

A Walking Tour

of Historic Downtown Billings-Yellowstone County, MT



A Walking Tour



Drawing by Kim Olsen

Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board

The Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board invites you to explore historic downtown Billings by starting right here!

You can take a tour of Billings, stopping at some of the oldest remaining buildings in town. You can learn about the detailed history and architectural styles of over 30 buildings in downtown. Experience the beauty and grandeur of these buildings by touring through a gallery of current and historical photographs. Learn how Billings grew from land that was part of a huge buffalo range to become a major urban center in just a few decades.

The Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board commissioned an architectural and historical resource survey and walking tour in the Fall of 1998. We invite you to visit this site often as we build onto this historic resource framework.

Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board
c/o Western Heritage Center
2822 Montana Avenue
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www.billings.com/walking/walking.html

About the Walking Tour

The walking tour focuses on the first four decades of Billings' development (1882-1925) and concentrates on a geographic area that roughly extends west from North 23rd Street to North 30th Street and north from Minnesota Avenue to 4th Avenue North. (See map inset for walking tour boundaries). The tour includes 45 sites and is designed to generally follow the history of development between 1882 and 1925.

By beginning the tour with building #1, the Western Heritage Center, the tour will take you from the namesake of Billings through the wild years of early development 1882-1900. The tour takes you along Minnesota Avenue, past the hotel and commercial district built near the depot in the early 1900's, and from there to the grand era of civic and commercial buildings from 1900 to 1925.

The walking tour is approximately 25 blocks long and includes two sections - Part 1: Western Heritage Center/Minnesota Avenue/Montana Avenue Warehouse District, and Part 2: Montana Avenue Depot District, North and West Downtown.

Funding

This project was funded with the assistance of a grant from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. Historic Preservation grants are administered in Montana in conjunction with the National Register of Historic Places program by the State Historic Preservation Office, a program within the Montana Historical Society. The contents and opinions in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior.

Credits

Drawing by Kim Olsen.

Photography by Paul Whiting.

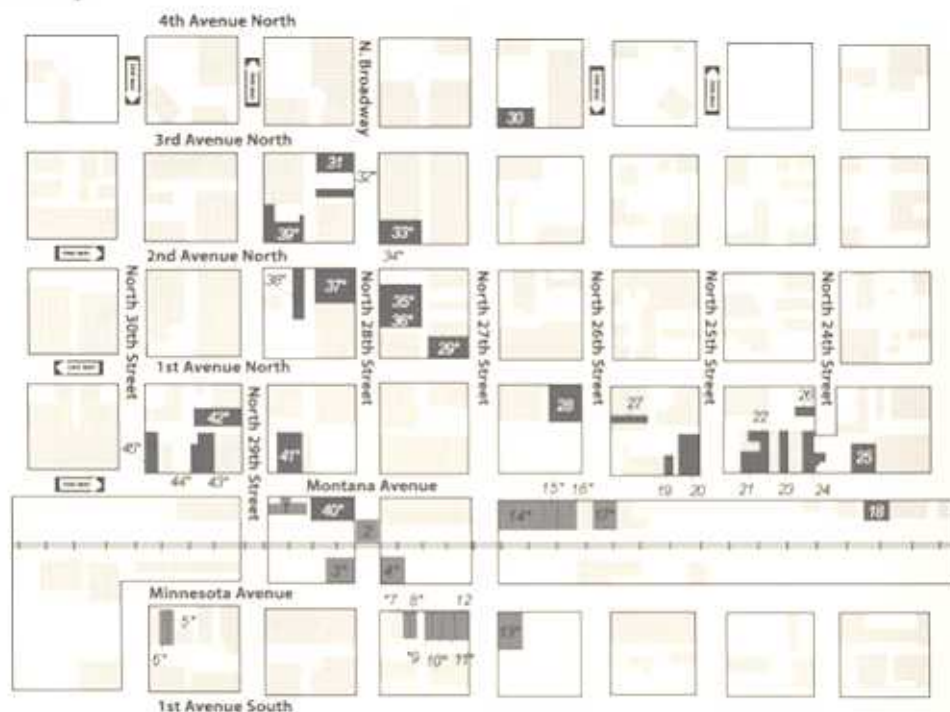
1998-99 Architectural and Historic Survey for Downtown Billings

A team of professionals, lead by project director and architect, Kim Olsen, completed an architectural and historic survey documenting significant buildings in downtown Billings. Sponsored by the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board and funded by the City of Billings Tax Increment Program, the survey provides research material for educational programs and serves as an economic development tool for historic preservation efforts in downtown Billings. Two walking tours, developed as part of the survey, will be valuable interpretive activities for students and educators as well as for tourists who visit this region. Nation-wide, preservation and educational efforts reflecting the historic and architectural fabric of a community are primary contributors to downtown revitalization projects.

For the survey, the Western Heritage Center provided administrative and technical assistance to the project team that identified 30 buildings in an area encompassing more than 20 blocks. Chere Justo, historic preservation consultant for the project, researched and documented each of the 30 buildings in detail. Assisting Ms. Justo was Teresa Tillinger, a graduate student intern from Montana State University. The documentation included information gathered about the original development of the city of Billings and the Yellowstone region. Billings photographer, Paul Whiting, researched and copied historic photographs and photographed the 30 buildings. Global information system specialist Jere Folger and consultant Anne Cossitt, worked on producing GIS maps of the survey area, scripts for two walking tours, and the design of an interactive Web page which features the architectural and historic research material and walking tours.

The original research material is housed in the archives of the Western Heritage Center. For archive hours, contact Kevin Koistra-Manning, Community Historian, (406) 256-6809, extension 27 or kevinkm@ywhc.org. The Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board is seeking partners in the downtown to assist with printing walking tour brochures and funding interpretive panels for the kiosks on Montana Avenue.

Downtown Billings Walking Tour Map



Scale in Feet
0 300 600 900

- Walking Tour 1
- Walking Tour 2
- Other Building

* Building Part of Historic Survey



- 1 Western Heritage Center, 2822 Montana Avenue
- 2 Headquarters Hotel/Depot
- 3 Yegen Grocery Warehouse, 8 South Broadway
- 4 Armour Cold Storage, 2723 Minnesota Avenue
- 5 Kirk's Grocery Store, 2920 Minnesota Avenue
- 6 Big 4 Store, 2922 Minnesota Avenue
- 7 Oasis Bar, Crystal Saloon, 2718 Minnesota Avenue
- 8 Western Bar, 2716 Minnesota Avenue
- 9 M. Henihan Cigars and Saloon, 2710 Minnesota Avenue
- 10 Brick Building, 2706-2708 Minnesota Avenue
- 11 Brick Building, 2704 Minnesota Avenue
- 12 P.W. McAdow's General Store, 2700 Minnesota Ave.
- 13 Arcade Building, 2624 Minnesota Avenue
- 14 Stone Ordean and Wells, 2624 Montana Avenue
- 15 E.U. Logan Glass & Paint, 2610-2614 Montana Avenue
- 16 Mills-Durant-Star Auto Sales, 2606 Montana Avenue
- 17 George L. Tracy Building, 2528 (2600) Montana Ave.
- 18 Union Depot, 2320 Montana Avenue
- 19 St. Louis Cafe Building, 2507 Montana Avenue
- 20 Carlin Hotel, 2501 Montana Avenue
- 21 McCormick Hotel, 2417 Montana Avenue
- 22 Eagle Hotel, 2415 Montana Avenue
- 23 Oxford Hotel, 2411 Montana Avenue
- 24 Rex Hotel, 2401 Montana Avenue
- 25 Billings Brewery, between 24th and 23rd Streets
- 26 Fargo Hotel, 16 North 24th Street
- 27 Hotel Albany/Johnson Building, 15 & 17 North 26th Street
- 28 Post Office, 2602 First Avenue North
- 29 Grand Hotel, 2710-2711 1st Avenue North
- 30 Old Chamber Building, 301 North 27th Street
- 31 Masonic Temple, 2806 3rd Avenue North
- 32 Gregory Building, 216 North Broadway
- 33 Montana National Bank, 201 North Broadway
- 34 Carlin Building, 117-119 North Broadway
- 35 Montana Power Building, 113-115 North Broadway
- 36 Acme Building, 107-111 North Broadway
- 37 Babcock Theater Building, 2808 2nd Avenue North
- 38 Kress Building, 2816 2nd Avenue North
- 39 Fratt Building, 2817-2823 2nd Avenue North
- 40 Billings Hardware Building, 2812 Montana Avenue
- 41 Western Pawn, Fuller Hotel, 2817 Montana Avenue
- 42 Sturm and Drake Building, 14-16 North 29th Street
- 43 Secor, 2905-2907 Montana Avenue
- 44 Connolly Saddlery, 2909-2911 Montana Avenue
- 45 Pouder Furniture, 2923 Montana Avenue

1. Western Heritage Center/Parmly Billings Library

2822 Montana Avenue

The Parmly Billings Memorial Library was a gift from Frederick Billings, Jr. in memory of his brother Parmly, who lived in Billings for a few years and who died in 1888 at the age of 35. A statue of their father, Frederick Billings, Sr., is located near the northwest corner of the building. When the Minnesota and Montana Land Improvement Company, a railroad subsidiary, platted the town in March 1882, it was named after Frederick Billings, Sr. who was the railroad president from 1879-1881, a period when the railroad began to expand its line from Bismarck to Seattle. Although he never lived here, Frederick Billings, Sr. was an avid community supporter until his death in 1890. His family kept up the tradition. In 1910, Frederick Billings, Jr. financed the east wing of the library and in 1923, his sister Elizabeth financed the west wing. The library remained here until 1969, when it moved to a larger location. The building was restored and re-opened as the Western Heritage Center, a regional museum interpreting and reflecting life in the Yellowstone River Valley.



2. Headquarters Hotel/Depot

Imagine yourself at this spot in April 1882, when Heman Clark, general contractor for the Northern Pacific Railroad, arrived here in advance of the approaching rail line being built between Minneapolis and Seattle. In his hands are the details for a town of 20,000, but what he sees around him is the same as it has been for hundreds of years without a building in sight. Within a month, there are three buildings on the spot destined to become Billings. One of these is the headquarters built to lodge railroad survey crews. In another month, by



June 1, there are over 500 people living here in hastily constructed tent shelters and log buildings, and more people are coming every day. These people are coming afoot, by horseback and by wagon because the rail line itself will not be completed to Billings until August 1882. In October 1882, the Headquarters building is enlarged and moved track side to serve as a temporary depot. The Headquarters Hotel remained at this site until 1890 when it burned and provided the opportunity to extend 28th Street, renamed Broadway, across the tracks.

3. Yegen Grocery Warehouse

8 South Broadway

The name YEGEN BROS. appears in raised, stepped sign panels at the top of this building. The Yegens were prominent among the businessmen who helped build Billings. Immigrants from Sweden, they arrived in Billings in its first year, 1882, and started business with a bakery. By 1900, when they opened the town's first savings bank, their retail stores, wholesale markets and warehouses

sprawled across three blocks in the Minnesota Avenue corridor. The first warehouse on this site was built between 1886-1889. The current brick warehouse was built around 1920, after the site was sold to Ryan Grocery Company in 1915.



4. Armour Cold Storage

2723 Minnesota Avenue

Increasing numbers of wholesale warehouses such as this one were constructed near the tracks as the town and its agricultural markets grew and diversified. This warehouse was built around 1920 to house cold meat and dairy storage. The building is centered around a poured concrete refrigeration shaft with cold rooms on each level including the daylight basement. Armour Wholesale Meats and Armour Creamery remained in the building through the mid-1930s.



5. Kirk's Grocery Store

2920 Minnesota Avenue

Kirk's Grocery was a long-standing South side business since the late 19th century. Around 1900, the business operated out of wood frame building down the block at 2910 Minnesota and around 1910 moved to this building. Note the painted sign panel on the building's east side advertising Kirk's Grocery in white on black. Kirk's Grocery was deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.



6. Big 4 and Kirk's Grocery Store

2922 Minnesota Avenue

These buildings were constructed between 1907 and 1913 and typify early 20th century commercial structures. Both businesses remained until the 1930s and helped to anchor the west end of Minnesota Avenue for many years. Prior to the 20th century, this end of Minnesota Avenue remained relatively undeveloped. The first building at the site of the Big 4 Second Hand Store was a 1 1/2 story frame house built in 1884, which was really the only building at the end of this block through 1900. Around 1900, there were Chinese laundries at both sites.



7. Oasis Bar, Crystal Saloon

2718 Minnesota Avenue

Built between 1896-1900, the first owner had a cigar shop up front and the Crystal Saloon at the rear. The second story remains relatively intact, but the two slender cast iron columns are the only original fabric to remain on the first story storefront area.



8. Western Bar, Globe Theater and Hotel

2716 Minnesota Avenue

The original wood-frame building (ca. 1886-1889) on this site housed a barbershop and confectionery through the latter 1890s but was replaced with this brick structure between 1898 and 1903. Joshua L. Fogg ran a saloon here from 1902-1903. In 1907, he also advertised the Globe Theater, which became linked with the notorious red light district along Minnesota Avenue. The original storefront has been altered but the upper story remains intact.



9. M. Henihan Cigars and Saloon

2710 1/2 Minnesota Avenue

It appears these are the original frame structures built in 1882-1884 that were later added onto and bricked over. This site was the origination of Billings' first and only lynching. Joseph Clancy, the owner, lived here and operated a saloon until 1891 when he was killed by a vagrant who, when asked to pay his bill, picked up a beer mallet and crushed Clancy's skull. Vigilantes had a body swinging from a telegraph pole within 12 hours.



10. Brick Building

2706-2708 Minnesota Avenue

The original wood frame buildings were damaged by fire in the late 1880s. Between 1903-1912, a new building was erected at 2708 Minnesota and remains as the west half of the building on this site today. The east half of the building, although it appears contemporaneous, was added between 1923-27. The buildings held a succession of businesses between 1917 and 1932 including a restaurant, barbershops, tailor, soft drink shop and two cigar businesses.



11. Brick Building

2704 Minnesota Avenue

Following a fire which burned down the original wood frame building, there was nothing on this site until this two-story brick building was constructed between 1893-1896. Lung Kong purchased the property in 1896; thereafter, it housed a Chinese restaurant on the first floor and lodgings on the second. Despite the addition of stucco over the brickwork, this building is a strong example of end of the century design. The cast iron storefront by Mesker Brothers of St. Louis is a treasure. At one time, there were many buildings in downtown that featured cast iron framing and decoration on the facades; this is one of the few that remain.



12. P.W. McAdow's General Store

2700 Minnesota Avenue

In 1877, Bud McAdow's general store became a center for activities such as trading pelts for store-bought goods, lending grubstakes to aspiring homesteaders and a polling in the 1880 presidential election.



13. Arcade Building

2624 Minnesota Avenue

This is the last building remaining in this block which formerly held a solid lineup of 1-3 story businesses at the heart of Billings' Chinese district. This building, constructed between 1893-1896, was purchased in 1896 by Yee Sam Lee, owner and proprietor of a Chinese restaurant and liquor store here. Yee appears to have been a leader in the Chinese community, one of the few whose name is mentioned in various newspaper and business articles. This building retains a high level of integrity, despite its deteriorated condition. The cast iron storefront is by Gillette and Herzog, a well-known Midwestern foundry.



14. Stone Ordean and Well Company

2624 Montana Avenue

The Stone Ordean and Well Company, a large wholesale grocery, constructed the building on the southeast corner of 27th and Montana between 1914-1916 and remained here through the 1930s. With the exception of the replacement of the first floor windows, this building is relatively unchanged from historic times and is one of the best preserved of its type as is the building at 2528 Montana Avenue.



15. E.U. Logan Glass and Paint

2619-2614 Montana Avenue

E.U. Logan Glass and Paint was housed at 2610 Montana Avenue from 1918 through the 1930s.



16. Mills-Durant-Star Auto Sales

2606 Montana Avenue

From the time it was built in 1920 until the mid-1930s, 2606 Montana Avenue housed Mills-Durant-Star Company, one of numerous automotive related businesses that came onto the downtown scene in the early 20th century. George L. Tracy and C.W. Gorham, moved into 2528 Montana Avenue in 1919 as "manufacturer's agents." Gamble-Robinson Company marketed fruit, product and wholesale groceries in the building, among others. On the south side of the building, a black ghost sign remains reading "GAMBLE-ROBINSON CO./FRUIT AND GROCERIES" in white and yellow.



17. George L. Tracy Building

2528 (2600) Montana Avenue

The George L. Tracy building is representative of the last wave of warehouse construction to occur between the Minnesota-Montana business corridors. Constructed at a time when downtown was densely built up, these warehouses housed a wide variety of goods being shipped in and out of the Billings market by rail. George L. Tracy and C. W. Gorham listed themselves as manufacturers' agents during the early 20th century, with offices at 2817 Montana. In 1919, this building was constructed, and their business moved here. Gamble-Robinson Co marketed fruit, produce and wholesale groceries in the building, among others. During the 1930s, Ryan Wholesale Fruit Co was based here, they moved up the block to the larger Stone-Ordean-Wells building at 2624 Montana about 1940. The building itself is one of the best preserved of its kind, and serves as a good example of the type.



18. Union Depot

2320 Montana Avenue

Built in 1909 by the chief engineer of the Northern Pacific Railway Company, the depot included the main building and a restaurant. Both are in a Beaux Arts Eclectic style. The exterior of the buildings was renovated in 1997.



19. St. Louis Cafe Building

2507 Montana Avenue

Built in 1905, the St. Louis Cafe building was actually a Chinese restaurant that served both American and Chinese dishes. The building was renovated in 1998 in order to bring McIntosh Art back to Montana Avenue. The building also houses the Bill McIntosh Gallery, McJava And Such and Heins Creative. The renovation brought McIntosh Art to a full circle -- from its start in 1976 in the building where the Toucan Gallery is now housed, through two other moves, and finally to its current location, which is directly next door from where the business first opened its doors.



20. Carlin Hotel

2501 Montana Avenue

The Carlin Hotel was built around 1905 in the Renaissance Revival style, with three-stories in tan brick and strong horizontal cast stone banding and lintels. The cast iron storefront window frames the original,



21. McCormick Hotel

2417 Montana Avenue

Also built around 1905, and in an adaptation of Renaissance Revival style, the McCormick Hotel is a three-story gray brick building with raised patterns of buff-colored brick and cast stone window lintel key-stones.



22. Eagle Hotel

2415 Montana Avenue

The Eagle Hotel was built in 1909 by Austrian immigrant Matthias Thomas, who raised his five children in a second floor apartment of the hotel. The hotel was reportedly used as an auxiliary hospital during the flu epidemic of 1918. The building was vacant from 1983-1993, temporary home of transients and pigeons that flew freely through broken windows, until local entrepreneur Michael Schaer renovated the Victorian Italianate style structure.



23. Oxford Hotel

2411 Montana Avenue

This two-story red brick building in Victorian Italianate style was built around 1918.



24. Rex Hotel

2401 Montana Avenue

This Eclectic style hotel was built in 1910 by Alfred Heim, chef for the Buffalo Bill Cody Wild West Show. Bill Cody helped finance the project and was a frequent visitor to the hotel. You can see the original pressed tin ceiling of the first floor in the present-day Rex Restaurant. The one-story wing to the east was added in 1998.



25. Billings Brewery

Between 24th and 23rd Streets

The top of the Billings Brewery between 24th and 23rd Streets was aglow at night, its electric sign "DRINK OLD FASHION BEER" made up of 920 white and yellow light bulbs that depicted beer flowing from a tilted bottle into an empty glass. In 1920, prohibition closed down the brewery, begun in 1899. It re-opened in 1933, but closed its doors in 1951. The building was torn down in 1959.



26. Fargo Hotel

16 North 24th Street

This two-story red brick building with white brick details was built in 1917.



27. Hotel Albany/Johnson Building

15 North 26th Street, 17 North 26th Street

This three-story olive gray brick building was constructed around 1918. The upper windows are uniquely ornamented with cast stone keystones and continuous cast stone sills across the entire facade. This building is unique in the way the windows are treated in a typical "Gibbs-surround" - rusticated cast stone-quoins-like blocks and flat arch voussoirs.



28. Billings Post Office

2602 First Avenue North (1914, 1934)

This building was the city's first federally constructed post office. The building also served as the federal courthouse and was seen by local citizens as a substantial monument to the faith of the federal government in the city of Billings. The new building was dedicated on Flag Day, June 14, 1914 with a marching band parade. In 1934, two additional stories were added to the single-story building



wings and an extension added to the rear. These additions were so well-blended, they are basically indiscernible without reference to earlier photographs and design drawings. The mural on the east end of the original lobby entitled "Training Cattle" was completed in 1942 by native Montana artist Leo Beaulaurier.

29. Grand Hotel

2710-2711 1st Avenue (1895, 1921)

During Billings' early history, the name Grand Hotel was synonymous with the finest luxury accommodations in town. Founded in 1885-86, the first Grand Hotel was built on this corner when it was the northern edge of the downtown local high society, where they could dine on buffalo tongue, guinea hen under glass and vintage wine. In 1895, new owners added a three-story annex along the north side. In 1889, they were the first in town to introduce a private bathroom and in 1900 the first elevator. A fire burned the main (1885) portion of the hotel in 1920 and in 1921, the owners rebuilt the hotel from the ground up, in part to keep up with the swanky competition of the Northern Hotel, just down the block to the west.



30. Old Chamber Building/Elks Club

301 North 27th Street (1909-1910)

The B.P.O.E. Elks Lodge #394 was founded in 1897 with Billings businessman, A.L. Babcock, as the first Exalted Ruler and the Elks constructed this building for their club. Approximately 5,000 people were invited to the dedication celebration in July, 1910. It included a formal lodge dedication, balls, reception, auto tours and street decorations. Just eight years later in November of 1918, the Elks were forced to give up the building due to various accumulated debts. It was then bought by Billings Chamber of Commerce and finally paid off in 1946.



31. Masonic Temple

2806 3rd Avenue North (1910)

The fraternal order of Masonry was established in Billings in 1884 as Ashlar Lodge No. 29. Some of Billings most prominent businessmen and public officials were members including P.B. Moss, owner of the first National Bank; Charles Spear, another leading banker; and Albert Babcock. The building was designed by the architectural firm of John Link and Charles Haire, one of the most significant architectural firms in Montana during the early-to-mid 20th century. They had offices in Billings, Butte, Helena and Lewistown and designed over 1,000 public commercial, academic, private and institutional buildings in the northwestern U.S. including the additions to the Montana Capitol, 18 of the 56 county courthouses and several other structures in Billings including the Parmly Library and Montana Power Building.



32. Gregory Building

216 North Broadway (1920-1922)

This lot was not developed until around 1920, when Helen Gregory built a ladies clothing shop here with offices or lodgings on the second floor. As early as the 1890s, however, there was a residence on the adjacent lots, built by Charles Spar. The Gregory Shop remained here through the 1960s. The building is one of the very few Mission style designs in downtown and is attributed to J.G.

Link of the architectural firm Link and Haire. The balcony had Doric columns and French doors leading to the interior. The balcony is now enclosed and the columns are no longer in place.



33. Montana National Bank

201 North Broadway (1917)

In the late 1880s, this block and the area to the north was the site of scattered residences. There were two residences on the property that eventually became the site of the Montana National Bank. At the time it was built, this was one of six in town. The bank bust followed about five to ten years later and by 1930, about half of the banks in Montana had folded. Later recognized as the

Montana Bank of Billings, the bank continued here until recent years. It is an excellent example of Neo-Classical revival architecture, common on bank buildings of this period throughout the state, and is the only Billings bank building remaining that still retains integrity of the period.



34. Carlin Building

117-119 North Broadway (1918)

This site passed through several speculative owners as undeveloped property until P.G. Carlin built the building in 1918 and the following year sold it to Oliver H. Hovda, a real estate man. Early storefront occupants included a clothing shop, millinery and the Atlas Apartments upstairs.



35. Montana Power Building

113-115 North Broadway (1918)

In 1912, John Ryan formed the Montana Power Company by merging several smaller hydro power producers on the Missouri River. Ryan was head of the Amalgamated Copper Company (Anaconda Company after 1915) and controlled the power flow to this giant company and throughout the state as well. This was the tallest building on the Billings skyline for years. The hallmark of the building is the vertical panels that separate the floors and cap the pediment. Each is formed of translucent white block and was illuminated at night by lighting behind the glass.



36. Acme Building

107-111 North Broadway (ca. 1910)

The building designed with stores in front and the Acme Theater in rear. The theater also known as the Broadway Theater in 1913-14 and the Regent Theater from 1916-1930. Other early occupants included a jewelry shop and Tressman's Millinery. Rooms upstairs were known as the Acme Hotel.



37. Babcock Theater Building

2808-2812 2nd Avenue North (1907)

A.L. Babcock purchased this site as undeveloped property in 1889 before the downtown business district had spread this far to the north. By 1889, a couple of homes were erected on the south portion of the block but this north half remained open. This building succeeds the 800-seat Billings Opera House (also built by Babcock), which had its first performance in 1882, but was burned down at 2517

Montana in 1906. Babcock built the new Theater Building on this site, replacing what had been a tennis court. In 1935, the theater interior was completely gutted by fire but was immediately rebuilt by a well-known theater designed based in California during the 1920s and 1930s. The original building exterior was brick accentuated with columns with floral carving. All of the original exteriors has since been covered with blue metal paneling.



38. Kress Building

2816 2nd Avenue North (1923-1925)

This building is the finest example of Art Deco design in the business district and one of the best Deco commercial buildings in Montana. The glazed brickwork, stylized Deco paneling, multi-color tile are high caliber design. The building housed J.E. Muzzy Grocery and Modern Shore Repair Shop until 1930 when S.H. Kress & Company opened a notions business that remained here until the early 1960s.



39. Fratt Building

2817-2823 2nd Avenue North (1923)

In 1891, David and Kate Fratt built a two-story dwelling on this site. David Fratt, a successful livestock grower and vice president of the Yellowstone National Bank, died in 1912. His wife Kate died a few years later in 1918, and in her will, she bequested funds to erect a large building in memory of her husband David Fratt. Cole's Department Store, which had been located at 2716 Montana until it burned in 1919, relocated here one month after completion in 1923 and stayed until the late 1980s. Upstairs were 25 offices.



40. Billings Hardware Building

2812 Montana Avenue (1909)

In 1902, A.L. Babcock Hardware was sold to Billings Hardware. Previously located at 2619-2621 Montana Avenue, they remained in business here through the mid-1950s.



41. Western Pawn, Fuller Hotel/Losekamp Block

2817 Montana Avenue (1903)

"Losekamp/Famous Outfitter" was located on Montana Avenue between 25th and 26th Streets from 1884 until sometime before 1900, when Losekamp moved to a two-story building on this site. Losekamp freely gave credit to cowboys and range riders from the surrounding areas. In the fall of 1903, when Losekamp was out of town, his partner put the entire inventory up for sale to clear the way to construct this building. In later years, the Losekamp Block housed the local post office. During 1920s to early 1930s, the Liberty Theater, later the Rio Theater, ran here.



42. Barbizon Square/ Sturm and Drake Building

14-16 North 29th (ca.1913)

This building housed Sturm and Drake grocery store on the first floor – carrying groceries, meats, hay, grain, harness and horse supplies. Upstairs Harvard Hotel rented rooms. In the 1920s, Safeway Stores opened a grocery business here. Note the historic painted signs that still grace the facade. In white block letters on black and green, they read: HOTEL HARVARD; GROCERIES HAY AND GRAIN.



43. Secor

2905-2907 Montana Avenue (1912-1923)

This block was relatively undeveloped until after the turn of the 20th century. On this site was a single-story wood building which held a Chinese laundry during the latter 1880s. In later years, it housed a restaurant – the Midget in 1912, the American Cafe in 1913-1914. By 1923, the original building was gone and this brick structure erected in its place. It was commercial space and home to American Dry Cleaners by 1930s.



44. Connolly Saddlery

2909-2911 Montana Avenue (1920)

The Connolly brothers, John T. and Patrick H., opened a saddle business in Billings in 1913 offering “handmade harnesses, saddles and collars” and “repairing neatly done.” They were located at 11 North 29th until they erected this building.



45. Pouder Furniture

2923 Montana Avenue (1916)

Except for a Chinese laundry at the other end of the block and a small wooden dwelling dating to the mid-1880s, this stretch of Montana Avenue was relatively empty until the 1910s. A.B. Pouder Furniture remained here through 1929. After that, it housed a variety of businesses including Miller Properties from 1959-1978. Harry Miller, Sr. lived in the upstairs apartment for 20 years, and the building still retains an apartment.



Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board

The Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board was created February 1993, under an inter-local agreement with the City of Billings, City of Laurel, Yellowstone County and the Crow Tribal Council. This inter-local agreement is a provision for a joint board of the four parties to promote public interest and preservation of historic and prehistoric sites, structures, objects, buildings and districts by addressing preservation issues at the local level and integrating them in to local, state and federal planning and decision-making processes. When the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board was created, it replaced several separate board and commissions, making the Board the first of its kind in the state. Careful planning went into establishing this inter-local agreement, a joint resolution and separate ordinances which implement the Board's duties, functions and responsibilities.

The Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board consists of nine members with demonstrated interest, competence and knowledge of historic preservation. Five members are selected jointly by all signatories of the inter-local agreement. The Board has at least three members with architectural history or other historic-preservation related disciplines such as cultural geography or cultural anthropology. Two of the board members must be members of either the Yellowstone County Planning Board and the Laurel Board of Planning, a property owner owning a business in a historic district, or a member of a city or county historical preservation society. All terms of the members are two-year terms. The Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. at the Parmly Billings Library, 510 North Broadway, 4th floor conference room, unless otherwise scheduled at an off-site location. A historic preservation officer is jointly appointed by all of the signatories of this inter-local agreement and serves as staff to the Historic Preservation Board. This office shall also have a demonstrated interest, competence or knowledge in historic preservation. The Board is specifically charged with the following duties and responsibilities:

- To review the development within the historic districts and any development affecting historical properties. Other duties are to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program for historic preservation in a manner that also ensures the promotion of public health, safety, convenience, order and general welfare for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of community development

- To serve in an advisory capacity to the local governing bodies, establishing said Board and to the Laurel Board of Planning, Yellowstone County Board of Planning, Yellowstone County Zoning Commission, Billings Zoning Commission, city and county Boards of Adjustment, Crow Tribal Council and other related bodies.
- To advise the cities, Tribal Council and county on matters pertaining to historic properties and historic districts within the jurisdiction area of the Board.
- To review all grants and to allocate the funds in accordance with the fiscal agent's guidelines.
- To review the applications and applicants for the position of Historic Preservation Officer and to make a recommendation to the city councils, county commissioners and the Tribal Council.
- To operate the Board and supervise the Historic Preservation Officer.
- To solicit input on a regular basis from other groups or organizations who have an interest in the Board and the services provided by the Board.

Any person interested in serving on the Yellowstone Historical Preservation Board can contact his/her respective city, county, or Crow Tribal Council member, or John Walsh, historic preservation officer, at (406) 657-8286 or WalshJ@ci.billings.mt.us.

