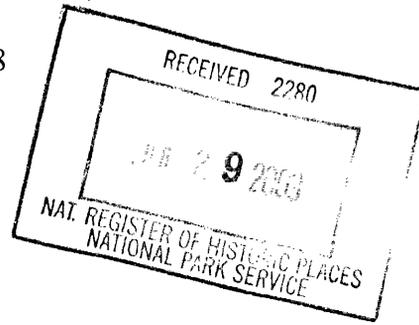


939

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name \_\_\_ Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43 \_\_\_\_\_

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number \_\_\_ 182 North Cache \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication \_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_ Jackson \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity \_\_\_  
state \_\_\_ Wyoming \_\_\_ code \_\_\_ WY \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ Teton \_\_\_ code \_\_\_ 039 \_\_\_  
zip code \_\_\_ 83001 \_\_\_\_\_

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Shirley Buckley-Wade  
Signature of certifying official

September 10, 2003  
Date

Wyoming Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the

National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the

National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

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

SEP 12 2003

Entered in the  
National Register

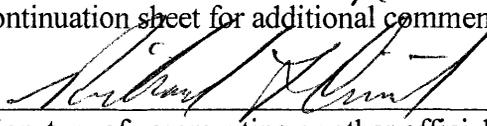
3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date July 25, 2003

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify that this property is: SEP 12 2003

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register Entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature of Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:  SOCIAL  Sub:  meeting hall

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:  SOCIAL  Sub:  meeting hall

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

vernacular

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation  concrete

roof  metal

walls  log

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  1929-1953 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  1929 \_\_\_\_\_  
 1933 \_\_\_\_\_  
 1938 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
 N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder  Charles Fox  \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Major Bibliographical References  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:  Jackson Hole Historical Society \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property \_ less than one acre \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	12	519314	3		
2			4		

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title \_\_\_ Michael Cassity \_\_\_\_\_

organization \_\_\_ Michael Cassity Historical Research and Photography \_ date \_\_\_ December 10, 2002\_

street & number \_\_\_ 304 West Albuquerque \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_ 918 451-8378 \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_ Broken Arrow \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_ OK\_ zip code \_\_\_ 74011 \_\_\_\_\_

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name  Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43

street & number  182 North Cache  / P. O. Box  612  telephone

city or town  Jackson  state  WY  zip code  83001

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43

Teton County, Wyoming

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Description

**Summary**

Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43 is a single story building located one block north of the town square in Jackson, Wyoming. This handsome vernacular log structure remains essentially unchanged since its original construction in 1929 with the minor exceptions noted below. A single-story log structure, stained dark brown, with a basement, configured in a cross shape with metal-roofed gables on each wing, it has overall dimensions of approximately sixty-six feet on the east and sixty feet on the north. The main entrance is in the center of the west elevation. Set back from the sidewalk and street, with a low profile and dark color, and with mature coniferous trees and a post and rail fence separating it from street and pedestrian traffic, the building is unobtrusive and inconspicuous, and indeed is often overlooked. It remains, however, an outstanding example of log construction in addition to its historic importance. The building possesses a high degree of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Exterior Description**

The west elevation consists of three parts: a central wing that projects westward and is flanked by the west elevations of the north and south wings in a nearly symmetrical fashion. The three entrances, each with its own gable and porch, convey an appearance of great size that belies the building's essential cabin scale. That appearance is enhanced by the vertical log posts which support the canopies; the posts are connected to the building by log rails. The central, or main, entrance is flanked by wooden double-hung windows (with six lights up and six lights below), one window on each side. Since that wing projects beyond the adjacent elevations and entrances, it also has its own north and south elevations, and a set of similar double-hung windows arranged in groups of three are centered in the north and south elevations of that central projection. Likewise, the west entrances to the north and south wings are flanked by the same kind of double-hung windows, one on each side of each door.

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Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43

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The north elevation consists primarily of the gabled end of the north wing; that elevation contains a pair of the same windows as the only feature breaking the logs as they rise from the concrete foundation to the gable, although a small fixed window / heater vent in the foundation opens from the basement. Above the logs, the wooden shingles forming the gable, are, again, stained dark to match the color of the logs. Indeed, on this elevation the shingles and also the quarter-round chinking in the logs are especially visible even though they are used on each elevation of the structure. The coping of the logs at the corners, consistent with the rest of the building, is saddle notched.

The east elevation, including the wing projecting to the east and also the eastern exposures of the north and south wings of the cross, is fundamentally simple with window units providing the only break in the log walls. Those windows are: a pair of double-hung windows on the east elevation of the north wing, three separate double-hung windows on the north elevation of the east wing, and a set of three double-hung windows centered in the east elevation of the east wing. In the original (center) portion of the east elevation a pair of double-hung windows are centered. East of the northeast corner of the building (east of the point where the east and north wings of the cross converge) an external entrance opens to the basement. A shed canopy that slopes to the north, supported by three vertical log posts, covers the entrance to the basement on the eastern extreme of the east wing. Because the surrounding yard slopes to the east, the foundation actually rises several feet above the adjacent yard and allows room for casement windows into the basement on each elevation. Although the basement entrance dates from the period of significance, the date of the shed roof covering the entrance and stairs leading to it is not known, although the shed roof in materials, appearance, workmanship, feeling, and design conforms to the original structure. It is not known if this roof replaced an earlier, similar covering for the basement entrance. On the opposite (south) side of the east elevation, the building itself was enlarged about 1954 by the addition of two bathrooms at the southeast corner where the east gable and south gable intersect. While this change is noticeable because of the alteration in the symmetry (though not a compromise of the general configuration of the structure), the addition blends well because of the extension of the gables, because of the use of a similar colored log-siding, and because of an effort to continue the lines of the existing logs into the siding. The tell-

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Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43

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tale signs are the absence of chinking and the boxed corners (compared with the saddle-notched corners in the original building). This addition has one double-hung window on the east elevation and one on the south elevation. Thus the building has been altered from its original 1929 construction, but the alteration has been in keeping with the original design and appearance. Indeed, the presence of trees and shrubbery effectively conceal this corner of the building. This addition, moreover, about 2004 will have met the fifty-year requirement and at that time will be a fully contributing element of the building.

The addition of the two rooms at the southeast corner has thus enlarged the south elevation as well as the east; the remainder of the south elevation consists of the original portion of the south wing, which mirrors the north with a pair of double-hung windows centered under the gable. Although records indicate the presence of a garden somewhere in the vicinity of the south elevation, that feature has long been absent, but that does not detract from the integrity of the structure.

The Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43 building has weathered the forces of social change, urbanization, physical decline and repair, two proposals for its disposal, and the natural elements for more than seventy years, yet the structure retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43

Teton County, Wyoming

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Narrative Statement of Significance

**Summary**

The building that houses Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43 is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because of its association with events that have made a contribution to the broad patterns of history in the community. Organized in Jackson in 1920, the local post of the American Legion constructed its own building in 1928 and 1929 and both the institution and the building became centers of community activity. While on the national level the organization emerged especially as a force to press for specific policies on the part of the federal government, at the local level this post appears to have eschewed controversy and embraced all members of the community in its efforts to improve the circumstances of life in Jackson Hole. The building serving as home for Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43, moreover, has provided a broad range of community functions that have extended well beyond the political and economic agenda of the national organization. During the period of its historic significance, 1929-1953, this organization, and the building where it conducted its business, has reflected the shift from rural to urban leadership in the valley, has served as a central location of entertainment and recreation, has provided a forum for the investigation of issues critical not only to the community but to decision-makers in the U.S. Senate, has promoted the cause of education and library access in the growing community, and has established itself as an eminent, constant, and distinctive institution in community development. Each step of the way the post reflected fundamental contours of the broad patterns of history at the local level.

**The Emergence of the American Legion in the Nation**

The history of the American Legion in the nation is both complex and controversial. In the late nineteenth century a multitude of fraternal organizations emerged in the United States that appealed to both particular segments of the population and to a wide public. Offering both material benefits, usually in the form of life insurance policies for people who, because of their occupation and income, could not

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Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43

Teton County, Wyoming

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otherwise procure insurance, and also the social bonds of cooperative, fraternal camaraderie and fellowship in a society becoming increasingly individualistic and competitive, these orders flourished through the turn of the century, although many at that point faded or transformed themselves into private insurance companies. The appeal of fraternal relationships, in a very broad sense, that emphasized communal, mutual support of citizens for each other rather than competitive strife among citizens, remained but often took the form of economic interest groups or broad political and social movements in the early twentieth century. Just as some of these fraternal bodies defined themselves more narrowly as insurance companies, others arose as organizations with political agendas that sought to press Congress and other agencies in a particular direction or to promote the economic interests of the particular group from which they drew support. At the same time, they sought to inculcate a common identity based on shared experiences that separated them from the rest of society. The American Legion was such an organization with both a political agenda and a social base.

In the large picture, the American Legion was born after World War I as an organization that sought to bring veterans of the war together as a political and social force especially with the purpose of protecting their economic interests and influencing future decisions about foreign policy and armed preparedness. Following a 1919 meeting in Paris of notable veterans, the American Legion was chartered by Congress and began its membership drive. The organization spread across the country in the 1920s and quickly became a powerful agency, if sometimes a divided group. While the leadership generally sought to focus primarily on "one-hundred-percent Americanism," many of the rank and file wanted to use the organization to secure a government bonus for veterans of the recent war that would be distributed to them in their retirement years. That split never entirely went away, and continued well into the 1930s with many in its ranks pushing broader efforts to take the profits (and also the incentives) out of the economics of war and thereby equalize the suffering, often against the weight of the group's national leadership. Some locals saw their main goal as combating radicalism in any form. But many locals, like that which emerged in Jackson, Wyoming, focused on another strain of activism within the American Legion: community improvement through volunteer activity.

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Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43

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**The American Legion in Jackson, Wyoming 1920-1929**

One of the earliest locals in the nation, American Legion Post Number 43 in Jackson was chartered April 20, 1920. The community of Jackson was a relatively new town itself, having been platted and chartered just two decades earlier. One of a handful of settlements spread around the valley known as Jackson's Hole (later, Jackson Hole), the economy was overwhelmingly agricultural and the population widely dispersed. The white settlement of Jackson Hole came late by national standards, with homesteads appearing in the land records and in the valley only in the 1880s and 1890s. A harsh climate limited the economic attraction of the area and the population remained small, with concentrations here and there in the southern end of the valley and the town of Jackson itself did not emerge until the turn of the century. At first the economy was almost exclusively ranching and in the second decade of the twentieth century the only indication of change in this was the establishment of a few ranches that catered more to bringing in dudes than to raising cattle—sometimes despite the original intentions of their owners otherwise—as the JY Ranch and then the Bar BC Ranch and then the White Grass Ranch on the west side of the Snake River brought in handfuls of well-to-do people for adventure and relaxation. The town of Jackson, with its handful of merchants, catered to the needs of the ranchers but increasingly to the visitors to those ranches from outside.

The community leadership initially emerged in what was known as the Jackson Hole Gun Club, but by 1905 the group called itself the Jackson Hole Gun and Commercial Club with the object of “the betterment of social and commercial conditions in Jackson Hole.” With a membership that included the town's elite, the group even built its own building, initially a cross-shaped structure, opposite the rudimentary town square. The Clubhouse served as a meetinghouse for the town, was the location of frequent dances, and even provided temporary quarters for a school. In 1908 the organization that sponsored the Clubhouse became simply the Jackson Hole Commercial Club. No records for this organization are known to exist and it appears to have faded in the community in the 1910s; the Clubhouse, although it continued to be used for dances and other activities, appears to have been sold to private interests in 1912. There was another group, a fraternal order, the Woodmen of the World—exactly one of those late nineteenth century fraternal groups which provided the rituals of brotherhood along with insurance

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benefits—which erected its lodge building on the town square; it subsequently was replaced the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In many respects, Jackson harkened to the rhythms and symbols of the nineteenth century despite the efforts of the town's leadership otherwise.

In 1920 when the American Legion formed in Jackson Hole, the group had no meeting hall and appears to have conducted its business in the Clubhouse, as did a variety of organizations in the community. The Legion proved popular though, and its membership roster quickly included a number of names of individuals and representatives of families that especially provided the core of leadership and commerce in the small town: Bruce Porter, Chester Simpson, Billy Mercill, Almer Nelson, Ray Reed, Henry Francis, Buster Estes, James Deloney, Felix Buchenroth, Brian Nowlin, Allen Budge, Fred Deyo, A. A. Bean, and Lester Leek, each one a prominent name in community development. Significantly, the group reflected more the town than the country, the commercial and professional rather than the agricultural, and the affluent rather than the marginal. Even the members who lived in the countryside made their livings by commercial ventures other than ranching. Indeed, it appears that the American Legion in Jackson assumed some of the role that had been performed by the Jackson Gun and Commercial Club in both commercial promotion and social cohesion. During the agricultural depression of the 1920s, that leadership likely proved critical as the area shifted gradually to a business-oriented economy instead of an agricultural economy. In this way the American Legion became a community center of sorts that attracted townspeople for purposes that went well beyond the official purposes of the national organization.

And it continued to attract leaders in the community, people whose interests reached beyond suppressing radicalism or securing veterans' benefits. Margaret (Mardy) Murie recalls how she and her husband Olaus, when they came to Jackson in the 1920s, came to be part of that group: "Through Almer and Loletta [Nelson] we came to know the American Legion folks, and in those days this organization was most active in projects for the betterment of the town." That simple statement, however, reveals two features important to an understanding of the activity of the American Legion in Jackson. One was that it was not exclusively male. Even though the organization itself recruited

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Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43

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veterans, some women were thereby included in the original numbers of members. The roster of officers for the group lists "Miss. A. M. Wheeler" as Finance Officer in 1924 and 1927; plus, an auxiliary was chartered in Jackson in 1923. More to the point, however, was that Margaret Murie's recollection implies a common bond of men and women in a common organization. The second aspect was the identification of the Legion as a community improvement organization. The Jackson post was broad both in membership and in purpose.

Within two years of its organization in Jackson, the organization began plans to construct its own building. In 1922 the post acquired from Fannie Bean one and a half lots at the southeast corner of Cache and First Streets (First Street would later be named Gill) and the remainder of the second lot would be purchased from Ms. Bean in 1927. The post entered into an agreement with local architect Charles Fox, for initial construction, but that construction would be undertaken in stages.

Charles Fox, perhaps the pre-eminent construction contractor in the valley at the time, was the ideal person for the job. Coming to Jackson in 1910, as his obituary later described, "Probably no one man of the Jackson Hole country constructed more buildings in [that] town than did Chas. Fox." Other projects of his included a number of barns, the Chapel of Transfiguration near Moose, some of the buildings at the JY Ranch and at the Bar BC, the 4 Lazy F, Jackson Hole Hardware, and the old gymnasium once located at Miller Park. He also constructed the two-story lodge for W. Lewis Johnson near the John Sargent ranch that ultimately became part of the AMK complex in the northern part of Jackson Hole. Shortly before he was engaged to work on the American Legion building, Cissy Patterson, "The Countess of Flat Creek," had also hired him in the construction of her Flat Creek Ranch northeast of Jackson. (Many of these buildings have been either listed on the National Register or have been determined eligible for listing.) Fox's responsibility with the American Legion building, however, was more limited, perhaps because of cost and perhaps because of the volunteer spirit of its members. In either case, Fox, evidently in 1928, excavated and poured the foundations, boarded the floor, did some of the log work, and built the roof. The post entered into an agreement that gave Fox a four thousand dollar mortgage on the building. Windows, doors, and finishing would come later with members performing the work themselves. In a community where

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carpentry and construction skills were both necessary and common and where sometimes those skills were performed with great finesse and craftsmanship, this worked well for the post as members like Tom Lamb, legendary in the town for his log construction and other woodwork, and Ray Reed put up logs and provided much of the finishing work. In the spring of 1929 the work had progressed enough that the local newspaper could report that "Members of the local post of the American Legion and Auxiliary turned out in force last Sunday and gathering at the new legion home spent the day in fencing the property, putting in walks, lawns, flower beds; erecting the flag pole and fixing up the place in general." With evident pride, the same publication proclaimed that "the home is the result of years of planning and labor and is one of the neatest small clubhouses in the west." It is notable that in the very construction of the building, the spirit of civic participation and volunteer effort were the hallmarks.

**The American Legion in Jackson, Wyoming 1929-1953**

When the building was finished and dedicated on July 8, 1929, the occasion even attracted the department commander and even the national commander of the American Legion. A huge banquet—making front-page news in Jackson—followed the dedication with about a hundred guests seated at long tables. (As of February 1929, the post had a total of forty-four members.) And then, as was the custom, a dance followed at the Rainbow Palace (a few doors down Cache) with music provided by the popular Jenny Lake Band. As if to underscore community pride in the new building, the first issue of the local newspaper in January 1930 graphically depicted the two major building accomplishments of the previous year—the Jackson – Wilson High School and the American Legion Home.

In the following years, the American Legion and its building proved central to the community. While the issues facing the national organization were often vigorous and contentious—an uneasy tension between emphasizing military preparedness and patriotism on the one hand, and securing benefits for soldiers and sailors victimized by injustices of the past war on the other hand—in Jackson the emphasis was hugely on matters of local priority. It was a social organization more than a political group. Perhaps the most visible activities of the American Legion in the community were the

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dances sponsored by the post and also the annual Frontier Days. The dances were renowned locally. Held at different locations, especially at the Clubhouse and at the Rainbow Palace, those dances were not simply polite occasions where members passed the evening quietly with music playing in the distant background; they were instead major community events that attracted people from all over the valley, people of all age groups. Mardy Murie recalls that at the American Legion dances she and her husband Olaus met Buster and Frances Estes, owners of a dude ranch, who then assisted the Muries in their moose and wapiti projects. Even in the winter, Mardy Murie said, the Estes “always managed to get to town for all the Legion doings.” They were not alone and the dances were special.

Dances were different then. The music was live, the musicians were interesting to watch; and everybody, young and old, came to dance. Teen-agers had not yet been declared a species and a cult apart, and we all one-stepped, two-stepped, fox-trotted and waltzed and polkaed together in the old Clubhouse—a two-story log and frame building on the east side of the Square. The dance hall was upstairs over the drug-store. One evening during a dance Olaus and I went downstairs for a soda. The thunder, the shaking and vibration from the dancing feet above were terrifying.

Likewise, the August rodeos—the Jackson Hole Frontier Days—attracted big crowds as one of the main public recreation events in this valley that was increasingly becoming known for its dude ranches. Riders on the rodeo circuit stopped in Jackson for its August rodeo, and the event gained a wide reputation. The organization was bringing the community together, an important feature itself, and a little more too. These successful activities, even during the depression, helped the American Legion, sponsor of the rodeo, earn money to pay off the mortgage on their building.

Yet the activities of Post No. 43 and the uses of the building transcended the specific mission of the American Legion in its national charter, and also went beyond the immediate goals of recreation and entertainment and fund raising. At one point, the building, recognized as the pre-eminent community center in the town, rose to even larger significance. An issue had been growing for several years that came to a head in

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1933. In an effort to preserve the historic and scenic qualities of the valley, John D. Rockefeller had been secretly buying up properties in the valley with the intent of consolidating the lands and giving them to the United States. His Snake River Land Company had quietly purchased ranches, homesteads, and businesses in the valley to accumulate enough land for an expansion of the tiny Grand Teton National Park that was created in 1929. When finally the force behind the purchases became public knowledge, local ranchers and their allies, especially the Wyoming Congressional delegation, mobilized a vigorous campaign against the move that would ultimately turn agricultural and business land into a national park. Wyoming Senator Robert Carey, in particular, convinced of a conspiracy in the land acquisition, called for an investigation into the activities of the Park Service and the Snake River Land Company as a political device to secure compromises from the Rockefeller – National Park Service coalition. The conservation forces, however, welcomed such an investigation and the hearing took place August 7-10, 1933. The first sentence of the transcript of those hearings announced that “The Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Lands and Surveys of the United States Senate met, pursuant to call, at 2 p.m., August 7, 1933, in the American Legion Hall, in the town of Jackson, Teton County, State of Wyoming.” Senator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, Senator Henry F. Ashurst of Arizona, Senator Peter Norbeck of South Dakota, Senator Robert D. Carey of Wyoming, and Senator Alva B. Adams of Colorado assembled at a table in the meeting room of the American Legion building and proceeded to call witness after witness to testify. Over the next four days thirty-nine individuals from the valley appeared and offered their experiences, their suspicions, and their knowledge to the subcommittee and the Senators wrangled amongst themselves about what it all meant.

But the Senators were not the only ones there. Reporters from the national wire services, from the *New York Times*, the *Denver Post*, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, and the *Christian Science Monitor* informed the nation and region of the developments in this building. The building was further packed with people since much of the community also attended these pivotal hearings. Historian Robert Richter quotes Snake River Land Company agent Harold Fabian that during the hearings, “there wasn’t a dish washed in Jackson . . . . They were all in the hearing hall.” After all was said and done, and although Carey’s negative position was reflected in the aggressive posture of the sub-

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committee's counsel, the hearings proved no illegal collusion, revealed no illegal actions, and in fact produced detailed information that generally exonerated the land-purchasing effort and the proposal to administer the lands by the Park Service. While this did not produce an end to the controversy or a solution to the problem, additional such hearings were canceled and the issue moved to a new level. It would be years and years before the question was resolved, but in the complex and contentious history of the creation of the final Grand Teton National Park, one of the most identifiable instances where the forces favoring the expansion and those opposed to it confronted each other in public came inside the American Legion building on North Cache.

If the Jackson American Legion had distinguished itself by serving as the forum for lawmakers in the highest body in the land, it made an equally profound mark in its responsiveness to local needs. When the town chose to participate in the improvement of neglected land at the town square by landscaping it and naming it in honor of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington, the American Legion was the most identifiable group present—serving on committees, leveling land, planting trees, and otherwise helping the project, this time under the leadership of post commander naturalist Olaus Murie. The town square, George Washington Memorial Park, remains one of the most prominent and visible features of the town. Several years later, in 1938, the Legion again came to the aid of the community. Although a lending library had existed since 1915 at St. John's Episcopal Church, the capacity of the library and the needs of the community grew further apart. In 1938 three citizens of the community, Helen Benson, Edith Mercill, and Stella Weston, launched an effort to start a public library through selling subscriptions. The task proved daunting in its scope and in necessary resources, and the committee ultimately sought assistance from public and private agencies in their efforts. The culmination of their project would be the Teton County Library and it would be housed in its own building. That outcome, however, was not certain nor even charted when they began their efforts. The immediate need was a place where the lending library could function. That place, of course, was the Jackson American Legion Post No. 43, which rented space for the library to operate. Beginning in January 1938, the library operated from the north wing of the cross-shaped American Legion building until the books could be moved into the new structure in the summer of 1940. Once again, this building had demonstrated that it was not just a place where a

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small group of citizens gathered periodically to discuss narrow interests, but that it was a resource upon which the entire community could draw.

Over the following decades the American Legion in Jackson remained active in a range of community projects, from the rodeos and their snow-bound counterpart, the annual Winter Carnival the first week of March, and the annual Days of '49 capped with a grand ball, to the youth oriented programs like American Legion baseball, delivering sacks of candy and nuts to each school in the valley (thus not just restricted to the town of Jackson) and sponsoring Boys' State and Girls' State, sending talented young people each summer to the state meetings. In 1934 the Legion held an auction to help one member in dire straits, using the funds to pay medical bills, buy groceries, and cover his rent. They also shared their facility with other fraternal orders; the Neighbors of the Woodcraft (known previously as Women of Woodcraft, a fraternal benefit society associated with the Woodmen) met regularly at the American Legion building at least in 1938 and possibly more. In 1939 a community-sponsored kindergarten began at the American Legion building. During World War II the group took on responsibilities in civil defense, appointing officials for various tasks including a Blackout Chairman, sponsoring a USO drive, and a war bond drive. One more feature of the American Legion now assumed a greater role, however: providing the military honors at funerals of veterans.

By the end of World War II, the town of Jackson and Jackson Hole had developed with more business and more people than ever before and Jackson took clear shape as a resort community. And even more people would come as the dude ranches for the elite were being replaced by vacation accommodations for the middle class and later as the development of the ski potential of the valley ended the one-season tourist economy that had prevailed, and growth surged more powerful than ever. As Jackson has changed in the last half century, new buildings and new relationships have replaced much of what once prevailed. The Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43, both as an organization and as a building, however, serves as a reminder of the town when it was a self-contained community that provided its own entertainment, that relied on citizens to help each other and on volunteers to perform basic services. That unpretentious building, now dwarfed by larger and more extravagant structures in downtown Jackson, sits quietly and usually

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unremarked by passers-by except perhaps as a quaint log cabin put to social use. That building, moreover, serves as a timeline or index, through the issues and patterns of social history in Jackson, Wyoming in the years of its historic significance, and beyond, and is thereby eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 4 and 5 of Block 1 of the W. W. Smith Addition to the Town of Jackson, Wyoming.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with Jackson Hole American Legion Post No. 43.