the area, Louie Lehfeldt operated a bar out of the Slayton Annex, a building down the block from the Adams, until he was 90 years old in 1955.[34]

Prosperity was not restored to the Adams Hotel as the nation sunk into the Great Depression. Instead, most of the rooms remained closed. While Louie's daughter's family, the Egges, had moved into the hotel to weather the hard times, at the end of the decade it was empty. The hotel was sold for back taxes, purchased by the American Lutheran Church for $750.

31 The telephone exchange was located in the hotel lobby; Hilda Lehfeldt—Louie's second daughter—was Lavina's first telephone operator.
32 The Adams Annex building operated as a hotel until 1978 and burned to the ground in the late 1980s.
33 Emanuel Dolft, cook for the hotel and family lived in the hotel after it closed, died in room 2 in 1922-3. And may live there still.
34 Louie's brother Herman, a partner in the failed bank, committed suicide on learning of his financial ruin. Lavina's townspeople and the Lehfeldt family report, however, that Louie remained upbeat throughout his long life.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8   Adams Hotel   Page 2
Golden Valley County, MT

In the middle of the nineteenth century, private parties and various arms of the federal government sponsored exploratory expeditions into the many unsettled areas of the West. Among the ventures undertaken in this period was Ferdinand Hayden's geological survey of the area between the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers in 1854-1856. Hayden's expedition, funded in part by the Chouteau family of Fort Benton, passed through the Golden Valley County area.[4] In doing so, it made history by becoming the first recorded group of Euro-Americans in the Lavina region.

Regional Mining, Transportation, and the Beginning of Agriculture Give Birth to Old Lavina

Shortly after Hayden's expedition, gold discoveries began drawing miners and merchants to the mountain valleys of western Montana. The mining camps spawned trade and travel corridors in all directions, for the isolated settlements depended on imports from both coasts and food stuffs from the fertile bottom lands of the broader valleys in the region. Fort Benton, located about 150 miles northwest of what would become Lavina, served as a major supply center for the western mine settlements. The booming trade town stimulated activity in surrounding regions, and by the late 1870s several men were grazing cattle herds along Swimming Woman Creek in the northwest corner of what would become Golden Valley County.[5]

Other cattle operations quickly followed on the heels of these early stockmen. In 1880 the "79" outfit, a large livestock venture, set up headquarters in Big Coulee southwest of Lavina. From its Big Coulee base, the enormous ranch was soon running thousands of cattle, sheep, and horses tended by some 100 employees.[6] In 1881, cowboys from the "79" joined employees from other ranches in the Lavina region's first roundup. Stockmen started gathering the herds at the lower and upper reaches of the Musselshell River and its tributaries, and ultimately met on the banks of the river near what would shortly become the first Lavina townsite. In doing so they began a practice that would endure for decades, as Lavina became the endpoint for the area's annual fall and spring roundups.[7]

As the central Montana range filled with cattle, the Northern Pacific railroad pushed westward across the Northern Plains. The rails reached Billings in August of 1882. The preceding spring, T. C. Power, a Fort Benton businessman, watched the progress of the track laying crews and envisioned a stage line connecting the growing soon-to-be rail town of Billings with Fort Benton. In May of 1882, Power founded the Billings-Benton Stage Company. He immediately dispatched construction crews under the command of Walter Burke to build a trail over the 220 miles that separated the two towns. Burke was charged with the task of completing the road, erecting 17 stage stations, and stocking the line in less than six weeks. Completion of the road entailed finding a suitable passage not only over land but also across several streams that ran through the route, the most substantial of which was the Musselshell River. Burke assessed possible crossings of the river and settled on a ford about a mile upstream from the present town of Lavina. He erected "a stage stables, mess house, bunk house for the men to sleep in, and ... [a] saloon" and named the settlement Lavina in homage to his former sweetheart.[8] That summer the Musselshell Valley "settled up thick," and the stage stop became the hub of activity. It was soon surrounded by the home ranches of several big cattle outfits, the closest of which was the Three V. Cattle Company, which established its headquarters a quarter mile west of present-day Lavina. By the following year, the settlement offered daily stage service to Billings and bi-weekly stages east to Roundup and north to Lewistown, by then a bustling burg of over 1,000 people.[9]

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4 Goetzmann 1966:489-492; Montana State Engineer's Office 1949:6
5 Montana State Engineer's Office 1949:6
6 Montana State Engineer's Office 1949:6; Gordon et al. 1971:6-9
7 Bicentennial Committee 1976: 13
8 Bicentennial Committee 1976: 11-13
9 Bicentennial Committee 1976: 13; Gordon et al. 1971:136.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Adams Hotel
Golden Valley County, MT

Page 3

Shortly after it initiated service, the stage line constructed a log bridge at the Lavina river crossing to ease the passage of its coaches. The bridge, however, proved insufficient, for the violent spring floods on the Musselshell washed it out annually. In 1885, the stage company replaced it with a steel structure. An increase in traffic followed the completion of the new bridge, which was the only steel bridge on the Musselshell and made the crossing passable year round. Lavina was thereafter" on one of the most important wagon roads of the state." The small settlement prospered with the trade from "freighters carry[ing] anything from flour, bacon, calomel, Lydia Pinkhams, overalls, calico dress goods, bonnets, guns and ammunition, to whiskey and mouth organs," and with the business generated by the surrounding stock operations.[10]

Over the next twenty years empty ranges in the region slowly disappeared as stock outfits moved more herds into the Musselshell country. As a trade and transportation hub for the area, Old Lavina, as it came to be known, grew apace. With the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railway Company's decision to build its main line along the Musselshell in the first decade of the twentieth century, the future of the town seemed secure. But railroad surveyors, perhaps in response to landowner resistance at the old townsite, but more likely because the site was essentially an island within the Musselshell and an impractical place to build a railroad town, as there was no room to expand, located the train station a mile downstream from Old Lavina. In 1906-1907 the old town enjoyed a last burst of activity as grading and track laying crews passed through the river valley. A Missouri firm held the grading contract, and used large crews of African-American workers to run the graders that were pulled by 600 horses and mules. The crews camped for a time just across the river from the present townsite. They continued to contribute to Old Lavina's last business boom after the camp moved on, for the transport of camp supplies translated into a flurry of freight traffic.[11]

Completion of the Milwaukee Road and Construction of New Lavina

The Milwaukee purchased land for the new Lavina townsite from local rancher Louie Lehfeldt. In fact, the company purchased his entire ranch, totaling 38,000 acres, for $100,000 in 1907. In the process of negotiating the transaction, Lehfeldt and the Milwaukee's purchasing agent, John Quincy Adams, became close friends. When Lehfeldt expressed his desire to construct a hotel to serve new Lavina, Adams deeded his friend several lots across from the depot, on the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Railroad Avenue. Lehfeldt completed his two-story, twenty-two room Colonial Revival hotel in 1908, just as trains began serving the town, and named it the Adams in honor of the man who made it possible.[12] The Adams immediately became a cornerstone of the community, and boasted its own livery services. Rooms were appointed with "pure linen sheets, down comforters, [and] a decorated china bowl and pitcher in every room." In addition to lodging, the Adams offered a "huge dining room, lobby, kitchen, and bar," on the first floor, and a large ladies parlor/withdrawing room on the second floor." By the fall of 1908, several other businesses had joined the Adams in serving new Lavina, including Slayton's Mercantile (NR Listed 12/28/200), and a land office.

Other commercial establishments followed, and Lavina soon offered every service central Montanans might need. In short order, the town boasted a second hotel (called at different times the Adams Annex, the Radford, and the Hotel Clermont), a lumber company, a bank owned by the Lehfeldt family, a barber, a dentist, a restaurant, a saloon, a druggist, a butcher, a jeweler, a milliner, an attorney, a piano tuner, a blacksmith, a harness shop, two garages, a newspaper, three grain elevators, and various other skilled tradesmen.[13] The ranks of the surrounding populace swelled with the town itself. Homesteaders poured into the Musselshell country in immigrant cars that moved over the new Milwaukee rail line. Even before the rail reached Lavina, the Milwaukee set about promoting the region. The railroad company established an experimental dry

10 Bicentennial Committee 1976: 13, 16; Gordon et al. 1971: 136.
11 Bicentennial Committee 1976:16; Gordon et al. 1971:136, 155, 160.
12 Gordon et al 1971: 155; McCarter 1992:59.
13 Gordon et al. 1971:136

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8   Adams Hotel   Page 4
            Golden Valley County, MT

farm near Lavina, and employed Dr. W.X. Suddeth to farm the property and to publicize his successes. The Milwaukee experimental farm placed Lavina at the forefront of agricultural development in the Musselshell Valley. Word of the region's "fine future" spread rapidly. In a single week in the spring of 1910, ten carloads of immigrants detrained at the town's depot.[14] Lured by free land and dreams of profitable farming, immigrants arrived at the depot with all their worldly possessions packed into a single boxcar. A typical immigrant railroad car would have looked a lot like that unloaded at Lavina by an early settler named Carl Krause. It contained" sixteen chickens, three pigs, three barrels of water, thirty sacks of seed oats, twelve bales of hay, household goods, bed clothes, food, some meat," a cow and heifer and four horses.[15]

Homesteaders established schools in the countryside for their children, but commercial centers like Lavina were the focus of the region's social life. The scale of Lavina's 1911 Fourth of July celebration attested to both the importance of town gatherings and to population growth in the surrounding countryside. About 1,000 people turned out that year to witness the parade, baseball game, and other patriotic festivities.[16] The town served the trade as well as the social needs of its rural neighbors. As one resident recalled of Lavina:

> ...during the 'teens, the big night of the week for all farmers was Saturday, when all business was open until 10p.m., even the post office. We hitched up the horses to the spring-wagon, taking our produce, eggs, etc. to Slayton Mercantile and Tom Linton [sic] store to exchange for food and clothing. The children received a penny or nickel to spend...In summer when the sweetpeas were in bloom the children would trade them for ice-cream cones at Farr's Drug Store. Lavina had a good band [that gave] concerts on Saturday nights outside in the summer.[17]

In addition to summer concerts, town diversions included basketball games, men's and women's baseball clubs, a "Negro Minstrels" group, a women's literary club, and various fraternal and civic organizations.[18]

Lavina's Heyday, Rapid Demise and Modest Renaissance

Despite losing its bid for county seat of the newly formed Musselshell County in 1912, Lavina flourished through the 1910s. Homesteaders grew flax, wheat, rye, and oats and joined the established stock operations in producing sheep and cattle for market. The widespread adoption of steam engines in this period eased farmers' workload and allowed farming on a larger scale.[19] When drought descended on the region in 1918, those who had settled near streams" started the construction of small diversion dams and canals to divert water to their lands."[20]

Adaptation and optimism pulled most of the homesteaders through the first few years of drought, and by 1920 the growth of the area's population created a need for more accessible government. Lavina again lost the contest for county seat, this time to Ryegate, which became the civic center of Golden Valley County. At the time of its formation, Golden Valley County housed 49 school districts and five banks. The abundance suggested by such numbers would not last. While homesteaders, and the services they supported, managed to weather the first years of drought, the climate did not reward their tenacity. The rains failed to come, and the drought lasted into the mid-1920s. By January of 1924, all five of the

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14 Stearns 1966:113-114,119; Stearns 1966a:87, 118
15 Gordon et al. 1971:170
16 Gordon et al. 1971: 136
17 Gordon et al. 1971:171
18 Gordon et al. 1971:138, 167, 171
19 Schanz n.d.; Gordon et al. 1971:165
20 Montana State Engineer's Office 1949:6-7

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8   Adams Hotel   Page 5
Golden Valley County, MT

county's banks had failed and settlers fled the dry land in droves.[21] The devastation in Golden Valley County mirrored that in the state as a whole. Over half of the state's banks failed, and the influx of immigrants that characterized the 1910s reversed itself as destitute Montanans began a sustained exodus in search of greener pastures. In the 1920s, Montana became the only state in the union to lose population.[22]

The Dust Bowl and Great Depression of the 1930s followed the drought and farm depression of the 1920s, and many producers who had survived the turbulent twenties abandoned their operations in the dirty thirties. Between 1929 and 1934, American agricultural commodity prices fell an average of 40 percent, while industrial prices fell only 15 percent.[23] Montana lost over 10 percent of its remaining farms in the 1930s, as agriculturalists facing both drought and poor prices proved unable to pay their expenses. The outcome would have been worse were it not for the infusion of vast amounts of federal aid: only one state received more federal funds than Montana in the 1930s, and at times roughly one in four residents relied on some form of relief.[24] Lavina suffered with the farmers and ranchers that surrounded her, for "the fortunes of people in Golden Valley county [were] most dearly tied to agriculture."[25] The town welcomed the return of rain in 1938. Record crop yields combined with booming wartime commodity prices in the early 1940s translated into prosperity for Montana's producers and the commercial centers they supported. Golden Valley County's rural residents once again had money to spend in town, as the net income of Montana ranchers increased 188 percent between 1940 and 1948.[26]

The national transition to extensive automobile and truck use, effectively completed by about 1940, also reinvigorated Lavina. By 1923, the road connecting Billings and Lavina was a part of the "Buffalo Highway," an officially designated tourist route that ran from Cheyenne, Wyoming to Glacier National Park. It became a part of the Federal Aid Secondary Highway system in 1942, and in 1947 the State Highway Commission contracted for the reconstruction and paving of the dirt and gravel road. Some new building accompanied the road improvements, as residents erected two gas stations and a new cafe to serve travelers passing through.[27] The return of veterans after the end of the war contributed as well to the modest second building boom. Service men and their families founded Lavina's American Legion Post in 1946, and in 1953 the post completed a permanent hall on the west side of Main Street.[28] Relative economic stability continued through the end of the 1950s, and manifested itself physically in the construction of several comfortable homes and a new Post Office, completed in 1960.[29]

The Adams Hotel

Upon its construction in 1908, Ludwig Carl Lehfeldt's Adams Hotel became a commercial and social center in the community. At its grand opening November 6, 1908, fully one hundred persons were in attendance, and were entertained by Professor Grady's orchestra.[30] The Adams boasted steam heat, gas lighting, first class service, a fully stocked bar with

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21 Montana State Engineer's Office 1949: 8; Anonymous n.d.: 1
22 Malone and Roeder 1976:216- 243
23 Garraty 1986:54
24 Malone and Roeder 1976:227-237
25 Anonymous n.d.:2
26 Malone and Roeder 1976:230,237; Anonymous n.d.:2
27 Axline 2001; Gordon et al. 1971:35, 168
28 Gordon et al. 1971: 139
29 Golden Valley County Real Property Records
30 Gordon et al. 1971:172. Louie's daughter, Clara, was sixteen. It was a momentous occasion, made even more memorable since it was at this dance that the lovely Clara met C. B. Egge, the man she later married

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8   Adams Hotel   Page 7
                              Golden Valley County, MT

Churchgoers converted the bar side to serve as a chapel. In 1960, the German Lutheran Church leased the building and the small congregation continued to worship in the bar-turned-chapel through the 1970s. Then the building became private property. In 2000, Raymond Barry purchased the building and continues to reside there, carefully restoring the Adams to its original grandeur.

Architectural Significance

The Adams Hotel in Lavina, Montana is an excellent local example of the Colonial Revival style of architecture. The Colonial Revival style became popular in the late nineteenth century. The Colonial Revival was a nationalistic style, that has its roots in the burgeoning interest in colonial heritage beginning with the centennial celebrations of 1876. Interest continued, and at a time when "manifest destiny" was at its peak, the early 1890's, Americans placed increased value their own heritage and architecture. Colonial Revival sought to follow the style of the period around the Revolutionary War. Buildings of this type have strictly symmetrical facades and are usually rectangular in plan with no or minimum projections. The eaves tend to have classical detailing, and windows are usually double-hung sash. The earliest examples of Colonial Revival buildings "are rarely historically correct copies but were instead free interpretations with details inspired by colonial precedents." Though relatively simple in ornamentation, the Adams Hotel displays elements of the Colonial Revival style, including the symmetrical fenestration, pent roof overhang, double-hung windows, lack of projecting bays, and its full-width front porch originally supported by round Doric columns.

C.S. Haire was born in Hamilton County, Ohio in 1857. After graduation from the high school in Cincinnati in 1876, he worked as a teacher for three years while studying architecture. In 1886, he was employed as a draftsman in the construction department of the Union Pacific Railroad in Pocatello, Idaho. The next year, he moved to Butte, Montana in a similar position with the Great Northern Railroad. In 1888, he established an association with the realty firm of Wallace and Thornburg. Withdrawing from this firm some time later, Haire devoted himself exclusively to the practice of architecture, moved to Helena in 1893, and worked as the state superintendent of buildings. In that capacity, he oversaw the construction of numerous state institutions.

In January 1906, Haire formed a partnership with John G. Link of Billings. Link was born in 1879 in Hattnau, Bavaria, where he lived until he was 17. He was a student for six years at the royal academy at Landau where Professors William Meyers and Joseph Goetzer instructed him in architecture. He graduated in 1886. Link came to the United States in 1887, settling in Denver, Colorado. There, he worked for *Architect's Handbook* author Frank Kidder from 1887-1890, and the Fisher architectural firm from 1890-1893. In 1893, Link won a national competition for the design of the Minnesota State Capitol. On the heels of that success, he moved to St. Louis and opened his own firm. At the young age of 22, Link moved again, this time to Butte, Montana in 1896, the same year competition for the Montana State Capitol was ongoing. In Butte, he partnered with W. E. Donovan, under the name Link and Donovan, which lasted four years. During this period, state Architect John C. Paulsen commissioned him to supervise the construction of a number of state institutional buildings. Link joined in partnership with Joseph T. Carter in 1900, and continued that association until 1905, when he began working with Haire.

Link and Haire became the most prolific architectural firm in the State of Montana for a number of decades, with offices in Helena, Billings, Missoula, Butte, and Lewistown. In these offices, many of the younger architects of Montana received their training. Together, Link and Haire designed many courthouses, schools, hospitals, commercial buildings, and residences. The Adams Hotel gains considerable significance as an example of their work.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

Adams Hotel
Golden Valley County, MT

Page 8

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs   Adams Hotel   Page 9
                        Golden Valley County, MT

Detail of Lavina's Main Street, with Adams Hotel in foreground, 1916.

Undated photograph of Lavina's railroad depot and tracks. Adams Hotel is prominent at the right in the picture.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Site Map   Adams Hotel   Page 10
                    Golden Valley County, MT

Barely Visible Grades

Railway Avenue

Jensen Road

1st Avenue

Highway

To Depot ruins

Bud's Standard Service Station 24GV173

Residence/ 22 Main Street 24GV174

Lavina Café 24GV175

The Adams 24GV161

Poordevil Traders/ Box Land Office 24GV162

Residence/Jensen Bros. Meat Market 24GV163

Dr. Bob's Rocky Mountain Garage 24GV164

Country Kids Daycare 24GV165

Slayton's Mercantile 24GV159

Lavina Masonic Lodge 24GV166

Residence/105 Main Street 24GV167

Residence/1960 Post Office 24GV168

Main Street Lavina, Golden Valley County, MT