NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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

24LC.1970

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building

other name/site number: Montana Historical Society

## 2. Location

street & number: 225 North Roberts

not for publication: n/a

city/town: Helena

vicinity: n/a

state: Montana code: MT county: Lewis and Clark code: 049 zip code: 59620

## 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 X statewide __ locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

__ 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:** Public - State

**Category of Property:** Building

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:** n/a

**Name of related multiple property listing:** n/a

**Number of Resources within Property**

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ____ | buildings |
| ____ | ____ | sites |
| ____ | ____ | structures |
| ____ | ____ | objects |
| ____ | ____ | Total |

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:**
RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum
EDUCATION/research facility
GOVERNMENT/government offices

**Current Functions:**
RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum
EDUCATION/research facility
GOVERNMENT/government offices

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:**
MODERN MOVEMENT

**Materials:**
foundation: CONCRETE
walls: STONE; CONCRETE
roof: ASPHALT
other: METAL

### Narrative Description

The Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building is a large, flat-roofed, "L"-shaped, asymmetrical building, with steel beam framing, reinforced concrete construction, finished with Indiana limestone. The roof is reinforced concrete slab covered with pitch and gravel roofing over two-inch thick foam glass insulation. The building rests on a concrete wall foundation. The north wing is three stories tall, with a daylight basement. The south wing houses the museum area, and is a single story with a full basement and sub-basement, where the boiler room is located. The building faces the Montana Capitol to the west. The impressive building has two additions: a 1970, one-story addition fills the space between the original wings of the building, and creates a roughly rectangular footprint; a second addition was completed in 1986, and extends to the east (rear) from the north wing. Despite these changes, the building still retains a high degree of integrity, as the additions are to the rear of the building, and sensitive to the original design.

On the west (front) elevation, the centered, striking entrance dramatized by bronze trim offers a friendly welcome to the building. Polished, mahogany colored Minnesota Granite surrounds the heavy bronze double doors at the main level. Above, a recessed curtain wall rises to the full three-story height of the building. The doors and glass settings are bronze glazed with golden plate insulating glass, which diffuses the strong western sunlight warmly and without glare over the entire lobby.[1] This same decorative scheme is carried out in the lettering, which highlights the upper portion of the entrance. The entrance also serves to separate the two wings of the building, the horizontal, windowless expanse of the museum wing to the south, and the vertical, massive, research facility and offices to the north. A flat, concrete slab canopy, surrounded with decorative bronze fascia, projects from the building above the entry doors and across the patio area just to the south. Plain, square, concrete pillars support the shelter.

(see continuation sheet)

[1] "Challenging Lines in Limestone," *Construction News Bulletin*, Vol. 60, No. 2, January 16, 1954, p. 4.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Areas of Significance:
ARCHITECTURE;
ART;
EDUCATION;
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1953

Significant Dates: 1953

Significant Person(s): n/a

Architect/Builder: Angus Vaughn McIver/Carson Construction Company

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level under Criterion A, for its association with the history of art and education in Montana. The building gains additional significance under Criterion C, as an excellent example of the International Style of architecture as executed in a public building.

The History of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building

*By Lester Loble, originally published in* Montana Magazine of Western History *January 1951. Edited by Kate Hampton, 2003.*

Jack Johnson, the great black heavyweight fighter, won the world's championship in Sydney, Australia in 1908, by defeating Tommy Burns. That fight affected the future course of boxing and indirectly contributed $48,000 for the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building. Here's how it happened: Following this fight, a great cry arose to find a "white hope" who could defeat Jack Johnson. During this period, boxing was in disrepute, and many states banned it as illegal. Jack Johnson finally lost the world's heavyweight championship, (to Jess Willard - the Pottowatomie Giant - in 1915) but not until a great impetus had been given to boxing in the efforts to find a "white hope" who could defeat him.

During this time, boxing was illegal in Montana, but as in other states, a movement was started to legalize. In 1914, a referendum, known as the Kiley Boxing Law was submitted but ultimately failed after a hotly contested debate. In 1919 the Legislative Assembly legalized boxing, but with the stipulation that a portion of the net proceeds from boxing matches go for the benefit of soldiers, sailors and marines. Through the following years a substantial fund accumulated at the state treasury from the boxing matches. This fund ultimately was used for the erection of the Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building.

Much earlier, in 1865, a group of prominent Montana men gathered in the Dance and Stuart Store in Virginia City to critique *Montana As It Is*, a promotional history by Granville Stuart. This gathering led to the formation of the Montana Historical Society, first as a private men's club, then sanctioned by the first territorial legislature. In 1893, Governor Robert B. Smith, a populist, effectively transformed the society from a gentleman's club to a government agency, renaming it "the Historical and Miscellaneous Department of the Montana State Library." Librarian Laura E. Howey systemized the library, accessioning and cataloging resources for the first time. The library quickly moved into the west wing of the newly completed Capitol building. In 1912, the society moved into the newly completed east wing of the Capitol. A technicality regarding Howey's reappointment (she could not vote and therefore could not hold public office) led to her dismissal. The Society continued to exist, of course, but economic depression and leadership by committee stagnated its growth.

(see continuation sheet)

## 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
_X_ Other State agency: Montana Historical Society Library and Archives
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Specify Repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** approximately 2 acres

**UTM References:**

| Zone | Easting | Northing | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 422227 | 5159481 | (NAD 27) |

**Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)):** NE ¼ NW ¼ NW ¼ of Section 32, T10N, R3W (Montana Prime Meridian)

**Verbal Boundary Description**
Lots 1,4; 5-14; and 15-32, Block 9, Corbin Addition, Helena, MT

**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: Kate Hampton
organization: MT SHPO date: November 2003
street & number: 1410 8th Ave telephone: (406)444-3647
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620-1202

## Property Owner

name/title: Department of Administration/State of Montana
street & number: P.O. Box 200110 telephone: (406)444-2511
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620-0110

The north side of the west elevation features ribbons of steel-framed windows, three at each level. The northernmost and southernmost ribbons each contain three vertical windows with four lights. The bottom light is a hopper that opens in, and the middle two lights are an awning that opens outward. The centered ribbons each contain four, four-light windows and feature the same ventilation system. A single, narrow sandstone lintel and sill transverse all three sets of windows, and protrude slightly from the smooth face of the exterior wall.

Although the southern wing of the west elevation contains no fenestration, vertically and horizontally placed, narrow, slightly raised strips of limestone interrupt the smooth, rectangular slabs of limestone veneer. The random pattern displayed on the exterior wall is mimicked in details throughout the interior of the building, including the brass plates that cover the heating ducts, and the bronze lattice of the mezzanine railing.

The north (side) elevation features the original section to the west, and the flush 1986 addition to the east. The original section of the building displays ribbons of windows identical to those on the façade. The first and second stories each contain four ribbons of three windows evenly spaced across the west side of the elevation. The third story features six ribbons of windows. All these window openings feature continuous lintels and sills like those on the façade. At the daylight basement level, there are seven sixteen-light steel framed windows. The center four lights form a hopper that opens inward. While the lintels for these window openings are flush with the exterior wall, the limestone sills protrude slightly from the wall surface. Also at the basement level, the exterior walls are poured concrete, and not faced with limestone.

The 1986 addition is slightly taller, and, like the rest of the building, faced with limestone above the basement level. The north elevation of the addition features four one-light, fixed, metal-framed windows at both the second and third story levels. These windows are paired beneath continuous lintels and sills within slightly recessed areas of similar proportions to the window openings on the original section of the building. The first story contains no fenestration. At the basement level, a concrete ramp leads to a loading dock equipped with a lift. Behind the loading dock and ramp, a short flight of concrete stairs leads to large, heavy, metal double doors that open into the basement level of the addition.

The south (side) elevation of the building consists of the original, one-story museum wing to the west and the 1970 addition to the east. The original section features the same raised, narrow limestone strip design as displayed on the west elevation. The addition is recessed and slightly taller, though still one story, and faced with smooth limestone like that of the rest of the building. Fenestration on the south elevation of the building is limited to a single, metal pedestrian door centered on the addition.

The east (rear) elevation of the building includes a small section of the original museum wing of the building to the south, the wide expanse of the 1970 addition at the center, and the 1986 addition to the north. There is a pair of metal double doors centered in the original south wing. Within the 1970 addition, there are no windows, only a pair of metal double doors off-center to the south. The east elevation of the 1986 addition contains recessed entry at its south side. Within the entry, the south wall is set at a forty-five degree angle while the north wall is perpendicular to the exterior of the building. Access is gained to the interior through a pair of metal-framed, one-light double doors. A pair of metal-framed, fixed, one-light windows is centered above the entry, within a recessed area of the same design as the entrance. There are two sets of windows centered in the north side of the addition, one set at both the second and thirds stories. These windows are identical to those found on the north elevation of the addition, and echo the window patterns of the original building.

The interior of the building still displays much of the original detailing and materials of the 1950s design. These include Colorado travertine marble surrounding the doors to the galleries and office spaces, the twelve-inch gold and black marble baseboard and terrazzo floors in the public spaces, and wood paneling in the stairwells. The original vault doors to the stacks and archives spaces of the building are massive, heavy, and still functional. Most of the original light fixtures are intact, especially in the stairwells, on the third floor, and in the archives and stacks areas. Some office spaces still boast the dark green laminate tile floors, and the closets still display the original paint colors chosen by McIver and his associates.

Adding to the overall 1950s design and integrity of the building is the original, architect-designed furniture. The sleek birch chairs and sofas, many upholstered in the original green and brown leather, still provide seating to visitors. In the library, the newspaper tables and other sturdy furnishings specifically chosen for function, durability, and to accent the modern design of the building remain in daily use.

Changes to the original portion of the building are limited to the introduction of interior walls at the basement levels, some commercial carpeting, and an update of the lobby area that coincided with the 1970-era addition. At that time, a unique horizontal-wood slat ceiling treatment was installed across the west end of the lobby and down to partially obscure the curtain wall above the entrance. Lighted display fixtures, and removal of some of the wainscoting also took place as part of the remodel.

Integrity

Despite the changes to the building over time, including the exterior additions and interior remodeling, the overall integrity of the building remains remarkably high. The design elements indicative of its modern style – the asymmetrical appearance, the sleek lines, curtain walls - and use of classic, quality materials including bronze, limestone, steel and concrete, in innovative ways, are still evident. Indeed, its association with the history of the conservation and display of the art, education, and culture of the state are still clear.

Plans to revive the Society dated back as far as 1923, when librarian David Hilger spearheaded (nagged) the legislature to establish the Montana Pioneer Historical Fund for the purpose of constructing a building to hold the library and an art gallery on the Capitol grounds. And here is where the Society's story begins to intertwine with that of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers. The 1923 legislation established the Society of Montana Pioneers as a partner in the building.

Fundraising efforts continued for years, and bills continued to be presented to the Legislature to emphasize the crowded conditions and inappropriate art displays. A deal was struck between the Montana Pioneers, the Montana Veterans, and the state one night at the Placer Hotel in Helena. The lion's share of the money would come from the Capitol Building Grant Fund – which could only be used for actual construction costs. The $48,000 in the Veteran's state accounts from the boxing tax would also be used. To see if the plan was legal a test case – "Willet vs. the Board of Examiners" was taken to the Supreme Court. The court ruled that the funds could be commingled. The Veteran's Welfare Fund could be used for items that could not be bought with the Capitol Building Land Grant Fund.

The plan was successful, and appealing to Legislators for a number of reasons: it was a triple presentation by the Veterans, the Pioneers, and the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers. The plan also allowed the building to be constructed without direct taxation. Though delayed by World War II, the bonds were eventually set aside, and a call for architects went out. All architects in Montana were invited to submit plans. Nine or ten architects submitted plans, and they were given to the Montana Pioneers and the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers, and the Veterans Group to look over. At their separate conventions, without influence, and by secret votes, it so happened that one set of plans appealed to all groups, and according to Lester Loble, a member of the Veterans groups, "there was never any conflict over the matter."

Great Falls Architect Angus Vaughn McIver submitted the winning design. McIver had an impressive resume to go along with his beautiful design. His works around the state include the Pondera County Courthouse, the Toole County Courthouse, and the Glacier County Courthouse. He also designed the Great Falls International Airport, and schools, churches and other public buildings across the state.

As early as 1945, the use of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building was clearly outlined by statute:

> [the building shall] constitute a perpetual memorial to the war veterans and the pioneers of Montana, and said building shall be devoted to the use of the united Spanish war veterans of Montana, the veterans of foreign wars of Montana, the American legion of Montana, the disabled American veterans of Montana, the World War I veterans of Montana, the Montana historical society, the society of Montana pioneers, and the sons and daughters of Montana pioneers and for the housing of books, records, documents, and other property of such veterans and organizations; and there shall be provided in said building appropriate office quarters for the state headquarters and officers and employees of such veterans and organizations and for the librarian and other employees of the Montana historical society.[2]

The plan to construct the building in the late 1940s, culminating with Governor John Bonner's persuasion of the legislature to authorize an additional $350,000, coincided with a total revamping of the Historical Society. Indeed, the legislation authorizing the increase in funds also defined the duties of the librarian, established the society's collecting

[2] Montana Code Annotated 22-3-302.

parameters, and emphasized the need to promote the study of Montana history through lectures, museum exhibits, and publications. All this not long after budget crisis threatened the future of the Society altogether. The Board of Trustees was also changed considerably. The new Board authorized the hiring of a new professional director. That decision would change the Society forever, and bring it physically and philosophically into the modern age. These changes included a new academic influence, personified in the new Director, K. Ross Toole.[3] A Montana newspaper editorial acknowledged Toole's role in the state:

> Employment of K. Ross Toole as director of the historical library has proved a major factor in the rejuvenation process so urgently needed. He has demonstrated an unusual ability to enlist the assistance of skilled people in the classification and display of very valuable material on the Treasure State...Without proper classification of records, no historian can hope to compile a readable history of Montana...[4]

Building Construction and Use

Construction of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building began with an official groundbreaking ceremony March 22, 1950. No sooner had the concrete been poured that the trouble began to start. The first problems were physical. A flood in the newly finished basement level resulted in the water levels reaching fourteen feet. It was pumped out with the help of local fire companies within a day or two, and no significant damage was done.[5]

The flood may have been a harbinger of things to come. The architect wrote to the State Board of Examiners as early as 1949, applying for another Capitol job. He asked that:

> you do not hold against me the long period of time taken to prepare plans for the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Buildings. The war delayed progress in the first instance. Many changes have been made in the use and purpose of the buildings. Appropriation amounts have changed twice. Gaining information of library stacks and museum cases has taken months, the companies manufacturing these items being very dilatory in answering requests for technical data. Satisfying all the occupying groups has been another cause for delay involving no little amount of diplomacy.[6]

New Director K. Ross Toole had a vision, and that vision did not always coincide with the plans of the Pioneers and Veterans groups. The building was administered by the Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Fund Commission that included

[3] The historic context for the years between 1865 and 1950 was taken from Lester Loble's "The History of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building," *Montana Magazine of Western History*, with some information from Brian Shover's "Saving Montana's Past: The Creation and Evolution of the Montana Historical Society and Montana: The Magazine of Western History," published in *Montana: The Magazine of Western History,* Vol. 52, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 48-59. Biographical information about McIver compiled by Kate Hampton from the "Architect Biographical Files" at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

[4] "A New Home for Montana Historical Library," January 13, 1953, source unknown, found in "Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building," vertical file, Montana Historical Society Library, Helena, MT.

[5] "Crews Finishing 'Mop-Up' after 300,000 Gallons of Water Flood Basement of Memorial Building," *The Independent Record* (Helena), July 16, 1951.

[6] Angus McIver to Montana State Board of Examiners, 1949, "Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building," Unprocessed collection, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, MT.

representatives from all the interested parties.[7] Although dedicated in 1951, the building was not open to the public until January 1953, and from the beginning the idea of how the building would be decorated was a hot issue. In the summer and fall of 1954, the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers voiced their concerns. Title to the lots purchased for the building was in question, and the group threatened to withhold their ownership in an effort to persuade the new director to bow to their demands. At issue were the hundreds of portraits of the Montana Pioneers. The group wanted them hung throughout the building, and their lawyer Moncure Cockrell asserted:

> That the pioneer group does not want the land or payment for it, but rather to use the ownership of the land as a means for obtaining more recognition and rights in the management of the building and museum...the (pioneer group)...has been manhandled.[8]

Toole noted that to hang all the portraits would take up all the walls space in the whole building. The State Board of Examiners settled the issue, giving Toole complete directory power in the administration of the building and museum.[9]

In addition to the concern regarding the portraits, troubles for Toole included issues such as furniture, which had to be approved by the numerous board members of the Veterans and Pioneers, since it was their money. A letter to McIver's associate in 1951 summed up the problem, and offers insight to Toole's attitude toward the commission members:

> I have gone over the plans and fabrics with a good number of people since you were here, including key members of the board of trustees and a decorator. The reaction has been universally hostile. This I think, is not merely because Montanans are backward in these matters, which, I agree, they are, but rather because there is a conviction that the fabrics and furniture are too extreme for the nature of the building and will, in the span of a few years, be very dated. Chair No. 71, reminded several people of a toilet seat.[10]

The woes continued, especially about the library furniture, which had to be specially ordered and proven to be durable enough. Toole continued: "All were worried by the type and design because of the fact that it is impractical, extreme, will be come dated, is "fad" furniture and isn't durable enough."[11] Despite these tensions, Toole and the architectural team remained steadfast in their opinions, and indeed the library furniture is still in excellent condition and continues to be used.

Toole brought in experts from around the country to help with the interior design of the museum:

> As for the museum we first obtained the services of John C. Ewers, curator of Ethnology at the Smithsonian...He came to Helena and in consultation with a museum board did the basic planning for the

[7] Lester Loble, "Legion Aids in Financing State Memorial Building," *The Montana Legionnaire* Malta, Montana, February 1954.
[8] "State Pioneer group Debates Action on Ownership of Lots," *Great Falls Leader*, October 23, 1954.
[9] "Status of Pioneers' Organizations Clarified in Meeting With Examiners," *Great Falls Tribune*, 1954; Sons and Daughters Group to Go Before Examiners," *The Independent Record* (Helena), October 25, 1954.
[10] K. Ross Toole to Knute Haugsjoa, September 12, 1951, "Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building," unprocessed collection, Montana Historical Society, Helena.
[11] Ibid.

> museum. We then hired for eight months Gardell Christiansen of the American Museum of Natural History to begin to execute Mr. Ewer's plans. Since that time a large number of Montana artists have contributed their talents toward the creation of what we think will ultimately be a very fine museum.[12]

This collaboration of architect, pioneer vision, and a director with conviction, resulted in what was at the time, the most modern museum in the west. Toole said that the museum should be exciting. That it was the hook to get people in the building. The true importance of the Society though was academics and its role as a research center.

Toole was a fourth-generation Montanan with a doctorate in history, whose vision and determination largely shaped the Montana Historical Society's direction and goals through the second half of the twentieth century. During the early 1950s, under his tenure, the Society saved the largest collection of Charles M. Russell paintings still in private hands, the Malcom S. Mackay Collection, from going out of state. Those canvasses became the "nucleus for what has become one of the four largest holdings of Russell material in the country."

Toole enlarged the library program, acquiring primary materials, including "ledgers, letters, account books, diaries, and business records from people all over Montana." He oversaw the indexing and collating of these materials for researchers. Toole noted that scholars from all over the West began to be aware that no library west of the Mississippi River with the exception of British Columbia archives had a better research collection."[13] During the first few years of his directorship, the staff of the Historical Society expanded from two to seventeen.

Toole also reinvigorated the publication of an academic journal by the Society. Its earlier incarnation, *Contributions*, had last been published in 1940. Toole wrote in 1956:

> The most notable accomplishment of the reorganized Historical Society was the publication of *Montana*, the magazine of western history. This publication was launched in 1951 as an ordinary historical quarterly. When I came on the scene in June of that year it has a circulation in excess of one hundred. Under my editorship it did not grow swiftly. Until the Fall of 1952 its growth was anything but spectacular. We had only four hundred and fifty subscribers when I determined that a professional magazine man was a necessity if we were to grow. Accordingly Mr. Michael Kennedy, a journalist and historian came to staff that fall. The magazine was redesigned and in the period between 1953 and 1956 the magazine increased subscriptions from 450 to 14,223. This magazine at present time is the largest journal of history in the United States...[14]

From the beginning, all the parties involved with the construction and use of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building agreed that it should be modern, yet respectful of the past. "This blending of old and new so eloquently achieved by the architectural firm of McIver, Hess, and Haugsjaa, architecturally represent the qualities

[12]Ibid. Gardell Dano Christiansen designed and constructed several dioramas for the museum, including one of a buffalo jump, still present in the building which, claimed local newspapers when it was unveiled in 1953, was "the largest in the world."
[13] K. Ross Toole to Geraldine Lowery, August 20, 1956, "Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building," Unprocessed collection, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, MT.
[14] Ibid.

implied in its name. The imposing structure provides a reserved contemporary home for the rich heritage of a state that hold promise of an even more glorious future."[15]

The building design served another purpose as well. Facing the Capitol itself, the fitting memorial with its limestone exterior forms part of a group of other state buildings, including the Capitol to the west, the Mitchell Building to the south, and the Livestock Building to the northwest. Within the Memorial building spaces were designed to keep the Pioneers, Veterans, and Historical Society as separate entities, yet to coordinate the floor spaces so that they appear to be in one tenancy. One Helena newspaper reported: "Carson Construction Company of Helena, who won the construction bid, followed the specification not only to the letter but also in spirit. The result is an impressive and modern home that still provides a setting to realistically take the visitor back 50 or 75 years."

As early as 1941, it was understood that the third floor of the building would be largely dedicated to the veterans and pioneers groups for office space:

> Veterans organizations have asked for two office rooms each for the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars; one office each for the Disabled American Veterans and the United Spanish War Veterans; a committee room for all groups and a central hall for trophies.[16]

These offices were equipped with vaults, closets and storage spaces. Most featured green tile laminate floors and fluorescent lighting, still present in the building today. The editor of *The Montana Legionnaire*, seem very satisfied with the new space when he wrote:

> [the new office] is where the correspondence, bulletins and reports are made out to keep American Legion business going in Montana. This large room contains all the working equipment the girls [secretaries] use, cutting down on their steps and making the operation more efficient...a large stationary closet and a work bench that holds mailing equipment and contains drawers where pamphlets and booklets from National Headquarters are stored. The new offices were furnished with chairs, tables, desks and settees when the department moved in...Old records are kept under lock and key in well-lighted, weatherproof storage space...[17]

The largest room on the third floor is the Nutter-Shore Memorial Trophy Room, an exhibit area maintained by the veterans groups that occupied the building. In it are displayed numerous artifacts and interpretive panels that convey the military history of Montana from the mid nineteenth through the twentieth century. Chester K. Shore, Montana veteran and American Legion of Montana State Adjutant from 1956 to 1967, is credited with establishing this military trophy hall, which was opened to the public on Memorial Day, 1958. Governor Donald Grant Nutter dedicated the room on January 20, 1962. Five days later, all were saddened by Nutter's untimely death in an airplane crash. The room was rededicated in Nutter's name on December 6, 1964, and again renamed to acknowledge Shore's contribution to Montana Veterans

[15] "Challenging Lines in Limestone," *Construction News Bulletin*, Vol. 60 No. 2, January 16, 1954, p. 4
[16] "Details on Plans for Structure go to Architects," *The Helena Independent*, June 13, 1941.
[17] "This I Where The Wheels Go 'Round To Do Your Business," *The Montana Legionnaire*, Malta, Montana, February 1954.

throughout his career.[18] The Trophy Room remains as one of the best-preserved rooms in the building, with original finishes and fixtures throughout. "One display case lists names of all Montana service people who were killed in action or died in service in the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection, World WAR I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

By the mid-1960s the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building was recognized throughout the state, and indeed the West, as a premiere research center and museum. Society Director Michael Kennedy extolled the importance of the Montana Historical Society Library, Archives, and Museum:

> The State Museum has been called "second only to Glacier National Park as Montana's greatest single tourist attraction." There is no doubt that this facility has been directly responsible for bringing thousands of visitors annually to the Treasure State. The Montana Historical Society has not only enriched our heritage but has brought in an incalculable amount of additional revenue to Montana's limited economy. Time after time, we have heard tourist families who only intended a fleeting glimpse of the museum, but who stayed extra days because they were so impressed with the depth, visual and education quality of our displays and collections. This Historical Society has proven, time after time, to be the envy of every other State in the Union. Our magazine has "sold" Montana's rich history and scenic-recreational delights throughout the world.[19]

Kennedy wrote this to emphasize the importance of the Historical Society to the State of Montana, but also as a plea to expand the building. Within eight years of its construction, the Society realized that the building was too small to accommodate its numerous exhibit pieces, and archival storage needs, and a campaign to the legislature and donors began again in earnest for an addition to the building. In 1967, the Montana State Legislature appropriated $499,750 for the addition, and by 1968, an additional $40,000 was raised from private donations.[20] Groundbreaking took place in 1969, and the new wing was dedicated "to all Montanans" on July 31, 1970. Designed sympathetically to the original building, the architects were Davidson/Kuhr of Great Falls. The new space included the Russell Gallery, the Poindexter Gallery of Modern Art, and an additional small gallery. The largest room on the first floor addition was the Towe Gallery, which showcased the Ed Towe's collection of 40 antique Ford cars on a ramp that surrounded the room.[21] At the same time, a major new exhibit was constructed in the ground floor of the museum. Called "Territory Junction," it was an impressive display of a Main Street in an unnamed Montana town, complete with storefronts and plank sidewalks.

The joy and satisfaction with the new addition lasted about a decade. By 1980s, rumblings from staff about cramped quarters began again, and the Historical Society again began to lobby for an addition. By 1983, the Historical Society was bombarding legislators with pictures and testimonials of the inadequate storage and staff areas in the building.

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[18] Fred Burnell, "Forward," in Chester K. Shore's *Montana in the Wars*, American Legion of Montana, Miles City, Montana: Star Printing Company, 1977, p. v. For a short biography of Governor Nutter, see the Montana Capitol website: http://www.montanacapitol.com/exhibits/governorsreception/index2.html.

[19] Michael Kennedy open letter, January 28, 1965, "Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building," Unprocessed Collection, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, MT.

[20] Lee Wynn, "Museum to Expand,"*The Independent Record* (Helena), July 21, 1968; Janet Allison, "Historical Museum Pride of Montana, New Wing Will be Dedicated on July 31," *Havre Daily News*, July 3, 1970.

[21] Ibid.

On July 18, 1986, the dedication ceremony took place for the second addition. Drawings for the three-story wing were initially very different from the original building, dominated by glass and metal, but in the end, a design much more in keeping with the original, was chosen. The 1986 addition provided space for two new galleries on the main floor. All the galleries were reconfigured, with the Homeland exhibit installed in what had been the Russell, Poindexter, and small gallery area. The Towe exhibit area became the Haynes gallery, and the McKay Russell collection, and a large temporary exhibits area located in the new space. The basement level for the entire building became a staff area, with additional shipping and receiving space. The library on the second floor got a larger reading room, additional stack space, and a staff workroom. On the third floor, photo archives expanded to include a research room, offices, and workspace.

In 1987, a separate project was launched to improve the landscaping at the entrance to the museum. Plantings were carefully planned to make the entrance more inviting, to encourage people to come and sit. These plans continued through 1992. While the result is beautiful and useful, it also covers the subtle design elements on the façade.

Since its completion in 1953, the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building has served its tenants well. By Statute, the Montana Historical Society is an agency of state government

> for the use, learning, culture, and enjoyment of the citizens of the state and for the acquisition, preservation, and protection of historical records, art, archival, and museum objects, historical places, sites, and monuments and the custody, maintenance, and operation of the historical library, museums, art galleries, and historical places, sites, and monuments. [22]

Within the walls of the building, for fifty years, the staff of the Historical Society has worked hard to preserve for future generations a representative selection of all historic resources (art, records, books, photographs, oral histories, artifacts, journals, sites, buildings) important to an understanding of Montana history. They continue to provide educational and public programs, reference services, exhibits, and publications that interpret Montana's past to a broad public, and technical assistance to all organizations that preserve and interpret additional historic resources that help Montanans and her visitors understand the region's past.

The Montana Pioneers and the Sons and Daughters of the Montana Pioneers

Two Montana organizations, the Montana Pioneers and the Sons and Daughters of the Montana Pioneers, were intrisic to the construction of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building. These groups wroked tirelessly for twenty-five years to see the dream of the building realized. As early as 1927, Sons and Daughters President James M. Brown pleaded with Montanans to urge legislators to support the building plans:

> Pioneers, Sons and Daughters, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, State Press association members! Act NOW in behalf of the proposed Historical Library that, in the past year, you have gone on record of having constructed! Interview or write today – don't delay – your state senator and

[22] 22-3-101 MCA

> representatives, urging the passage of an act authorizing the state board of examiners to issue required bonds...Only unified action will accomplish anything...Montana must have a new historical building...[23]

Brown was a strong advocate for a new building throughout the 1920s, even serving on the library advisory commission. In conferring with other historical societies thorughout the country, he and State Librarian David Hilger were among the first to acknowledge that the new building should not only provide for the storage and display of the "historic records and relics of Montana for an unlimited period," but also that the building should be "modern, impressive, dignified and attractive inside and out..It should be a thing both of use and beauty and be as perfectly adapted to its purpose as the science of buiding and the arts and crafts can make it."[24]

So devoted were the pioneer groups to the cause that they purchased and donated much of the land on which the building was built. Their pride in the buiding was evident when twenty four Pioneers participated to dedicate the memorial in 1951.[25] The Pioneers and Sons and Daughters have occupied their third floor office since 1953, dedicated to the research, documentation and perpetuation of the legacy of the first non-Indian settlers of Montana.

*The following history is directly from the Sons and Daughters of the Montana Pioneers Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, adopted at e regular annual meeting, August 1998.*

*The Society of Montana Pioneers was organized in Helena on September 10, 1884. Just eight years later, on August 18, 1892, the junior society, "The Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers", was formed. The account of the Helena Herald read as follows:*

> *About 40 young people of both sexes met in the district courtroom, department two, in pursuance of a published call for the purpose of forming a society of the sons and daughters of Montana pioneers. These gentlemen and ladies represent, in measure, the flower of the state's youth, talent and beauty. Thirty-nine names were enrolled at this, their first meeting. It was decided that the society shall hereafter meet with the pioneers each year.*

*The first meeting was called to order by General C.D. Curtis, the father of the movement. A quote taken from the minutes of the first meeting reads as follows: "That it is the object of this meeting that, to perpetuate the sacrifices and heroic virtues of our parents who blazed the trial into this county, we do here and now organize a Society to be called the Society of the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers."*

*The date of December 31, 1864 was originally chosen by the Montana Pioneers to determine the eligibility for people to become members into the Society of the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers. However, in 1909 the Montana Pioneers met in convention and amended the date to December 31, 1868. An interesting fact is that the Pioneers wrote into their by-laws that should anyone make a motion to change the date for eligibility into the Society, the presiding office would declare them out of order as quoted below.*

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[23] James M. Brown, "Plea for Historical Library Voiced by Society President," editorial, source unknown, c. 1927; found in "Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building," vertical file, Montana Historical Society Library, Helena, MT.
[24] "Advice Sought About Building," source unknown, c. 1927; found in "Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building," vertical file, Montana Historical Society Library, Helena, MT.
[25] "Pioneers, Veterans Dedicate Memorial," *Great Falls Tribune*, September 2, 1951.

*To suspend, amend or repeal this article shall forever be out of order and shall be so declared by the officer residing for the time being, whether the point is made by a member or not.*

*At the eighth annual meeting on September 8, 1900 a motion was made to the effect and the design of the gold pan with the pick and shovel crossed upon it and appropriately lettered was adopted as the official emblem of the society.*

*A log cabin was built on the State Fairgrounds (Lewis and Clark County) in 1917 as a meeting place for the Montana Pioneers to rest and visit with one another during the fair. This cabin burned and W. A. Clark donated $500 for its replacement. The cabin stood until the 1960's when it was dismantled.*

*After receiving approval from the Montana Pioneers, a motion was made at the 23rd Annual Meeting (September 5-8, 1917), to amend the Constitution and eliminate the age limit for Sons and Daughters and add all grandchildren and direct descendants be entitled to join the Society.*

*The Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers purchased 63 lots adjacent to the Capitol Building in 1941 and made a gift of that land in 1955 to the State of Montana with the assurance that they were insuring for future generations a place where historic documents and records, artifacts and relics and art of historic import could be preserved and maintained; and that we were also providing a permanent location to house our records and those of our parent organization, the Society of Montana Pioneers. The Veteran's and Pioneers Memorial Building and the Sam W. Mitchell Building were constructed on a portion of those lots. In accordance with Section 22-3-302, MCA the Montana Pioneers utilize a vault and third floor office for the purposes of housing books, records, documents and other property and as office headquarters for its state headquarters.*

*The Society of the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers hold their annual convention in August at various locations throughout the state. The agenda for the meeting includes conducting the business of the Society, electing new members, honoring our deceased members, learning about our past history through guest speakers, and touring historical points. Being able to share our love of Montana with our fellow descendants of Montana Pioneers is truly the most enjoyable part of every convention.*

The Veterans Groups

The combined efforts of Pioneers, Sons and Daughters, and Montana Veterans' Groups including the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the 163rd Infantry of the Montana National Guard, resulted in the construction of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building. Like the Pioneers groups, the veterans have maintained an active role in the building for decades, maintaining offices on the third floor since the early 1950s. In 2003, the America Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans offices moved to nearby Fort Harrison. The 163rd Infantry Division still serves the public from its third floor office.

**Veterans of Foreign Wars**

*This text submitted by Larry H. Longfellow, Quartermaster, VFW Post No. 15027, Helena, MT.*

*The Department of Montana, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) was chartered on June 1, 1928, as a fraternal, patriotic historical and educational non-profit organization. Today, there are 89 Posts and 64 Ladies Auxiliaries across the State of Montana. The VFW Post and Department Service Officers assist disabled and other needy veterans and their families. The VFW also helps guarantee a strong National Defense, supporting legislation for a strong National Defense and to give our military personnel and their families a better way of life. The VFW mission also includes promoting responsible citizenship, supporting scholarship programs in schools, and supporting education programs such as Voice of Democracy grade 9-12, Patriot's Pen, grades 6-8 and Teacher of the Year for grades K-5, 6-8 and 1-12. Veterans attend schools and talk of their military experiences and support programs to get out and vote. Another important mission of the VFW is encouraging and promoting responsible citizenship, sponsoring youth programs, and working with other VA Hospitals. Operation Uplink is a program where phone cards are given to veterans in nursing homes and VA Hospitals and military personnel and their families. Local Posts adopted a military unit and help the unit and their families in any way they can.*

**Disabled American Veterans**

*Formed in 1920 and chartered by Congress in 1932, the million-member DAV is the official voice of America's service-connected disabled veterans -- a strong, insistent voice that represents all of America's 2.1 million disabled veterans, their families and survivors. Its nationwide network of services -- free of charge to all veterans and members of their families -- is totally supported by membership dues and contributions from the American public. Not a government agency, the DAV's national organization receives no government funds.*[26]

In Montana, the DAV provides services throughout the state. The DAV mission includes tracking and lobbying national legislative measures, helping veteran families submit claims, and disaster relief. The DAV transport service alone has provided transportation to the Veterans Administration hospital facilities in Helena, and to outpatient services in major cites across the state. In 2001, the state's DAV vans traveled over seven hundred thirty thousand (730,000) miles, using over thirty thousand (30,000) volunteer hours in the process of transporting fourteen thousand (14,000) veterans.

**American Legion**

The Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion for God and Country explains the mission of the organization:

> we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.[27]

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[26] Copied directly from: http://www.dav.org/about/index.html. For an excellent history of the Disabled American Veterans, see the website: http://www.dav.org/about/history.html.

[27] http://www.legion.org/?section=our_legion&subsection=ol_who_we_are&content=ol_who_we_are.

Since its inception in 1919, the American Legion has worked hard to achieve these goals by establishing social programs, and lobbying for veteran's rights. Indeed, by 1921, the American Legion was intrinsic to the establishment of the U.S. Veterans Bureau, forerunner of the Veterans Administration. Legionnaires continue their support of youth programs, including the Boy Scouts, baseball leagues, academic scholarships, and other educational programs. Through the years, the American Legion Chapters in Montana and across the United States have promoted the GI Bill of Rights, national medical organizations such as the American Heart Association and the National Association for Metal Health, and have fought for the rights of prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action. These causes continue today, as the American Legion continues to support veterans and military families.[28]

**163rd Infantry Division**

The 163rd Infantry Division was designated in 1917, when Woodrow Wilson summoned the Montana National Guard to service in anticipation of World War I. Prior to declaring war on Germany, President Wilson called selected National Guard units, including the 2nd Montana Infantry, into service on March 25, 1917. Companies began arriving at Fort Harrison for swearing in on April 7, and the regiment was re-designated as the 163rd Infantry Regiment of the 41st Division. Nicknamed the "Sunset Division" for their distinctive shoulder insignia, the 41st Division consisted of Guard units from Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming. Once in France, the 41st was re-designated as a replacement division with its soldiers reassigned to the 1st, 26th, 32nd, and 42nd Divisions. While Montana's 163rd Infantry Regiment never fought as a cohesive unit, its soldiers participated in some of the heaviest fighting of the war.

After World War I, the Montana National Guard had no enlisted personnel on the rolls and all the equipment had been used for the war effort.[29] To bolster the National Guard, the National Defense Act of 1920 determined that it was a component of the Regular Army; the Federal Government provided wages and equipment and the Regular Army furnished instructors. Each state was required to fund and maintain armories, drill-halls and equipment storage. The 163rd Infantry Regiment began organizing companies and established its regimental headquarters in Helena. Summer encampments were held at Fort Missoula in 1922 and at Fort Lewis, Washington in 1923, until summer encampments resumed at Fort Harrison in 1924.

World War II erupted in 1939 and while the U.S. was officially neutral, National Guards nationwide prepared for war. In September 1940, the 163rd Infantry Regiment entered federal service for one year of training to prepare for possible U.S. entry in the war. On September 21 and 22, 1940, the 163rd Infantry Regiment departed from Helena for Camp Murray, to become again part of the 41st Division. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the 41st Division deployed to the Olympic Peninsula to halt the expected Japanese invasion of the American homeland. When this invasion did not materialize, the division embarked for Port Moresby, New Guinea in the last days of September 1942 to reinforce Australian troops in the Pacific Theatre of Operations (PTO). Victorious in the Buna-Sanananda campaign, the first decisive victory over the Japanese in World War II,[30] the 41st Division also participated in the island-hopping campaigns at Aitape, Arare, Biak and the Philippine Islands. Following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the division was preparing to invade the Japanese mainland when the emperor surrendered on August 19, 1945. Inactivated

[28] Geraldine Lowery, *The American Legion in Montana, 1919-1963*, printed by Reporter Printing and Supply Co., Billings, MT, 1965; see also: http://www.legion.org/?section=our_legion&subsection=ol_history&content=ol_history.
[29] Richard Lacey, *Montana Militia: A History of Montana's Volunteer Forces, 1867-1976*, (Dillon, MT: Dillon Tribune Examiner Press, 1976), p. 57.
[30] Lacey, p. 72

and shipped back to the United States on January 1, 1946, the 163rd Infantry Regiment, with only 20% of its soldiers being from Montana, returned home five years after they had been activated.[31]

Soldiers called to federal service for the war were discharged and were no longer carried on the National Guard rolls. Rebuilding the Montana National Guard began in spring, 1947, when the 163rd Regimental Combat Team formed. At this time the Montana Air National Guard also stood up, with the 186th Fighter Squadron located at the Great Falls airport. General Spencer H. Mitchell, the Adjutant General commanded both the Army and Air National Guard from the Montana Arsenal, Armory, and Drill Hall [listed in the National Register 2/14/2002]. Although Guard units across the country were called into federal service for the Korean War, 1950-1953, the Montana Army National Guard was not activated.

More recently, About 200 members of the Guard's 163rd Infantry Battalion from Billings to Missoula were called up at the end of July 2000 to help battle blazes in Montana's Bitterroot Valley and in Central Montana. More than 2,300 service members from the Army, Marines, Air and Army Guard and Air Force Reserve were conducting firefighting and support operations for the Western wildfires in response to requests from the National Interagency Firefighting Center in Boise, Idaho, and as directed by the governors of several states.

In July 2001 a reinforced company of 154 Montana National Guard troops from the 1st Battalion of the 163rd Mechanized Infantry prepared for its six-month tour in Bosnia. The troops had been warned to pay attention to their training as peacekeeping forces were being steadily reduced. Tm A/1-163 Infantry deployed on 21 February 2002 as part of Task Force 1-151 Infantry to Bosnia for Operation Joint Forge (SFOR 11). The unit redeployed on 15 September 2002 and was demobilized at FT Dix, NJ.

The 163rd Infantry Division maintains its office on the third floor of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building, and serves both current members of the 163rd and veterans.

For more than fifty years the above veterans and pioneers groups have served their members and all of Montana from the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building. It is clear that their work and dedication to their constituents, and the need to have suitable space to conduct their activities, inspired their activism on behalf of the Montana Historical Society to create and share accommodations. The building process, that took decades, was always intended to be mutually beneficial to the organizations involved.

[31] Lacey, p. 79.

Architectural Significance

Modern Architecture means clean lines, uncluttered spaces, and minimal decoration. Modern buildings, especially those of the International Style like the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building, are often asymmetrical, emphasizing the horizontal in one wing, and the vertical in the other. Often described as boxy, they are still inviting. Curtain walls of windows, ribbons of windows, and modern materials combine in new ways. Indeed, modern materials and technology were often the inspiration for the design: concrete and steel construction allowed for huge openings for windows, and lessened the need for interior support walls.

The International Style has its roots in the Bauhous movement of the early twentieth century. *Bauhaus* is a German expression meaning "house for building." In 1919, the economy in Germany was collapsing after a crushing war. Architect Walter Gropius was appointed to head a new institution, which would help rebuild the country and form a new social order. Called the *Bauhaus*, the Institution called for a new "rational" social housing for the workers. Bauhaus architects rejected "bourgeois" details such as cornices, eaves and decorative details. They wanted to use principles of Classical architecture in their most pure form: without ornamentation of any kind. Bauhaus buildings have flat roofs, smooth façades and cubic shapes. Colors are white, gray, beige or black. Floor plans are open and furniture is functional.

The Bauhaus school disbanded when the Nazis rose to power. Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and other Bauhaus leaders migrated to the United States. The term *International Style* was applied to the American form of Bauhaus architecture. The name came from the book *The International Style* by historian and critic Henry-Russell Hitchcock and architect Philip Johnson. The book was published in 1932 in conjunction with an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The term is again used in a later book *International Architecture* by Walter Gropius.

While Bauhaus architecture had been concerned with the social aspects of design, America's International Style became a symbolism of Capitalism: It is the favored architecture for office buildings, and is also found in upscale homes built for the rich. One of the most famous examples of the style is the glass and bronze Seagram Building in New York, designed by Mies van der Rohe with Philip Johnson.

Angus Vaughn McIver has the distinction of being one of only two Montana architects elected to the status of "fellow" in the AIA. McIver graduated from the Great Falls High School and the University of Michigan. Upon graduation in 1915, he opened offices in Great Falls in partnership with two other young men, Chandler Cohagen and W.V. Marshall. This partnership dissolved in 1917 when all three entered the armed services. "Mac" was a first lieutenant attached to the 109th Engineers 34th Division and served in England and on the continent. Out of service in 1919, McIver returned to Montana. He again formed a partnership with Cohagen, and opened an office in Billings. Subsequently a branch office was formed in Great Falls, with McIver in charge. The partnership dissolved in 1937. Some years later the firm name became McIver and Associates, but was changed again shortly thereafter when William Hess and Knute Haugsjaa entered the firm.

Throughout his 40 year career in Montana, McIver was innovative and kept up with design trends. His work spans from Neoclassical to Beaux Arts to International styles. But the design of the Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building was his most modern to date. McIver's vision was carried through the streamlined spaces, furnishings, and lighting of the interior. Nationally recognized curators and museum designers worked to create one of the most modern museums of the

west at the time, and those essential elements still serve as an impressive backdrop to display, research, record, and store Montana's precious history.

Clearly, the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building has served the citizens of Montana well. In housing the Montana Historical Society, it stands as a testament to the importance the state places on its history, its commitment to education, and its dedication to caring for its precious works of art, artifacts, and documents. The building also serves as offices and a steady memorial to the Montana Veterans and Pioneers and their contributions to the legacy of Montana. The serene limestone walls, ribbons and curtains of glass, bronze details and solid concrete foundation testify to the appropriateness of the International Style of architecture for a building designed to keep the history and legacy of Montana safe and relevant through the twentieth century. For these reasons, the property is eligible for listing in the National Register at the statewide level of significance under Criteria A and C.

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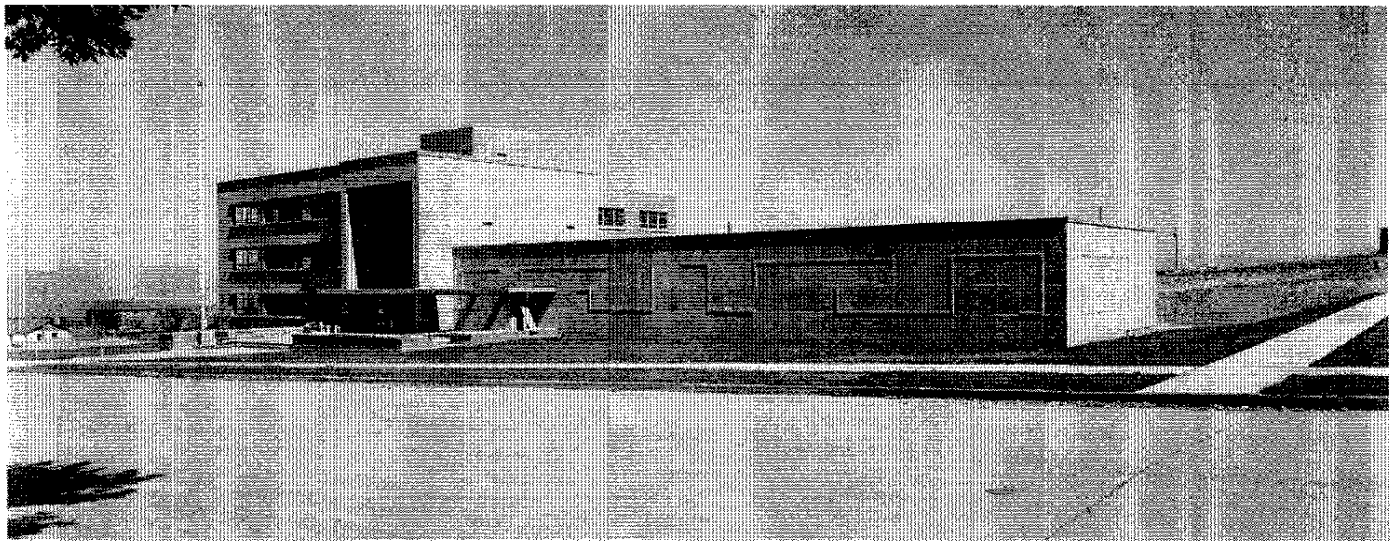
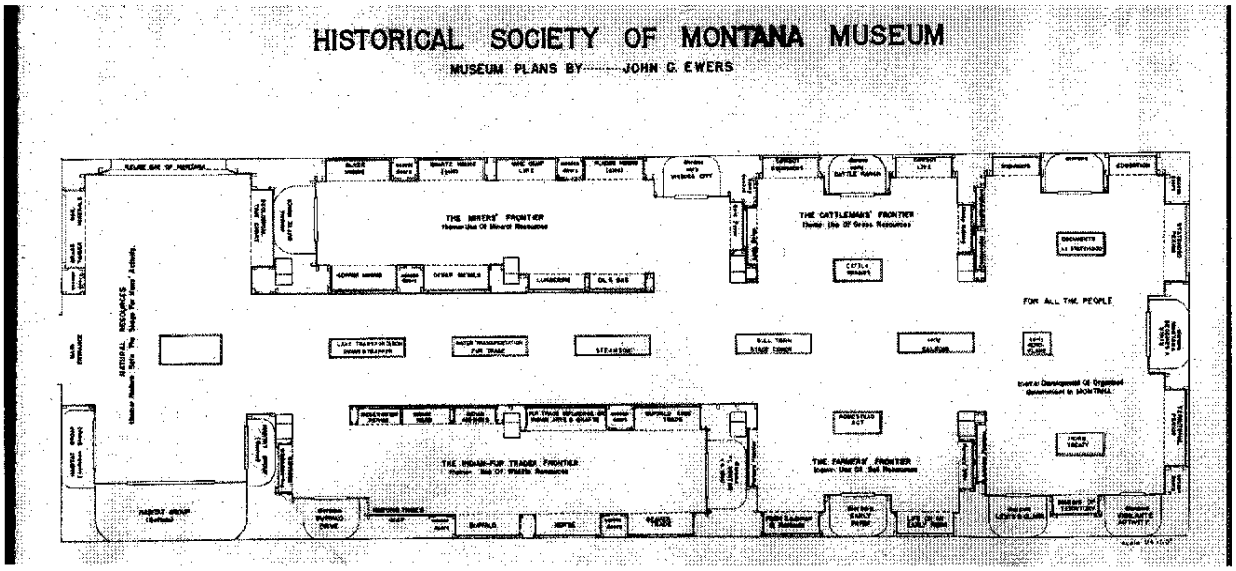
**Photographs**

*Except where otherwise noted, all photographs are courtesy of the Montana Historical Society, Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building, unprocessed collection.*

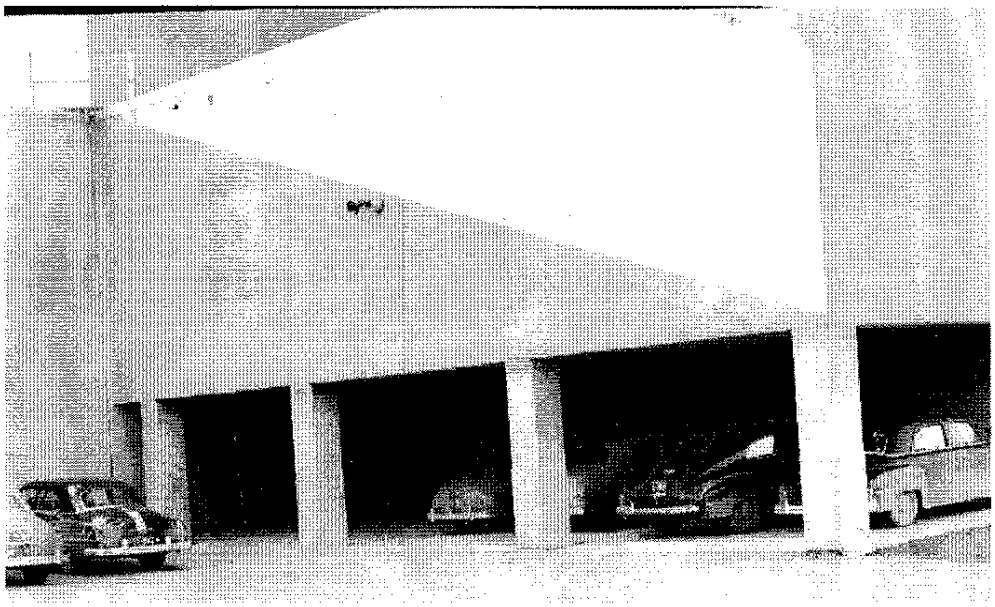
*Groundbreaking ceremony, 1950. Pictured are Governor John Bonner (with shovel) and Architect Angus McIver (wearing the light colored fedora).*



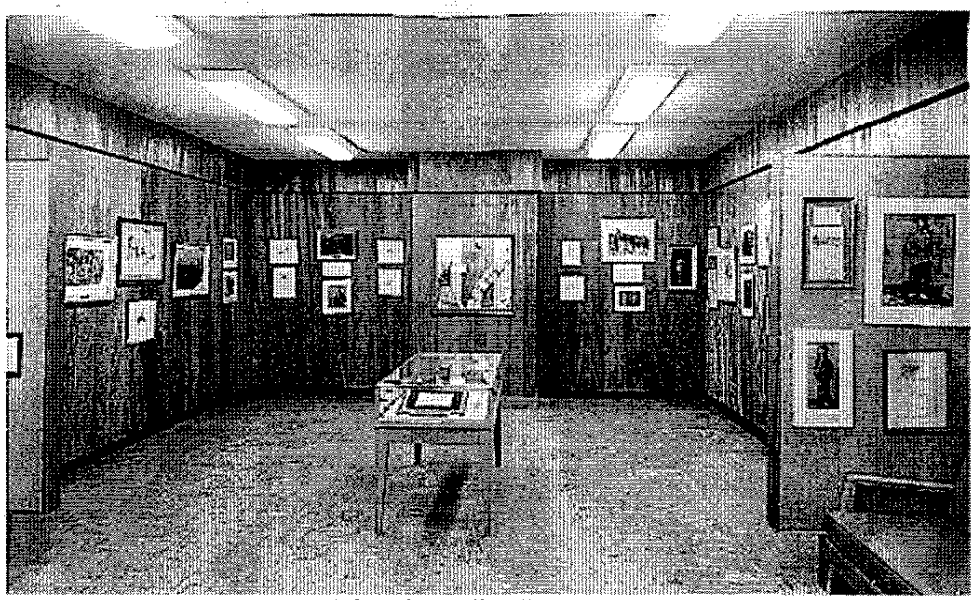
*Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building c. 1953.(west elevation)*




*John C Ewers (1909-1997) was one of the nation's foremost scholars in the ethnology of the Plains Indians and the history of the West. In the 1930s, Ewers worked as a field curator for the National Park Service, and later for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Browning, Montana. After World War II, he was hired by the Smithsonian Institution first as associate curator of ethnology and later as assistant director and then director of what is now the National Museum of American History (then the Museum of History and Technology).*



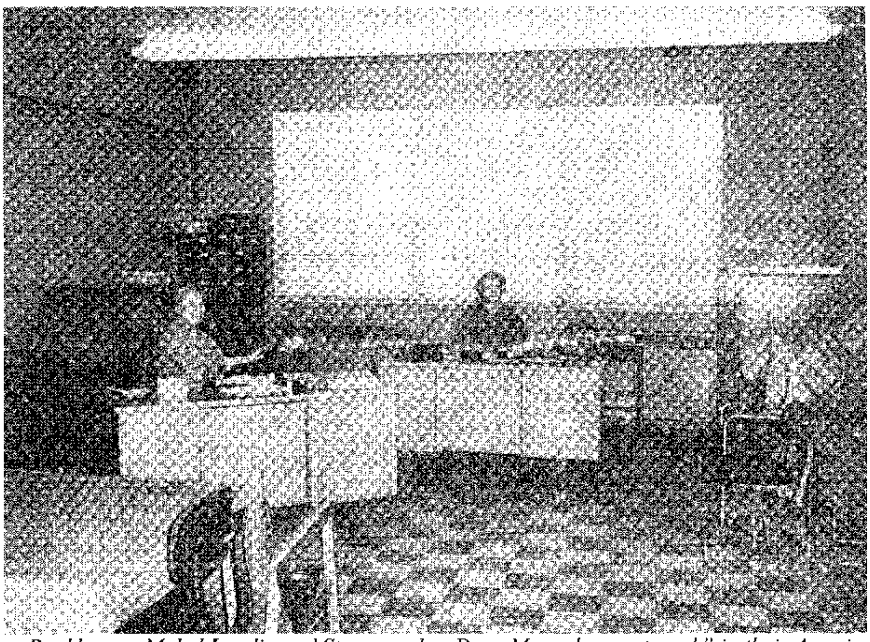
*The original 1953 building featured a loading dock and parking area at the northeast corner of the building. In 1954, Ross Toole requested that the area be enclosed to provide additional office space to the interior of the building.*



*Informal Russell Gallery, c. 1953.*

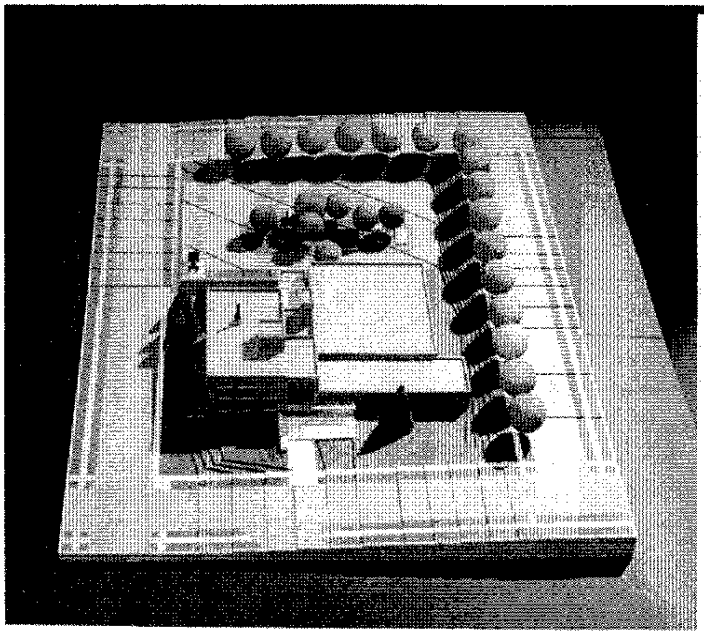
*Montana Historical Society Library, c. 1954. Though carpeting has been installed, the library floorplan and furnishings remain largely unchanged.*

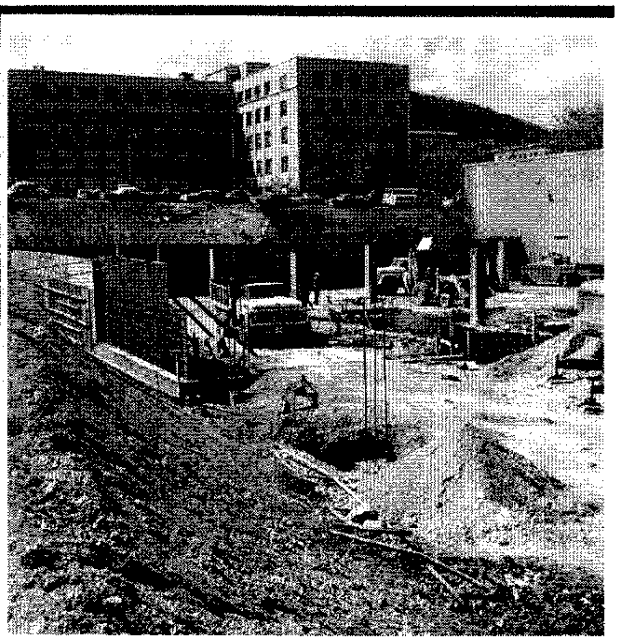
*The basement level of the building originally housed the "lower museum" pictured here in 1954, and later the "Territory Junction" exhibit during the 1970s and early 1980s. The space is now used for offices and storage, but the original materials, including flooring and lighting, are intact.*



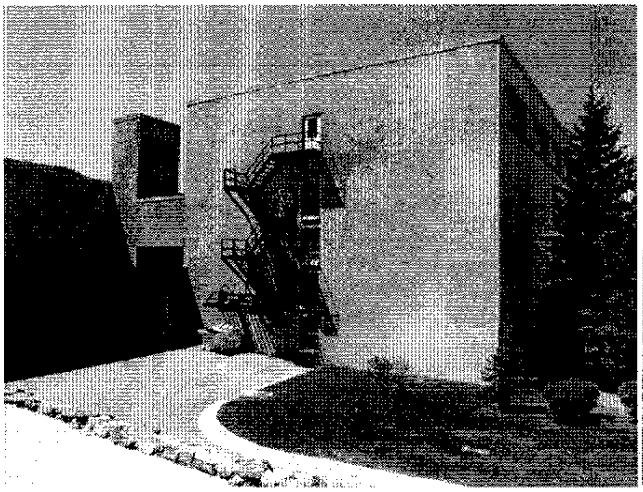
*"Secretary-Bookkeeper Mabel Lundin and Stenographer Dora Mues shown at work" in their American Legion office on the third floor of the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building, February, 1954. Photo scanned from* The Montana Legionnaire, *Malta, MT, February 1954.*

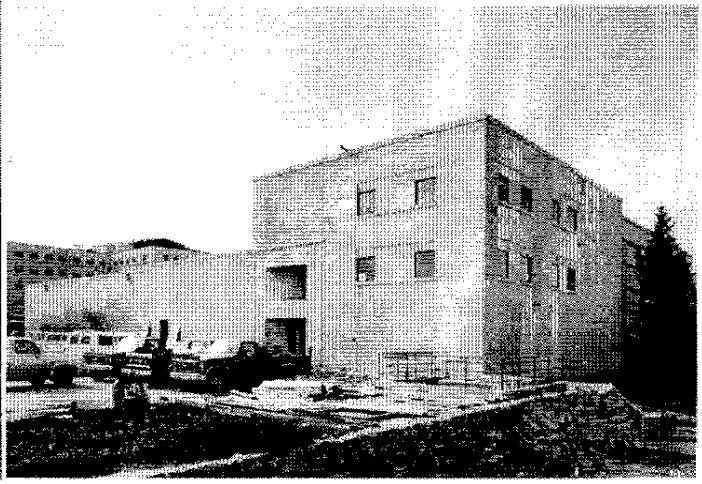
*Twenty-four Montana Pioneers attended the dedication of the building in September 1951. Photo scanned from newspaper article "Pioneers, Veterans Dedicate Memorial,"* Great Falls Tribune, *September 2, 1951.*



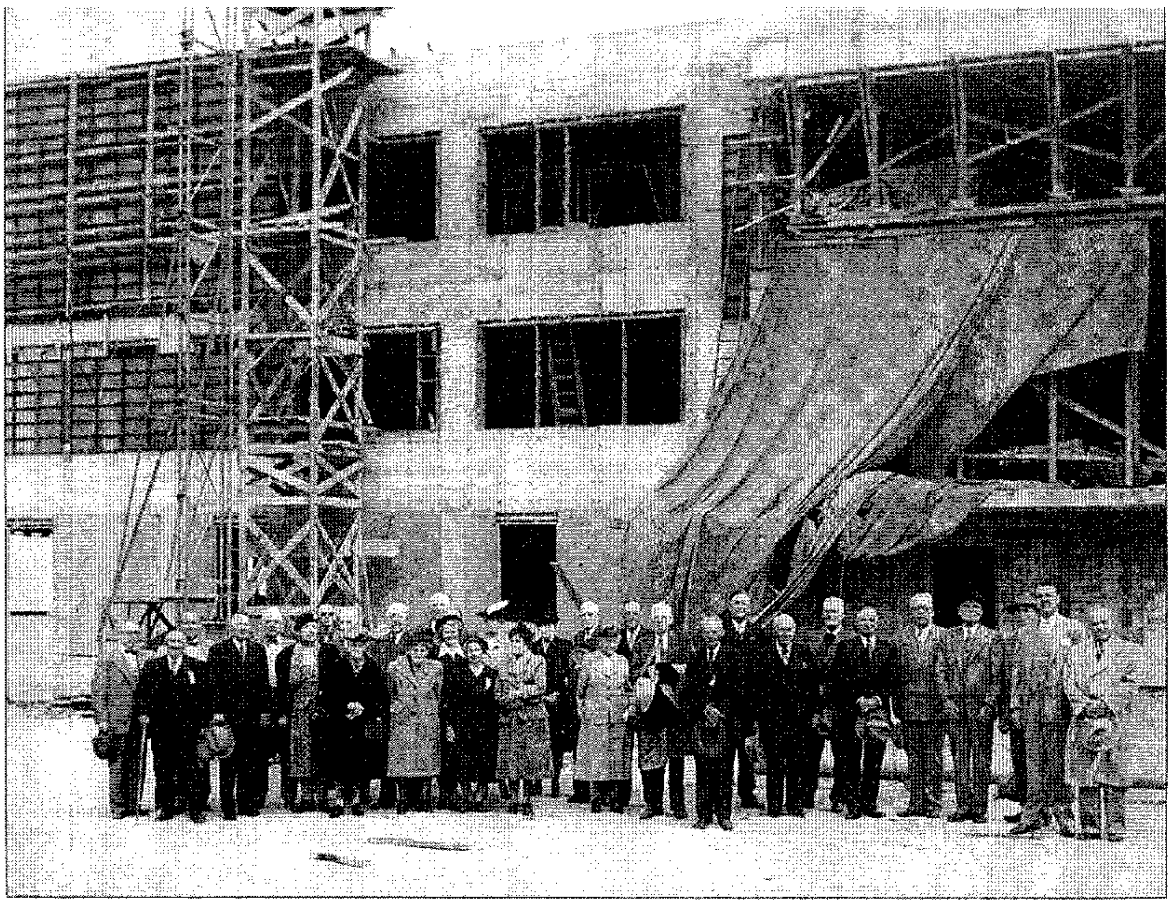


*Within just a few years of its construction, the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building proved to be too small for the expanding mission and collections of the Montana Historical Society. By 1970, a large but sympathetic addition– shown here under construction in 1969 – added a great amount of subterranean storage space for the archives and museum, as well as additional gallery areas on the main floor.*



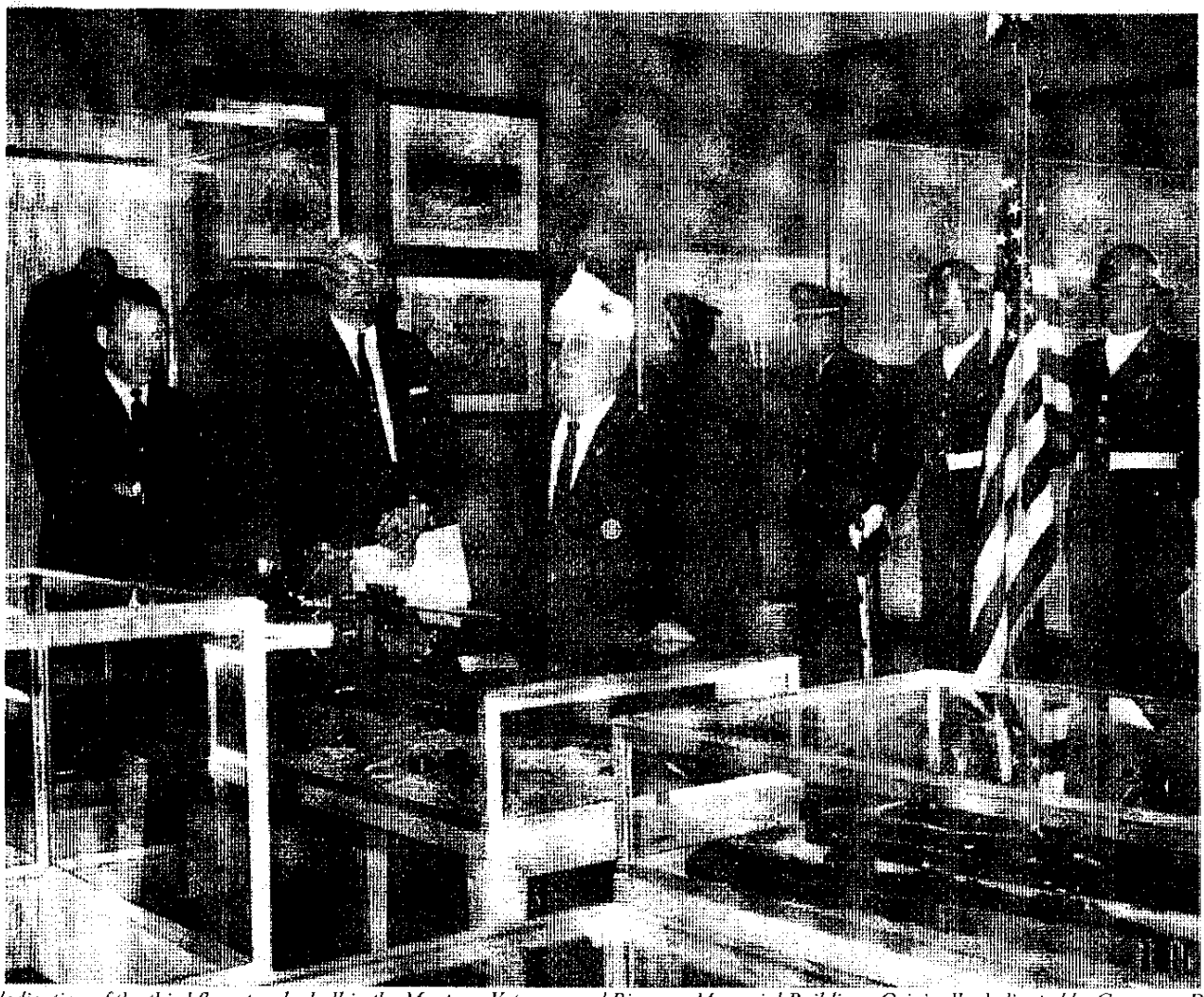


*A second addition, completed in 1986, filled the space between the original north wing of the building and the 1970 addition, pictured at left in 1983.*

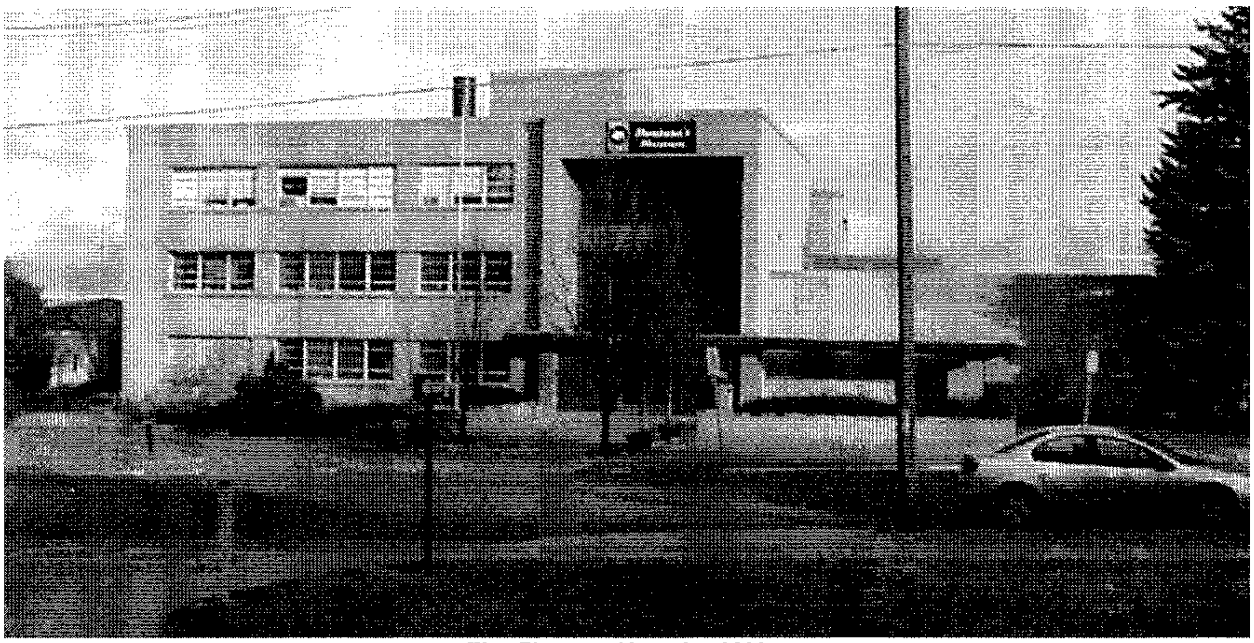


Above, supporters gather for a photograph on April 28, 1951, to celebrate the construction of the Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building, the Montana Historical Society's current home, located across the street from the state capitol. Society Board of Trustees president Norman Winestine stands at the left end of the group (wearing glasses). The trustees, reorganized in 1949, would be instrumental in shaping the modern society.

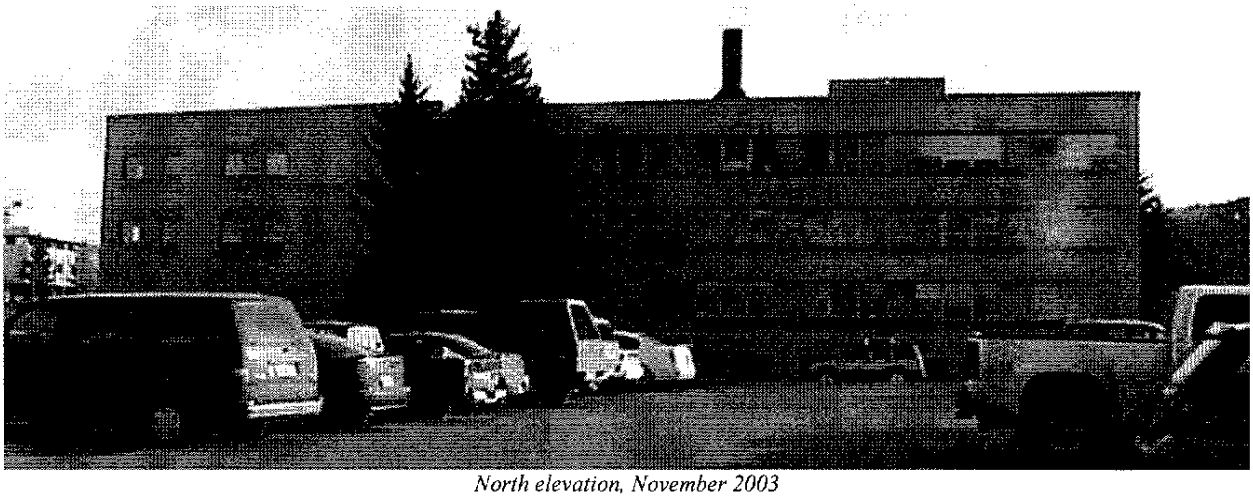
*Photograph and caption scanned from Brian Shovers' article "Saving Montana's Past: The Creation and Evolution of the Montana Historical Society and Montana: The Magazine of Western History."* Montana: The Magazine of Western History, *Vol. 52, No. 1 (Spring 2002), p. 52.*



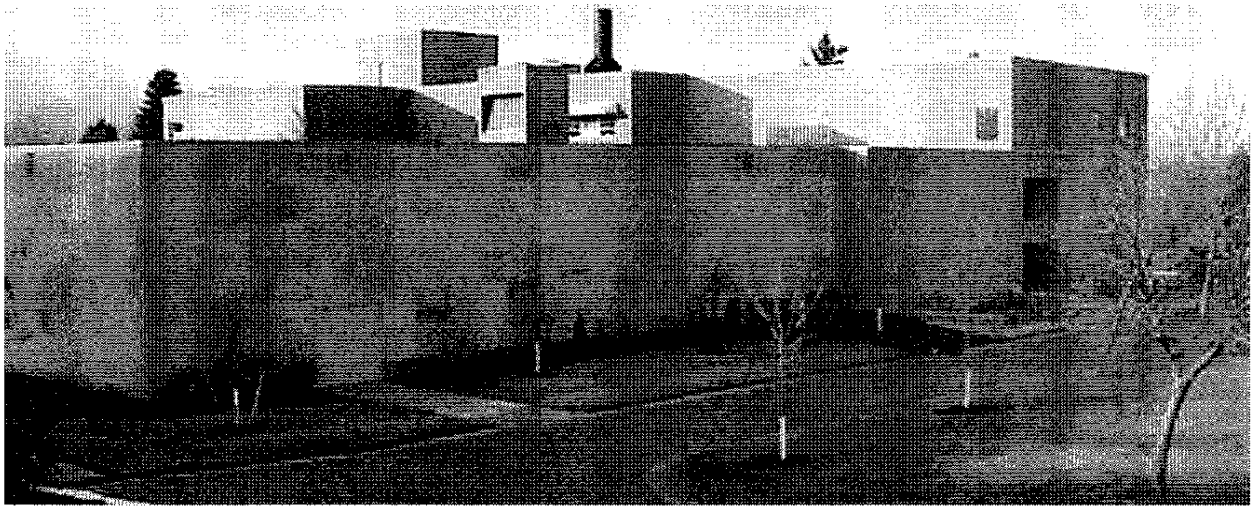
*Re-dedication of the third floor trophy hall in the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building, Originally dedicated by Governor Donald .> Nutter on January 20, 1962, just five days before his death, the Hall was dedicated in Nutter name at this ceremony on December 6, 1964. Photo scanned with permission from Geraldine Lowery's* The American Legion in Montana, *p. 249.*



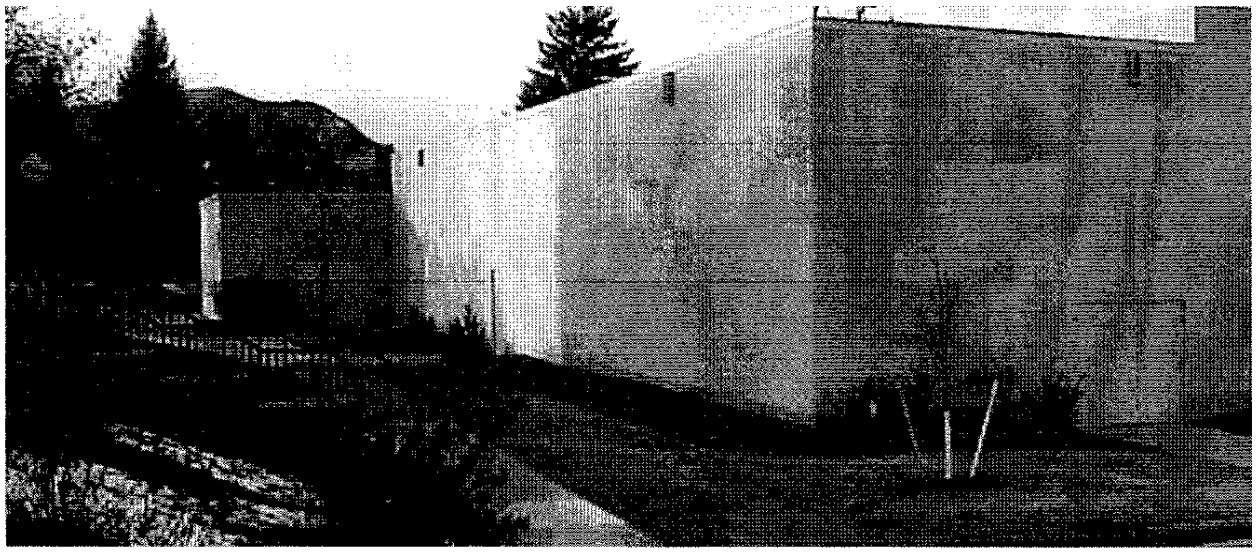
*West Elevation, November 2003*



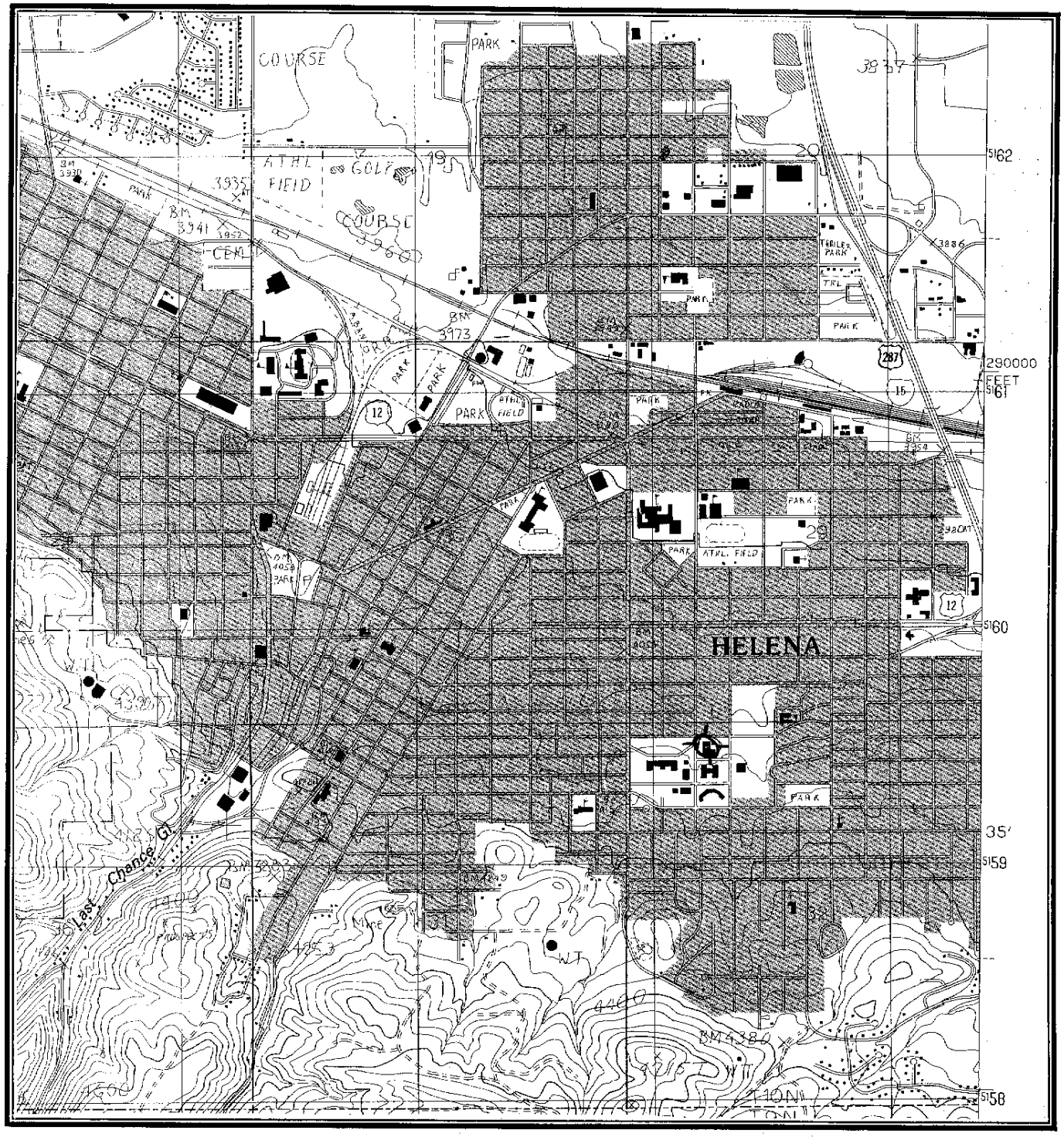
*North elevation, November 2003*



*East elevation, November 2003*



*South elevation, November 2003*




Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building
Lewis and Clark County, MT
UTMs (NAD 27): Easting 422227 Northing 5159481
NE ¼ NW ¼ NW ¼ of Section 32, T10N, R3W (Montana Prime Meridian)
Helena Quadrangle

Montana Code Annotated 22-3-101.

Montana Code Annotated 22-3-302.

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