

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

County and State **Hill County, Montana**

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**Historic and Architecturally Significant
Resources of Downtown Havre, Montana,
1889-1959**

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Commercial Development of Havre, Montana, 1889-1959

Introduction

(by Jim Jenks)

Prior to Euro-American contact, several American Indian tribes used the north-central region of present-day Montana as both a thoroughfare for intertribal trade and seasonal hunting grounds. Known major tribal groups that maintained traditional ties to the area include the Shoshone, Salish, and Kootenai Allied Tribes. The homelands of these tribes overlapped in the area between the Milk, Missouri and Musselshell Rivers, making the area a cultural meeting ground for regional tribes. In later years, the tribes were pushed south and west by the Assiniboiné, Plains Cree, Plains Chippewa, River Crow, Gros Ventre, and Blackfeet Nation¹.

Within the recent prehistoric and historic period and until forced to reservations, the Mountain and River Crow homeland came to encompass a large area, stretching east to west from the Three Forks region to the current Montana-North Dakota border and north from the Milk River to south along the Missouri and Yellowstone River bottoms. Crow land included mountains, valleys, plains, and river systems, offering different climates and food sources throughout the year.² A century before Lewis and Clark, the Crow had established a reputation of being hospitable to European traders and to other tribes, having for example acquired horses as early as c. 1730 through trade with the Comanche.³

Meanwhile, the Blackfeet held most of an immense territory stretching from the North Saskatchewan River, Canada, to the headwaters of the Missouri in today's Montana. Fifty years before Lewis and Clark, the Blackfeet Indians had a reputation of being hospitable to European traders, such as the Hudson's Bay Company, who occasionally even wintered with the tribe.⁴ The Blackfeet were regular commerce partners with Canadian-based British merchants, and this relationship had lasted more than twenty years, and during that time, the Blackfeet—using firearms—successfully dominated their regional rivals.⁵

The Blackfeet opposed the American fur trappers who followed Lewis and Clark, and successfully thwarted attempts by Americans to open fur trade outposts in their country. Finally, in 1832, the American Fur Company opened an outpost, Fort Piegan, on the Missouri River near the mouth of the Marias River. By then, the Blackfeet tempered their dislike for these intruders, enjoying the goods that traders offered. Besides access to trade, the Blackfeet traveled widely throughout the Milk and Missouri River country utilizing the region's resources.

The Gros Ventre tribe occupied areas north of Crow homeland, and east of the Blackfeet, into what is now southeastern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan.⁶ In the late 1700s, the tribe became active traders, and entered into a commercial relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company. Competition for trade increased tribal rivalries, and though the tribe was allied with the powerful Blackfeet nation, they began to suffer from attacks from the Plains Cree, Plains Chippewa, and Assiniboiné. Small pox epidemics in 1780-81 and 1801-02 also severely weakened the tribe.⁷

Further, relations with the traders deteriorated when the Gros Ventre came to view the Europeans as allies of their enemies. Clashes with traders, as well as continued conflict with the Cree and Assiniboiné, worsened their condition, and by the early 1800s the tribe was moving south. By 1830, the Gros Ventres established a territory that stretched from southern Canada's "Cypress Hills to the

¹ Raymond J. DeMallie, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: Vol. 13, Parts 1 and 2*. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian, 2001), p. 694.

² DeMallie, "Crow," p. 696.

³ Ibid., "Crow," p. 696.

⁴ DeMallie, "Blackfeet," p. 405.

⁵ Ibid., p. 406.

⁶ DeMallie, "Gros Ventre," p. 677.

⁷ Ibid., p. 677.

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Judith River and Bear Paw Mountains...down the Missouri and the Musselshell rivers on the east.”⁸ After this relocation, relations with traders improved. Beginning in 1831, the tribe traded peacefully with the American Fur Company outposts on the Missouri River, where the tribe grew rich in horses and goods.

As the nineteenth century unfolded, the once plentiful bison herds became increasingly scarce as more non-Indians moved into Montana, forcing tribes to withdraw further into core homelands and away from outlying seasonal hunting grounds and extended trade networks. By an 1880 agreement, the Crow sold over 1,500,000 acres to the United States Government and moved in 1883-84 to the present Crow Reservation in southeastern Montana. The Gros Ventre endured their own territorial loss. By the Judith River Treaty of 1855 with the United States (US), the Gros Ventre agreed to allow the construction of military posts and travel in the Milk River area and Bear Paw Mountains. While the Gros Ventre and US Army were never in direct conflict, pressure to confine native peoples to small areas grew. A series of Executive Orders reduced Indian lands, and as buffalo declined, the Gros Ventre traveled more regularly to Fort Belknap for supply. In 1890, the tribe was placed on a reduced reservation at today's Fort Belknap Reservation, located immediately south of the Milk River, and north of the Missouri River in north-central Montana. The Gros Ventre, in turn, invited the Upper Assiniboine to live with them there.

Non-Indian settlement continued and inter-tribal power shifted and weakened. The last two decades of the 18th century began a century of tragedy for the Blackfeet Nation. Small pox epidemics drastically affected the population in 1781, and between 1785 and 1805 large numbers of Blackfeet were killed in battles over hunting territory. In 1837, another smallpox epidemic killed nearly 6,000 Blackfeet, an estimated two-thirds of the total population.⁹ However, the Blackfeet Nation maintained their traditional way of life based on hunting bison, until the near extinction of the bison by 1881 forced them to adapt in response to the effects of the Euro-American settlement and resource loss. The tribe was restricted to land assigned in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, but this attempt to designate Blackfeet hunting territory failed when white settlers began taking the land. In 1888, those Blackfeet residing in Montana were placed on a 3,000 square-mile reservation in northwest Montana, under the terms of the 1888 Sweetgrass Hills Treaty.

Regional Historic Context

(by Jim Jenks)

The first Euro-American explorers believed to have entered the what would become Montana was the de la Verendrye Expedition, who in 1743 followed Missouri River westward, where they were able to view the “Shining Mountains” on the western horizon, perhaps the Big Horns of southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming. Approximately sixty years later, the American expedition Corps of Discovery led by Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, passed through north-central Montana, along the Missouri River in both 1805 and during their 1806 return to the United States.

For the following several decades, the Missouri River remained the primary form of travel for the fur traders who entered the area seeking beaver pelts. During this formative period, Euro-Americans, predominantly fur trappers, began to establish a foothold along the Missouri River to further economic and military aims. In 1822, Fort Union (then Fort Floyd) was completed near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, and trappers used this post as a base to gradually penetrate the upstream corridor. As mentioned above, in 1831, James Kipp of the American Fur Company constructed Fort Piegan at the mouth of the Marias River in order to conduct trade with the Blackfeet people who controlled the region.¹⁰ While this fort only lasted one season, it inspired a series of forts in the coming years. Finally, the American Fur Company's outpost at Fort Benton opened for business in 1846, and soon rose

⁸ Ibid., p. 678.

⁹ Warren D'Azevedo, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 11, Great Basin*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), p. 517.

¹⁰ As quoted in Bureau of Land Management, *Class III Cultural Resource Inventory*. (Report #02-MT-066-011, 2002), p. 20.

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to prominence as the head of navigation on the Missouri River.¹¹ The success of the post is often attributed to part owner, Alexander Culbertson and his Blood wife, Natawiska Iksen's ability to persuade the tribes to continue trading.

In 1858, gold was first discovered in Montana on Gold Creek, in the northern portion of Deer Lodge Valley, and in 1862 a gold rush led to the establishment of the town of Bannack, just over 80 miles west of today's Virginia City. This and other discoveries such as the Helena's Last Chance Gulch strikes transformed Fort Benton, hurt by the dying fur trade, into a bustling port and supply center. Steamboats first docked at the fort in 1860, and the town settled into a role as a major jumping off point and supplier to the mining industry and infant agricultural settlements.

While Euro-American expansion in north-central Montana continued along the Missouri, settlement moved at a slower pace inland. Until 1873, all of the land north of the Musselshell River remained in Native hands. Most of the new settlements that stretched inland were centered near the diggings in the western portion of today's Montana, but following the defeat of the Nez Perce in 1877 south of Chinook, the United States Government established the Fort Assinniboine Military Reservation to maintain a permanent military presence designed to control the native population of the area. In addition to the influx of military personnel and with the discovery of gold in the Sweet Grass Hills region in the early-1870s, the cultural composition of the region began to shift. In 1873, the United States began reducing and dividing Indian lands in northern Montana, opening most of the original Milk River Reservation to white settlement.

Fort Assinniboine

Fort Assinniboine was formally established amid the grassy river bottom along Beaver Creek near its confluence with the Milk River, forty-eight miles from the Canadian border, on May 9, 1879. The primary reason for the fort's construction was to protect communities to the south against possible attacks from the Sioux. Located north of the Canadian border, they were specifically Chief Sitting Bull and his band of Hunkpapa Sioux and some Lakota Sioux in the Cypress Hills, and the White Bird band of Nez Perce that had fled to Canada after their defeat and the capture of Chief Joseph in 1877.¹²

As it turned out the hostile Indians were not the threat many people perceived them to be. The soldiers only tangled with Sitting Bull's Lakota Sioux once. However, soldiers from Forts Keough, Buford, and Assinniboine were repeatedly engaged in pushing hostile Indians back into Canada. Fort Assinniboine's main encounters with Native Americans involved members of the tribes that were associated with the Riel Rebellion in 1885. Soldiers from the fort would periodically round up Plains Cree and Plains Chippewa who had traveled into Montana and return them to Canada.¹³

However, the establishment of Fort Assinniboine (Photo #1) did provide a catalyst for the later settlement and economic development of north-central Montana. Easing safety concerns of settlers wishing to move into the area, the fort cleared the way for the railroad, traders, merchants, ranchers, and farmers to move into some of the last open ranges of Montana.

Fort Assinniboine helped to bring cattlemen to the area after the reductions to the reservations gave stockmen more open range and increased the number of cattle and cattle companies in north-central Montana. Following the disastrous winter of 1886-87, stock companies changed the way they operated and the vast open ranges of Montana began to shrink.¹⁴ As stockmen began to move into north central Montana, the open ranges of the Milk River Valley became the domain of organizations like the Bear Paw Cattle

¹¹ Ibid., p. 20.

¹² Nicholas Hardeman, "Brick Stronghold of the Border, Fort Assinniboine 1879-1911," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 29:57 (April 1979), p 56.

¹³ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁴ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, Rev. ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), pp. 166-7.

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Pool, the Shonkin Stock Association, and Ranchers' Stock Association. By the mid 1890's there were estimated to be 70,000 cattle grazing in these last open ranges.¹⁵

The fort spurred growth in infrastructure as well. The size of the fort and its remote location required supply routes to be created. New wagon supply routes from Missouri River ports, such as Fort Benton, Coal Banks, and Rocky Point, Montana emerged. By 1887, the Montana Central railroad had arrived in the area, with Assinniboine Station serving as the regional headquarters. Built by Colonel Charles A. Broadwater from Helena to Ft. Assinniboine in 1887, it linked up with Jim Hill's St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway.¹⁶ Later both rails would become part of the Great Northern Railway.

The construction of one of the largest and the northernmost fort of its time further sparked the first developments of the local economy. L.K. Devlin, the first quartermaster, supervised the masons and Major J.C. Lee oversaw the construction of the fort. C.A. Broadwater, the post trader, provided materials for the project. Taking advantage of the fine clays and sands on nearby Beaver Creek and Big Sandy Creek, the fort was mainly constructed of brick. Broadwater hired 500 Métis Indians from the Red River Valley, soldiers, and 350 civilian laborers from St. Paul to construct the fort, bringing a large number of people to the area for the first time.¹⁷ The fort was the largest in the region with over 100 buildings and would be one of the most strategic forts in the northwest, as it became the headquarters for the District of Montana.

People moved into the area to provide goods for the fort and conducted brisk trade with the soldiers. The town of Cypress sprang up, five miles north of the fort on Big Sandy Creek. It had several saloons, a Chinese restaurant, two houses of prostitution and a store.¹⁸ Eventually the fort commanders barred the soldiers from visiting Cypress and consequently the town folded and most of its residents moved to Bull Hook Bottoms, named for a small creek that fed into the Milk River.¹⁹ The people who first came as soldiers, suppliers, railway workers, cowboys, prostitutes or saloon owners were destined to be the early settlers of what would later become Havre.

Founding of Havre

The first Euro-American settlers of what would later be Havre were squatters on federal land with connections to Fort Assinniboine. John Bell, a retired army sergeant from Fort Assinniboine, was the first to settle in the area, building a three-room rough-hewn log cabin in the bottoms of Bull Hook Creek, close to the confluence of the Milk River, in August of 1887. Several Indian groups knew the locality well for its proximity to water and the shade of large Cottonwood trees that made the place a good camping area.

Billy Brown, the son of Ft. Assinniboine's chief scout Jack Brown, settled the area in September 1887. The following year he sold his land to Simon Pepin. The Diamond R. Freighting Company, owned by Broadwater, had employed Pepin as a wagonmaster. He later moved into the cattle business, providing meat for Ft. Assinniboine. In the summer of 1889 Gus Descelles, a teamster for the Broadwater-McCulloh Company (R.L. McCulloh was the post trader at Ft. Assinniboine), settled the land west of Pepin's land. The Pepin and Descelles land formed the nucleus of what would become downtown Havre, fronting First Street and separated by present day Fourth Ave. (Photo #2) A tent city grew up nearby, north of the tracks and south of the river.²⁰

¹⁵ Gary A. Wilson, *Honky-tonk Town: Havre's Bootlegging Days*, (Helena, MT: Montana Magazine, 1985), p. 7.

¹⁶ Hill County Bicentennial Commission, *Grit, Guts, and Gusto: A History of Hill County*, (Havre, MT: Hill County Bicentennial Commission, 1976), p. 52.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁸ *Honky-tonk Town*, p. 6.

¹⁹ *Grit, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 52.

²⁰ Gary A. Wilson Notes, Havre Survey Files, Havre/Hill County Historic Preservation Commission, 2008.

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In 1887, two decisions by the federal government influenced the development of northern Montana. First, Congress passed a bill that granted the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad a 150-foot easement through reservations and military reserves, including Ft. Assiniboine. It also gave the railroad the right to use resources for construction purposes, as well as land to build stations so long as there was not more than one for every ten miles of railroad. At the same time, the federal Northwest Commission negotiated with Native Americans a cession of nearly twenty million acres of reservation land and recognition of the railroad right-of-way. These two federal acts allowed the railroad to enter north-central Montana and opened up the lands of the northern Missouri River to white expansion.²¹

The railroad wasted no time and construction for the Manitoba's Montana extension began in April 1887. Laying track west from Minot, North Dakota, the Manitoba reached Bull Hook Bottoms on September 6, 1887 en route to Ft. Assiniboine. Assiniboine station served as the division point between the Manitoba and the Montana Central. On November 18, 1887, the Montana extension reached Helena, completing the 643-mile distance from Minot to Helena before winter, linking the region with the national economy. In 1889, Great Northern Railway was created out of the Manitoba, forming what would be the northernmost transcontinental railroad in the United States, through the area that as a result became colloquially known as the Hi-line.

The importance of Bull Hook Bottoms got a boost when the Great Northern was selecting the location for their Rocky Mountain crossing. Surveyors hoped to follow the Clark's Fork of the Columbia like the Northern Pacific, find a pass through central Montana west of Great Falls or locate a pass west of Bull Hook Bottoms. At this time, Hill had already invested into the Great Falls Water Power and Township Company and nearby coal deposits, and Great Falls seemed poised to become Montana's main take-off point for the Pacific Extension. Surveyors searched for a Rocky Mountain route, but were unable to find a good crossing to the west of Great Falls. In December of 1889, in a blinding below zero snowstorm, Great Northern civil engineer, John Stevens, instead discovered a pass due west of Bull Hook Bottoms above the headwaters of the Marias River. Marias Pass was ideally suited to the railroad's needs as it is the lowest crossing of the Northern Rockies with a gentle slope coming from the east. Having the pass due west of Bull Hook Bottoms allowed the Great Northern to chart a direct main line from Grand Forks, North Dakota to Marias Pass that would be low grade, without curvature, and highly efficient.

Bull Hook Bottoms got a second boost when in 1890 there was a water shortage on Beaver Creek. The Great Northern needed a more reliable water source for their Pacific Extension division point and Bull Hook Bottoms' location on the Milk River fit the bill. Decelles and Pepin donated parts of their land where the tent city was located for shops and the Great Northern depot, making it an ideal location for the division point.²²

In 1890, the Great Northern sent several hundred workers to Bull Hook Bottoms to build a depot and several rail sidings. The depot was complete with a platform about two feet off the ground to facilitate boarding passengers and loading freight. In 1891, Bull Hook Siding was chosen as the Great Northern division point but railroad officials, especially Hill, did not think "Bull Hook Bottoms" was a dignified enough name for their new rail hub. To decide on a new name, the town held a meeting. Though that first meeting ended in a brawl, the second meeting was more successful. There, the citizenry agreed that only the original five homesteaders, Gus Decelles, Exor Pepin (nephew of Simon Pepin), Tom McDevitt, Joe Demars and Charlie Goutchie would be allowed to vote. After several suggestions, including "France" to acknowledge their common heritage, Gus Decelles then suggested Havre after his parents' hometown of Le Havre, France. "Havre", means "the haven or harbor", won the vote.²³

In August of 1893, twenty-six people voted to incorporate Havre as a city on September 5 of that year. The townsite was platted south of the railroad tracks on parts of Decelles' and Simon Pepin's ranches. (Photo #3) Like many railroad towns, Havre's streets were set in a grid formation, with the east-west orientation of the railroad serving as the northern boundary of the town

²¹ Michael P. Malone, *James J. Hill: Empire Builder of the Northwest*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1996), p. 122.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 131-3.

²³ *Grit, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 154.

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paralleled to the south by Main Street, which fronted the railroad tracks, followed by First through Third Streets. The avenues ran perpendicular to the tracks with Third Avenue running south from the Great Northern depot.

The depot served as the gateway to the commercial district of Havre. First Street between Second Ave. and Fourth Ave. served as the main commercial street, and Third Avenue became the main avenue. (Photo #4) The buildings in Havre during the 1890's were typical first-generation structures, and mainly consisted of tarpapered wood-framed shacks. Built close together, these modest buildings were false-fronted and one story high, with a few scattered one-and-a-half and two-story buildings, like the Windsor Hotel on the south side of First Street between Third and Fourth Avenues. Along with its annex, the Windsor, at two stories, was the tallest building on First Street until brick structures were constructed in the mid-1890's. Havre had many businesses typical to a frontier town including saloons, barbers, restaurants, Chinese laundries, cobblers, bakeries, mercantiles, hardware stores and hotels.

Simon Pepin and Ed Broadwater, brother of W.C. Broadwater, launched the first commercial venture in Havre. Ed Broadwater worked as a clerk and bookkeeper for ten years for the Broadwater-McCulloh Co. at the trading post at Ft. Assiniboine. There he met Simon Pepin and in 1891, they took some goods to the present day site of Havre where they set up the Broadwater-Pepin Company mercantile business in a cabin. This general merchandise company occupied the former cabin business site given to the Great Northern Railway for their depot and shops. The business was moved to the south side of the 200-block of First Street in 1893 and the frame building they built became the first permanent structure in Havre.²⁴ (photo #5)

Simon Pepin also met L.K. Devlin while working at Ft. Assiniboine. The two of them worked for the Broadwater-McCulloh tending the cattle business and slaughterhouse.²⁵ Pepin's later investments included the Diamond R and the P Cross ranches outside of Havre and the three-story, brick Havre Hotel, built in 1900 on the location where the Windsor Hotel, destroyed by fire in 1898, had been located. The Havre Hotel cost \$30,000 and featured gas lighting, steam heat and porcelain baths.

Henry W. Stringfellow set up the first drugstore in Havre. The first building was a one-story framed building located on the northeast corner of First Street and Fourth Avenue. Joseph Gussenhoven moved to Havre in 1891, and by 1892 had established a general merchandizing business specializing in hardware and machinery, located on both sides of First Street west of Third Avenue. In 1895, he replaced the one-story wood-framed building on First Street between Third and Fourth Avenues next to the Windsor Hotel with a large two-story brick building. Havre's first steam laundry was added to the back of the building two years later. Gussenhoven would expand his business interests throughout the remainder of the decade to include saloons, brick manufacturing, lumber, a ranch and a coalmine north of Havre.²⁶

W.C. Broadwater took office as the first mayor of Havre and during his short term established the town's first rules and regulations, ordinances, offices, books and records, and set up a list of electors for later elections. E.C. Shelton succeeded Broadwater as mayor in May of 1894. During his tenure, he introduced the office of city attorney, installed a city pump, purchased equipment for a fire department and built a bridge across Bull Hook Creek on First Street. The town was also divided into three wards and the first mill levy was passed for street and road improvements. George T. Sanderson started what would be the first two-year term for a Havre mayor, in May of 1896. That year Chouteau County approved the construction of a jail at the northeast corner of First St. and Second Ave; Havre's town council was also housed in this building. Thus, Sanderson was the first mayor to have an official town hall for meetings.²⁷

Havre's early city administrations set up the basics for governance but they were largely ineffective. A modern water works system was planned as early as 1893 but was not completed until 1905. Electric street lights were also not installed even though lamps

²⁴ *Grit, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 220.

²⁵ *Grit, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 276.

²⁶ *Progressive Men of the State of Montana*, (Chicago: A.W. Bowen & Co., 1902) p. 674.

²⁷ *Grit, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 177.

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were ordered in 1899. Much of the city governments' inability to complete plans for civic improvements was due to lack of money. Havre like many other cities across the country suffered from the panic of 1893 and the subsequent economic depression of the 1890's. The depression of 1893 hit and the Great Northern reduced its workforce by nineteen percent, and Havre's economy faltered, when the return of soldiers from the Philippine Islands to Ft. Assiniboine during the Spanish-American War breathed new life into the town.

Social Aspects of Early Havre

Like many towns on Montana's early frontiers, the assorted mix of cowboys, railroad workers, soldiers, coal miners, entrepreneurs, gamblers and prostitutes gave Havre the reputation of being rough and wild. Throughout the state it was known as a "robbers' roost" and a "completely uncivilized" town.²⁸ Bill Wiltner, a Havre businessman, reflected on the wild side of Havre he witnessed upon his arrival in 1895. He described his first night in Havre as "one of those continental carnivals he had seen back east...Action and excitement were everywhere."²⁹ He was immediately asked if he was "heeled," or carrying a gun, upon getting off the train and witnessed ten fights, carried out with guns, knives, razors and fists, while standing outside the Pioneer Meat Market. That night he visited a saloon where many different gambling devices were in use and games were in progress. He said he had "never seen so much money as was displayed on the tables and roulette wheel and other games of chance, and he had never seen so many tough-looking men in one place in all his life."³⁰

James J. Hill was also very aware of the corrupt image held by Havre and attempted to "clean up" the town. Hill called for social change claiming Havre's image tarnished any chance to entice outside investors. For awhile, the city did make an attempt to become a reputable town, however, the people of Havre still frequented the many saloons, gambling halls, and the red light district on Havre's west end of town along First Avenue and First Street.

In 1898, C.W. "Shorty" Young opened the Montana European Hotel and Grill, better known as the Honky-Tonk, to provide entertainment in Havre. This large three-story frame building stood at the west end of First Street and housed a saloon, dance hall, gambling hall, prize fight arena, vaudeville theater and a brothel. Next door to the west of the Honky-Tonk was a smaller two-story frame building, also run by Young, called the Parlour House, which had more expensive drinks and prostitutes. Behind these buildings were several small apartments, known as "cribs," where prostitutes lived and worked.

²⁸ Gary A. Wilson Notes.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

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Many Japanese men had worked for the Great Northern during its expansion and the 1900 census recorded twenty-three living in Havre. This number may have higher as non-Europeans such as Chinese, Japanese, and Native Americans often were not counted or avoided the census officials. The Chinese mainly lived on the western edge of town next to the red light district and set up opium dens, laundries, and restaurants in town. Like many other places in Montana, they were received with suspicion by the townspeople and on one occasion were falsely blamed for starting a fire in town. There were also twenty-six recorded Japanese residents in Havre in 1900, but they did not receive the same treatment and the community thrived until World War II.³¹ Havre had an African-American community as well, especially after the 10th Cavalry was stationed at Ft. Assiniboine in the 1890s. The 10th Cavalry was an all-black contingent and were known as Buffalo Soldiers by the Native Americans.³² One of Havre's most famous black residents was Alice Pleasant or "Ma Plaz" who moved to Havre with her ex-soldier husband in the late 1890s. She started a restaurant on the corner of First Street and Second Avenue known as the Home Café. (Photo #6)

Havre also played host to early Montana's last major Sun Dances as such large gatherings of Native Americans later were banned throughout the state. The Sun Dance, held east of town and attended by over 5,000 Native Americans, coincided with a Fourth of July party and official christening of "Havre" in 1894. The celebration of Havre also included a barbecue, the fort band, pony races and pistol and rifle shooting competitions.³³

1901-1909

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the Hi-line population increased and homesteading expanded. The town of Havre boomed. In 1900, the population of Havre stood at 982, but by 1910, the population had tripled to 3,619. Though the majority of these new residents were single white males, families began to flock to town as well. Where there were only 113 families in town in 1900, by 1910 there were 400. Most Havrites were American born, including African-Americans and Native Americans, but the cosmopolitan face of Havre was also apparent, with Italians, Scandinavians, as well as people of British descent, Irish, Eastern Europeans, and Asians. Most of these new immigrants worked for the railroad.³⁴

In 1901, the Great Northern began a series of projects that expanded its role in Havre. That July, they started to extend their yard to over a mile long north of the machine shops on the east side of town. Later that year, new shops were constructed east of town while the old shops and the roundhouse were torn down. In December, the Great Northern opened the new freight depot and converted the old depot into a passenger station. In March 1902, they enlarged the machine shop and added an electric plant, and two years later, in 1904, constructed a new depot, still used today, trimmed with granite and landscaped with a small park. The Great Northern then converted the original depot to division offices.

The number of local railroad workers increased during the Great Northern expansion. Though they employed 210 men in 1901, the railroad complained of a lack of good help. They hired more than twenty additional employees by 1903, and tried to entice family men to move to Havre to stabilize the rowdy elements of the population. They constructed houses for their employees on the east side of town near the machine shops. By 1905, the Great Northern's payroll was between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a month, and by 1909, they employed 1,089 people in the community.³⁵ Schools, churches, and other stabilizing institutions were constructed throughout the period. The First Presbyterian Church was so successful, that they purchased lots downtown and constructed a

³¹ Jon Axline, *Havre, Montana "the City of Homes": The Havre Residential Historic District, 1895-1938*, (Havre, MT: Floren's Hill County Publishing, 1989), p. 10.

³² "Brick Stronghold," p. 65.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Axline, p. 12.

³⁵ Axline, p. 13.

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commercial building as an investment. That building, the Brainerd and Grady Building, still stands at 224 Fourth Avenue, one of the few still standing that predates the fire of 1904.

The Fire of 1904 and Havre's Resurrection

In January of 1904, a fire devastated the business district of Havre. An arsonist started the blaze late in the morning of January 14th in the rear of Gross and Lebert's hardware store located in the 200 block of First Street. The fire swept through about sixty businesses on First Street between Second and Fourth Avenues. (Photo #7) Only the recently-built Security State Bank building on the south side of First Street's 300 block survived the fire intact. Havre made several changes in the aftermath of the fire. New buildings codes were passed that prohibited the construction of wood frame buildings and required brick or masonry construction with eight-inch thick walls in the commercial district on First Street. A more efficient and better fire department was organized, new water works and sewer systems were planned, and the streets improved.³⁶

Only two days after the fire, people who had lost their buildings and businesses began making plans to rebuild. Buildings that survived the blaze housed at least two, and sometimes more, businesses. The St. Paul's Hotel (formerly the Merchants Hotel at the southwest corner of Main Street and Third Avenue), the Security State Bank Building, and the McIntyres Opera House were pressed into service along with various livery barns and other locations around town. F.A. Buttrey moved his business, the Fair Store, to Auld's Great Northern Livery Barn on the southwest corner of Third Avenue and Second Street.³⁷ The people of Havre quickly ordered more stocks of merchandise and tried to get back to business as quickly as possible.

Havre residents showed their resilience and quickly set about reconstructing the commercial district. By May of 1904, several Havre businessmen planned to spend over a combined \$250,000 by the end of the year to rebuild. Satisfied with his new location, in May, Buttrey began construction of the new Fair Store. Henry Stringfellow constructed his new store, the Havre Commercial Company, across Third Avenue from Buttrey's store at the southeast corner of Third Avenue and Second Street. Stringfellow's new store was a fifty-by-fifty-foot brick building and the business expanded to sell general merchandise including farm equipment, wagons, hardware, clothing and groceries. (Photo #8) In 1906, a storm known as the "Havre Cyclone" damaged several buildings and nearly destroyed the second floor of this building. However, the repairs were completed quickly and the Havre Commercial Company soon was back in business with its rival across the street.³⁸

Joseph Gussenhoven, who owned several properties in Havre, alone planned to spend \$18,000 on construction costs. (Photo #9) He built a two-story brick building on the north side of the 300 block of First Street where a Chinese laundry stood before the fire at the rear of the building. In 1905, he had constructed a building at 321-325 First Street (24HL1299), that housed a jeweler, print shop and the *Havre Promoter* during the next decade.

In May of 1904, buildings at the northeast corner of First Street and Third Avenue, and the southwest corner of Fourth Avenue and First Street, began construction at a cost of \$28,000. 301 First Street (24HL1295) was known as the Buffalo Corner because it was the location of the Buffalo Saloon before the fire. When the still-extant, two-story brick Buffalo Building was completed in the Fall it contained the Hub clothing store, a cigar store and a billiards hall on the first floor, a saloon in the basement and the Buffalo Rooms in the upstairs.

³⁶ *Honky-tonk*, p. 18. Despite these efforts, parts of Havre would burn again in 1905.

³⁷ Buttrey's department store still stands, but its exterior was drastically remodeled during the second half of the twentieth century. The building is located outside the survey area.

³⁸ Stringfellow's Havre Commercial Company remained in operation at 201 Third Avenue until 1941, when the building was nearly completely destroyed by fire. The "new" construction there that incorporates the remains of the original building is known as the Praude Block (24HL1308). Buttrey's store still stands, though has been altered beyond recognition.

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A local businessman associated with the railroad and local banking interests, Edward F. Burke, joined in the rebuilding frenzy in June 1904. According to the *Havre Plaindealer*, Burke planned to construct his two-story brick building over the course of ten days for a cost of \$7500. The understated brickwork and straightforward Western Commercial style are still evident on this building at 309-313 First Street (24HL1296). On the same block, Martin Mertz and his family constructed what is now the Oxford Bar at 331 First Street (24HL1301) by 1906. Though subsequently stuccoed, the simple lines, banding and pilasters are representative of post-fire architectural trends in the downtown.

In 1906, the Broadwater-Pepin Co. built the Broadwater-Pepin Block on the southeast corner of First St. and Second Ave (24HL1293). This new building, which stands at 202 First Street, was larger than their previous store, being two stories tall and constructed out of more substantial and fireproof bricks. Other buildings on the south side of First Avenues' 200-block were constructed concurrently. The construction of the foundation for the neighboring Pioneer building at 216-218 First Street (24HL1294), owned by L.K. Devlin, began the same year, but the brick two story building was not built until 1916.

By the end of first decade of the twentieth century, downtown Havre began to recover from the devastating fire of 1904, as new, solidly constructed masonry buildings filled the blocks along First and Second Streets. These buildings and the businesses they housed represented a growing confidence in the future of the town, and the second, more permanent phase of development. Some housed establishments associated with the earliest settlement of the community, while others invited new businesses and office space as the community continued to grow through the following decade.

1909-1918: Homesteaders Arrive en Masse

The plains of northeastern Montana were some of the last of the native grasslands to be cultivated and broken up into farms and ranches in the country. Central and Eastern Montana were dry and lacked sufficient rainfall for successful farming. Indeed, during the nineteenth century the area from the ninety-eighth meridian to the Rocky Mountains was called the Great American Desert. At the turn of the twentieth century, central and eastern Montana remained for the most part empty and sparsely settled with only the occasional town or Indian village and some herds of cattle and sheep. Agriculture in Montana at this time was mostly confined to the valleys of the Rocky Mountains where there was more rainfall, closer markets and better transportation. The dry climate, emptiness of central and eastern Montana, large Indian reservations and open range livestock operations did not lend themselves to success for the frontier farmer of the nineteenth century. However, the advent of dryland farming technologies, governmental policies and promotions for land use after 1900 launched a flood of hopeful farmers and homesteaders to the Havre region and beyond, populating the rural countryside and changing the makeup of the town.³⁹

One federal government policy to expand farming in Montana was through large-scale water reclamation projects. The champions of these projects began the campaign to irrigate Montana in the 1890's when they saw that much of the spring runoff from the Missouri River and its main tributaries like the Milk and Yellowstone Rivers flowed out of Montana. If these rivers could be dammed and the waters used for irrigation the plains of Montana could be made to "blossom like the rose."⁴⁰ In 1902 Congress passed the Newlands Reclamation Act committed the government to the building of long-range large-scale irrigation projects and created the Bureau of Reclamation. Early on, the Bureau and Jim Hill supported a water management endeavor called the Milk River Project.⁴¹ Approved by Department of the Interior in 1903, the project's goals were to manage the Milk River and provide irrigation for the Milk River Valley by diverting the St. Mary's River into the Milk River, storing the water of the Milk River in the Fresno Dam fourteen miles west of Havre, and creating another reservoir near Malta. Much like many of the other reclamation projects in Montana, the Milk River Project came along slowly. The slow movement of the bureaucracy and above average rainfall from 1909 to 1918 stalled reclamation projects in the area. The Fresno Dam and Reservoir were not installed until 1939 and the entire project was not finished

³⁹ *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, pp. 232-3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁴¹ Malone, *James J. Hill*, p 252.

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until 1946.⁴² Reclamation and irrigation of Montana would prove less successful than in other states especially as new dryland farming techniques gained importance in the region's agriculture.

Dryland farming techniques were promoted and became popular in the 1900's along with the belief that the plains of Montana could produce crops with the little rainfall that it received. Hardy Webster of South Dakota was one of the best-known promoters of dryland farming techniques. His method focused on conservation of water in the soil through deep plowing and intensive cultivation although others felt that development of drought resistant crops and crop rotation were also needed for successful farming in the dry prairie of Montana. Dryland farming also entailed cultivation of large tracts of land and the original Homestead Act of 1862, which provided for 160 acres to settlers, was too small to be productive with the low rainfall of the region.

Advances in farming technologies allowed some dryland farming techniques to be utilized. New machinery like steam tractors and grain drills and metal equipment enabled farmers to farm on larger plots of land. The deep plow and subsurface packing machine also made dryland farming easier.

Subsequent laws changed the Homestead Act to make homesteading more attractive, particularly in 1909, when Congress passed the Enlarged Homestead Act, which provided 320 acre sections of land free to settlers of several western states including Montana. Although this would later prove still not enough to successfully farm the dry Northern Plains, this act fueled the homestead boom from 1909 to 1918 and brought thousands into north-central Montana. Havre was given a boost in 1910 when President Taft made Havre the regional headquarters for the land district. That same year the Great Northern Railway brought more than 1,000 cars filled with homesteaders into the region and in one day 250 homesteaders detrained at Havre.⁴³ Three years after the passage of the Enlarged Homestead Act, Congress passed the Three-Year Homestead Act. This law allowed homesteaders to be absent from their claims for up to five months a year. Havre underwent a residential building frenzy as many homesteaders from the area would travel to Havre to spend the harsh winter months or to be closer to schools and community services.

Government laws and new farming techniques encouraged farming in the northern plains but getting people to immigrate into the region required a large scale advertising campaign. Jim Hill and the Great Northern Railroad had a vested interest in promoting the homestead boom and drawing settlers into the area in order to build up the region's economy and make long westward rail-routes profitable. Hill was in favor of the Enlarged Homestead Act and lobbied the government heavily for its passage. The Great Northern put their efforts into an advertising campaign across the Midwestern and Eastern states as well as in Northern European countries. The railroads put out posters, leaflets and brochures promoting settlement in the western states. Hill also sent out train cars that exhibited the fine grains, cattle and sheep that could be grown in the northern plains and even called the Milk River Country "A poor man's paradise where land is plentiful and a fortune could be made with little effort."⁴⁴

The Great Northern promoted in the northern plains of Europe, particularly in Scandinavian countries and Germany. Hill's railroads set up a system for prospective European homesteaders to receive cheap fares across the Atlantic and, once they arrived, they would receive a cheap ticket to St. Paul or Duluth. For only \$22 to \$50, a family could rent a part of or an entire GN boxcar to take family, livestock and belongings out west.⁴⁵

Local entrepreneurs saw the potential of the homestead boom could provide and promoted Havre as well. The Havre Industrial Association and the Havre Business Association did their parts to bring settlers to Havre, with promotional slogans such as "Boost-Don't Knock" and "Do it—Habit of Havre" and newspaper ads describing Havre as a "City of Progress." In 1909, they

⁴² "Reclamation: Managing Water in the West" *Milk River Project*, 8/8/2006. U.S. Department of the Interior: Bureau of Reclamation. 05/20/2008. <http://www.usbr.gov/dataweb/html/milkriver.html>

⁴³ *Honky-tonk*, p. 24.

⁴⁴ *Honky-tonk*, p. 24.

⁴⁵ Malone, *James J. Hill*, p. 259

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installed a display at the rail depot that exhibited grain and farm products showcasing the bountifulness of the land. The Havre Business Association spent over \$20,000 to put out an advertising booklet promoting Havre and the surrounding area. Soon there after the Havre Industrial Association reorganized into the Havre Chamber of Commerce and hired attorney Victor Griggs as its secretary and promoter.⁴⁶ In December of 1909, they began a campaign to increase Havre's population to 15,000 by 1916. The "Keep Your Eye on Havre" campaign urged everyone leaving Havre to wear a button and be an ambassador for Havre. Although Havre did not reach this goal, the campaign did boost community pride in Havre.⁴⁷

The homestead movement into the northern plains was the last big land rush in the United States and signified the nation's last waves of agricultural expansion. By 1919, nearly 35 million acres in Montana were homesteaded and making it the most homesteaded state in the union. The state population grew from 243,329 in 1900 to almost 550,000 by 1920. Farms and ranches increased from 13,370 to 57,677 over the same period and agriculture became the region's number one industry. In March of 1913, claims to 1600 homesteads were entered at Havre alone.

Formation of Hill County and Commercial Expansion in Havre

Havre was located in Chouteau County, which in 1911 was the second largest county in the country. The increased population strained county services and led to calls to form a separate county to serve those communities distant from Fort Benton, Chouteau County's seat of government. This campaign had begun as early as 1901 and culminated in 1911. Community members from Harlem, Chinook, the Little Rocky and the Bear's Paw Mountains selected a committee to decide the issue. The committee met in Havre with fifteen delegates present to decide on the name for the county. The commissioners chose Hill County from a list that included Prairie, Bear Paw, Sweet Grass, Little Rocky and J.J. Hill.⁴⁸ The new Hill County held an election to decide the county seat, which Havre won easily over its closest rival, Chester.⁴⁹ In February of 1912, Montana's Governor Edwin Norris signed the authorization and Hill County became official.⁵⁰

The homestead boom and the creation of Hill County led to commercial businesses and industries to grow. Many of the Havre's big commercial businesses like the Havre Commercial Company, the Lou Lucke Company, the F.A. Buttrey Company and the H. Earl Clack Company, made the most of the large number of people arriving or passing through town. New industries and businesses developed to meet the needs of the growing community. These companies expanded while cementing Havre's place as the regional hub in north-central Montana.

In 1910, the Great Northern Railroad remodeled the depot as a part of the \$130,000 improvement project. The remodel made the depot 200 feet long with a hipped roof, tile floors, mosaic trim and it was considered the most elegant depot on the line. The Great Northern expanded the machine shops around the same time and they extended its services all to meet the growing economy's needs during the 1910's. Much of the expansion occurred in more white-collar positions such as engineers, conductors and brakemen. The people in these positions tended to bring their families with them to Havre.

The family of William Blashfield had owned the Metropolitan Hotel on the west side of Fourth Ave between First and Main Streets. They had wanted to build a new hotel on this location since the fire of 1904 burnt down the Metropolitan Hotel. Finally in 1910 they constructed a ninety-by-thirty foot Hebron pressed brick hotel at a cost of \$18,000. It had fifty guest chambers and since it

⁴⁶ *Grits, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 170.

⁴⁷ Axline, p. 15.

⁴⁸ *Grits, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 365.

⁴⁹ Axline, p. 17.

⁵⁰ The splitting of Chouteau County into Hill and later Blaine, Philips, Liberty and Toole Counties was the beginning of the county splitting movement in Montana. The Leighton Act, passed in 1915, gave counties the ability to break up and divide as they saw fit. From the beginning of the homestead boom until 1925 the number of counties in Montana doubled from twenty-eight to fifty-six counties.

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faced the park in front of the rail depot, it was called the Park Hotel. At the same time, Frank and Philip Jestarb erected the Jestarb Building back-to-back with the hotel and facing First Street. The building housed the brothers' hardware and farm implements business and the upstairs were used as apartments. The Jestarb's business became one of the largest of its kinds on the Hi-line. Together, the Park Hotel and Jestarb building continue to dominate the busy corner of First Street and Fourth Avenue.

Frank Chestnut had been in the saloon business since his arrival to Havre around 1893 and invested in real estate to become a prominent property owner. He acquired many pieces of property including the lot at 128 Third Avenue (24HL1307). There he constructed the two-story red brick Chestnut Building which housed a jeweler, and on the second floor, the Chestnut Hall which served the Episcopal Church and several fraternal organizations. Its subtle brick patterning and window placement still reflect these patterns of use. Though remodeled throughout the twentieth century, the Hub Building is also representative of the construction boom and mixed uses of buildings through the 1910s. Located north of the Chestnut Building at 120 Third Avenue (24HL1306), the building was constructed in 1904. Frank Chestnut resided in the rooms upstairs, while the storefront level housed the bank and various businesses. Today, it houses "Havre Beneath the Streets," a local history and railroad museum.

The services provided by banks and professional offices made up only a portion of the downtown business. To accommodate the grocery needs of the region, foodstuff wholesaler George W. Ryan constructed a large brick building at 48 Second Avenue (24HL1305) in 1917. A year later, George and Rose Ryan incorporated their Havre store as the family-operated Ryan Havre Company. The business employed several local people and handled many nationally known lines of canned goods, foodstuffs, and sundries. The territory of the company included all of north-central Montana serviced by local and regional salesman. Ryan's was well known for their retail cutlets. Ryan's operated in this location for several years until they merged in 1974 with Northern Montana Services Industries to become Ryan's Inc. In 1975, Ryan's Inc. vacated the building. In later years, the building was remodeled for offices and as the Downtowner Serve Your Self Furniture.

In 1916, the Northern Grocery Company constructed its building at 2 Fifth Avenue (24HL1313) to warehouse their wholesale grocery business. T.C. Penny, former proprietor of the Orpheum Theater, created the business in 1912. He believed that Havre was the logical wholesale distributing center for a radius of several hundred miles. His intent was to eliminate freight charges added to goods that were shipped by rail through Havre to Great Falls and reshipped back to Havre. In 1919, the company bought out the Pioneer Grocery making the Northern Grocery Company the largest wholesale grocery outlet. In 1920, a fire on the second floor of the warehouse building caused considerable damage to the goods also damaged by firefighter's water. The fire burned out power and phone lines causing that portion of the city to be shut off for several hours. In 1936, a large garage was constructed to permit loading trucks and their delivery services to be conducted under cover, the same year the business was purchased by the Nash Finch Company, a wholesale house selling nationally known brands such as Del Monte, Libby, Nash Coffee, Pabst beer, etc. The company was based in Grand Forks, North Dakota with 57 wholesale houses. It ceased operation in Havre around 1950.

H. Earl Clack was another businessman whose interests included foodstuffs. He enlarged his business and began purchasing the homesteaders' harvests. He built the first grain elevator in the area, which led to a chain of five elevators that handled over 2 million bushels of grain a day. He built a two-story city block-sized white-fire brick building at 120 Fourth Avenue (24HL1310) in 1913 and expanded his company to sell farm tools and hardware to go along the feed and grain. During this time Clack also entered the petroleum industry, his brand of "HI-Power" gasoline would be one of the most successful independent petroleum companies in the northwest. He opened northern Montana's first gasoline service station in 1918.⁵¹

Many of the homesteaders lived far enough away that they could not come to Havre very often. To promote their store and Havre the F.A. Buttrey Company offered to refund train fares for those living in the area to come buy their goods at Buttrey's. In 1915, they were the first business to hold a live model fashion show in Montana. The Lou Lucke Company expanded and added

⁵¹ *Grits, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 236.

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clothes in 1908 and moved to its permanent location on Third Avenue between First and Second Streets in 1911, using the whole building in 1915.⁵²

The Havre Commercial Company expanded its store in 1916 to include an auto dealership called simply Havre Motors. This early auto business sold Willys, Knight, Overland and Whippet automobiles. In 1916, the Havre Steam Laundry moved to enlarge its facilities, the same location they operate out of today, and got up to date equipment to meet the needs of the larger population. The Havre Brewing and Malting Company started in 1911 and had a capacity of ten thousand barrels annually. Other industries that emerged included a flourmill, a flax mill and a creamer.⁵³

Lawyer and newspaperman J.K. Bramble contributed to the town's infrastructure with the construction of the Bramble Building, at 422 First Street (24HL1303) in 1914. There he ran the Bramble Adjustment Company with his fellow officer, J.W. Angell. The company offered real estate, collection services, insurance, loans, rentals, surety bonds, and investments. The building's fanciful, multi-colored brickwork is still evident. Bramble came to Montana in 1892 as a practicing lawyer and settled in Marysville near Helena. He moved to Havre in 1904 and founded the weekly newspaper, the Hill County Democrat in 1912. Still keeping his law practice, Bramble served as editor of the newspaper and was well known regionally for his strong opinions. In 1918, he secured an Associated Press franchise and started printing afternoon daily editions, but the paper was not a success, so he sold the daily paper and kept the weekly publication. Newspapers contributed Havre's community vitality, as did the many fraternal organizations that flourished in Havre through the early 1900s. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows met at the Chestnut Building until it constructed its own Neoclassical Revival building at 230 Fourth Avenue (24HL1312) in 1920.

The influx of people to the Havre area coupled with the passage of the amendment to the Homestead Act in 1912 that allowed settlers to leave their homesteads for up to five months created a housing shortage in Havre. To help alleviate this shortage several construction companies formed. Companies like Delaney and Bossuot, L.W. Mack and C.C. Bronson and Fuglevand, Habberger and Sundberg built many houses during the homestead boom. In 1913, the Home Builders Investment Company was created and built many homes on Havre's south side. They were one of the more important developers in Havre, providing low cost rent, low cost houses and low interest rates on loans to build houses. The HBIC made it well known that they were locally owned and operated, hiring local contractors and instilling pride in the community "and was responsible for the transition of Havre from a small town to a modern city."⁵⁴

Civic Improvements

Havre's coal industry peaked during the first half of the 1910's. The Havre Coal Company mined 75 tons of coal a day and had a payroll of \$6,000.⁵⁵ Coal mining became a large industry with a yearly profit of \$140,000, and coal was delivered to almost all Havre homes and commercial buildings throughout the 1910's. This would not last as the discovery of natural gas on A.J. Broadwater's ranch east of town ushered in a new era of energy for Havre. By October of 1913, the Havre Natural Gas Company filed for incorporation. They planned for Havre to be the first town in Montana to use natural gas for commercial and domestic use. This plan came to fruition in 1915 when the gas mains were filled. The Havre Natural Gas Company was the primary supplier of Havre's natural gas until Montana-Dakota Utilities bought them in the 1930's. Havre soon was referred to as the "Gas City" replacing the "Sunburst City" as it was previously known.⁵⁶

⁵² *Grits, Guts, and Gusto*, p. 262.

⁵³ *Honky-tonk Town*, p.28

⁵⁴ Axline, p. 21.

⁵⁵ *Honky Tonk Town*, p.25.

⁵⁶ Axline, p. 23.

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The growth of Havre during the homestead boom required the city to make several civic improvements. Havre took their city's electricity into their own hands. In 1896, the city of Havre passed by ordinance an intent to establish an electric light, power, and steam heating plant franchised for 15 years to John F. Cowan of Butte, but it was never brought to fruition. A 1901 ordinance to construct a water system and electric plant was awarded on November of 1902 to Eric Hauser of St. Paul, Minnesota, a utility businessman with holdings all over the state Montana. He constructed a sandstone building in 30 days located across the alley and south of the Havre Hotel.

In 1906, W.H. Turner, Max Hebgen, and J.E. Davidson of Butte, purchased the company, renamed it Havre Electric Company, and doubled the capacity almost immediately. The coal burning, steam plant was abandoned in 1913 after a new transmission line was built between Great Falls and Havre. In 1914, the Havre Electric Company, later acquired by the Montana Power Company (MPC), announced they would construct a modern building at 321 Second Street (24HL1304). In 1915, MPC constructed a 30-by-80-foot building adjoining the Clack Building to the east. The building housed the company offices, phone exchange, and power equipment from the old stone building. A *Havre Daily News* article on May 8, 1915 stated, "...the building will be one of the best for its purpose to be found in the entire state." The original steam plant located in the stone structure was abandoned in 1918. In 1929, a warehouse was added to the Second Street address, and MPC remained at the location until approximately 1979. The Elks Lodge moved into this building in 1980 and continues to meet there.

In 1911, the city installed an electric light system on the city's main streets. The one hundred and fourteen tungsten lights were some of the finest in the state. Three years later more efficient lights replaced them. The Ken-Wright Hills and the Lucke-Taylor additions to the south of Havre lead to the expansion of the city's water works. The city extended the water mains into these two additions in 1916. The city also constructed a bridge on Tenth Street crossing Bull Hook Creek.

The city also made smaller scale improvements to the appearance of the city. The city undertook a plan to landscape, sidewalk and boulevard the town's avenues. They also sponsored days to clean up and beautify the city. The town could boast that it had poured over \$100,000 into civic improvements in the year 1914.

World War I & Beyond

The 1914 outbreak of World War in Europe provided new economic opportunities and markets for the extraordinary agricultural output of northcentral Montana. Supported by sustained, above average rainfall and a boom in agricultural prices, Havre area farmers provided wheat and horses to America's allies, through the United States had not yet entered the war.

However, the prosperous years across the Hi-Line ended abruptly in 1917 when a series of events shook the local landscape. First and most serious for Montana agricultural regions was the beginning of years of severe drought, which compounded the problems of soil erosion and insect infestation. Deteriorating agricultural conditions dramatically affected local and state populations, as did the draft or enlistment of large numbers of young Montana males following the nation's entry into World War I in 1916. Per capita, Montana sent more men to fight in Europe, with over 88,000 members registered for the draft. By December 1917, over 14,000 Montanans were in uniform.

Further, the worldwide Spanish Flu epidemic began to tighten its grip on the United States in 1918. Servicemen returning to the United States brought back the highly contagious and often deadly strain of influenza. In October 1918, the *Havre Plaindealer* reported that there were between 20 and 30 known flu cases in Havre. In response, the City Council sought to contain the growing epidemic by closing all churches and schools, and suspending all public meetings. Soldiers passing through Havre were ordered to stay on their trains. Finally, after two months' quarantine, the City Health Officer lifted the ban on public gatherings.

However, local citizens had little time to celebrate together, as the federal Volstead Act, better known as Prohibition, was ratified in January of 1919. Given Havre's close proximity to Canada and the thin population along the Hi-Line, liquor smuggling and bootlegging became a profitable business for some locals. In Havre, Prohibition meant the closure or "modification" of many saloons

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and use of Havre's extensive steam tunnel system for smuggling. Havre's 1910 Sanborn Map shows eight saloons alone on the two First Street blocks between First and Third Avenues. By 1920, many of those building's housed new business's, while the saloon's that remained were now described on map as selling "soft drinks."⁵⁷ One historian notes that while soft drinks may have been sold at the front of the establishments, beer and liquor was being "quietly dispensed" at the rear of the building.⁵⁸

By 1919, severe drought had taken its toll on the eastern two-third of Montana. The boom in agricultural prices had turned to bust, with wheat prices having dropped by 40% per bushel by the early 1920s from its prewar high. Between 1920 and 1925, over 11,000 farms comprising two million acres throughout Montana ceased agricultural production. Notices of foreclosure began to appear in the *Havre Plaindealer*. Banking during the boom years had been extremely lucrative, but banks suffered as prices collapsed. The migration of people from Havre and the surrounding farming and ranching region combined with drought and the inability for locals to repay loans caused the closure of two local banks, the Farmer's State Bank of Havre and the Security State Bank. With the collapse of the Security State Bank in 1924, the bank's former board of directors formed the Havre Welfare Club to help restore consumer confidence in the community. No doubt friends and neighbors to those who lost savings when the bank closed, the club sought to provide aid to former depositors, distributing food and other goods during the 1924 holiday season. In 1927, the local Home Builder's Investment Company closed its doors and reorganized as the Havre Building and Loan Association. The group had clearly learned its lessons over the past decade, as it limited its loans to property located within city limits.⁵⁹

Significantly, the Great Northern, which had brought so many new settlers to Havre and the Hi-Line and which now relied on transporting local grain production to markets, also faced considerable financial peril during the early-1920s. In 1921, the Great Northern sought a return to solvency by reintroducing the lower homesteader rates of the previous decade in hopes of increasing traffic, but what the railroad failed to understand was that homesteaders no longer sought the increasingly arid Hi-Line and that the effect if the ongoing drought on immigration was insurmountable. In December 1921, the railroad laid off 300 Havre area employees, and in 1922 another 210 employees were laid off for two months. That summer, GN employees struck for higher wages, and scab workers replaced them just a few days later.

While Havre experienced a significant building boom between 1913 and 1916, the next thirteen years saw a dramatic downturn in the number of new commercial buildings constructed in Havre's commercial core. In 1917, the City Engineer issued 160 building permits for nearly \$500,000 worth of new commercial construction. But by the following year, the number of permits issued had declined significantly, to only 68 for a total of \$129,691 worth of new construction. A decline in residential construction mirrored these commercial construction trends. During the boom years, 111 new homes were built in Havre between 1913 and 1917. Only 105 more built in the eleven years between 1918 and 1929. The downward trend continued until 1925, when Havre, like the rest of Montana, slowly began to shake of the more serious effects of the rural depression.

One of the few downtown buildings constructed during this period was the 1920 Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall at 230 Fourth Avenue (24HL1312), as fraternal organization continued to play an important role in the social aspects of the community, and member often helped keep each other afloat in trying economic times. As noted above, utilities improvements also continued through the 1920s, and the Telephone Building (now Koepke Certified Accountants) was completed in 1922.

By 1925, Havre began to emerge from its economic and agricultural woes. That year, the city undertook a new round of infrastructure investment, with the installation of the city's first traffic lights at the intersection of Second Street and Third Avenue. The City also paved fourteen blocks of roadway and constructed on Second Avenue, as well as Fourth and Seventh Streets.⁶⁰ The following year, the city invested \$12,500 in a new fire alert system. The system included the establishment of a system of fire call

⁵⁷ 1920 Online Digital Map Collection for Havre, MT. Viewable at <http://sanborn.umi.com/>.

⁵⁸ Axline, p. 30.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

⁶⁰ Axline, pp. 31-32.

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boxes, which encompassed three thousand city lots. The system was organized so that no building would be more than two blocks from a call box, which connected to a firehouse switchboard.

Still, local businessmen remained confident about the future of the city. In addition to the Chamber of Commerce, members of the business community organized several auxiliary organizations designed to promote Havre commerce. The Business Women's Club and the Havre Businessmen's Association were among those founded by merchants of the era. Further, many local company's began to turn a profit as the 1920s progressed. The F.A. Buttrey Company, the H. Earl Clack Company, Hulfish Store and the Havre Commercial Company all remained successful. H Earl Clack was so successful, that he was able to spend \$60,000 to rebuild his building at 323-325 Second Street (24HL1310), after a devastating fire in 1927. He also rebuilt his grain elevators after a fire in 1931 (24HL1289). Like Clack, the owners of Valley Motors were able to take advantage of the burgeoning automobile industry to be successful, constructing their building at 115 First Street (24HL1292) in 1927, and even expanding in 1936. The Havre Natural Gas Company also fared well. In 1922, when local construction was stagnant and local newspapers were full of foreclosure notices, the Company paid its first dividend to shareholders. By 1925, the energy firm had five producing wells and had received nearly \$36,000 in revenue that year. Two years later, the Havre Natural Gas Company reduced its rates, a response to increased competition from coal producers. In 1929, the Montana Dakota Gas Company purchased the Havre Natural Gas Company and renamed it the Northwest States Utilities Company.

In 1930, Havre's population reached 6,372, an increase of nearly 1,000 new residents over the 1920s. This, despite the unpredictable and often severe economic conditions of the previous decade. Further, the state of Montana as a whole had lost over 11,000 residents over the previous decade, making Montana the single state in the union to have lost population during the 1920s. Many must have believed that the 1930s would only show continued economic improvement, as the last years of the 1920s had. However, the coming 1930s would prove disastrous for the nation, Montana, and Havre.

Montana State University ~ Northern

The 1929 authorization of \$40,000 in operating funds by the Montana State Legislature for the Northern Montana School must have seemed like a symbol of new fortunes to come for the people of Havre. The school had been created sixteen years earlier, when the State Legislature enacted a law establishing the "Northern Montana Agricultural and Manual Training School." At the same time, the State authorized the purchase of 2,000 acres of land in the Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation for use by the new school. However, despite the new law, no funding was provided to either purchase land or operate the school.⁶¹

The notion of a college or university in the Hi-Line began as early as 1905 with the rumored closing of nearby Fort Assiniboine. Havre, like many towns, benefited economically from the nearby fort, and local businessmen were no doubt worried by its pending closure. A bill to purchase Fort Assiniboine land and establish a school and agricultural experiment station was passed in 1913, but no funding was forthcoming. In 1915, only the experiment station received funding, and the new staff took residence in some of the few remaining buildings located at the now defunct fort.⁶²

By 1923, only one Fort Assiniboine building, an enlisted men's barracks, remained that could be efficiently converted to classroom use, this out of 100 original structures. In 1925, Representative Tom Troy of Havre introduced a new bill to reauthorize the Assiniboine School. With this legislation, extant Fort Assiniboine buildings would be dismantled and the materials sold to finance new college building construction. Proceeds from the sale of these materials were duly deposited with the State, though it appears that the funds were never used for the school, disappearing instead into the General Fund.

During the 1927 Legislative session, Havre area lawmakers succeeded yet again in passing new legislation related to the school. The bill which created the Northern Montana Agricultural and Manual Training School also established that the 1931

⁶¹ Louis W. and Antoinette R. Hagener, "A Northern Reflection." Northern Alumni Association. Havre: 2001, p. 146.

⁶² Ibid., p. 6.

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Legislature would allow funding for the school, allow the campus to be established in Havre, and would provide for future building maintenance as well as two years worth of funding for summer school.

However, local celebration was short-lived as Governor Ericson vetoed the bills that contained most of the funding provisions. The non-existent school was still part of the state University system, however, and retained the \$5,000 for the operation of a summer school. Still, state law required that local communities fund \$2,500 worth of summer school operating expenses. Havre businessman James Holland wrote a check for that amount, only to see the State of Montana raise the required local share from \$2,500 to \$3,600. Angry local legislators demanded that the \$5,000 originally allotted by the State Legislature for the Assiniboine School be applied to the summer program in Havre. The State Attorney General was even involved, rendering an opinion that authorized the State Board of Education to decide the matter.

The State Board failed to authorize the normal school course for Havre, and local businessmen, once again, were forced to finance the remaining \$1,100 for the summer program in Havre. Finally, after years of disappointment, the beginnings of a center higher education came to the Hi-Line.

The first summer courses began on June 23, 1927 in the Havre High School building with 117 registered students. Though the summer courses continued, and were an important first step in establishing today's University, it was not until 1929 that the Governor signed a bill authorizing \$40,000 in funding. While the University seemed safe, major legislative battles over the funding and academic direction of the school continued well into the modern era.⁶³

The Havre location for the campus was located on the southwest outskirts of town, on land originally owned by farmer Frank Brown, who operated a farm and slaughterhouse on the site. In 1918, the City purchased the acreage for use as a park and as part of an expanded municipal water supply and pump system. When the new water system failed the following year, the land sat vacant.

The initial amount of land granted by the City of Havre for the new college campus originally amounted to only 44.6 acres, compared to the 2000 acres available at the Fort Assiniboine location. The first president of the college, Dr. G.H. Vande Bogart, realized that this relatively small amount of land was insufficient to support a college campus. Vande Bogart appealed to the City Fathers, who donated another 13.5 acres to the fledgling campus.⁶⁴

The new college began classes on September 14, 1929, with an initial enrollment of 81 students. At that same time, the college began to remodel a building left behind by the city's abandoned water supply effort. Over \$13,000 was spent remodeling the pump station, and this, the first campus building, was ready for occupancy in 1932. Renamed East Hall, the brick building eventually housed the Art, Music, German, Engineering, and Mathematics Departments. By the early 1960s, structural flaws were evident in East Hall, and the college slowly began to abandon use of the building. It was demolished in 1979, though the original pump, still in the basement after several decades, was salvaged and is now located near the Automotive Mechanics Building as a monument to the college's early history.⁶⁵

Despite this important first addition to the campus, most administrative and instructional functions were held in the west wing on the high school building then located between Fourth and Fifth Avenues and Seventh and Eighth Streets. Though the wing was initially constructed for use as a middle school, the overriding need for a functioning college caused the school district to lease the space to the college. Though the use of the high school facilities was meant to be temporary, the arrangement actually lasted over 20 years, until 1952, when the remaining college functions were moved to buildings on today's campus.

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 14-15.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 30-31

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In the meantime, the campus slowly began to take shape. The second campus building is Pershing Hall, planned and built as the Great Depression first swept across the nation. Named for World War I hero General John J. Pershing, who served at Fort Assiniboine as a young Lieutenant, the new building was the vision of college president Vande Bogart and Earl Bronson, president of the Havre Chamber of Commerce, who proposed a creative construction plan. The Chamber would issue "scrip money," which was locally printed, substitute money used to pay laborers that allowed the workers to exchange them for goods at local stores. A \$600 loan taken out by the Chamber of Commerce supported the scrip. As the project progressed, unskilled labor was paid using federal relief funds. A local architect, F.F. Bossout and member of the college's Executive Board, donated his services to design the building. The state share for the construction of Pershing Hall was only \$1,000, used for the purchase of lime and cement.⁶⁶

Located at the center of campus and designed by Bossout with thorough consideration of the landscape, broader campus plan and limited availability of materials, the 100' by 80' brick Pershing Hall building was constructed with materials salvaged from Fort Assiniboine. Construction began in February 1933 when 200,000 bricks were trucked from the abandoned fort to the campus. When funding sources seemingly evaporated in September 1933, college students held a parade and fundraiser that collected more than \$1,300 and which allowed construction to continue. By January 1934, Pershing Hall was completely occupied and the first commencement ceremony was held that spring on the stage at the rear of the building.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal provided the funding for the construction of the third and fourth buildings constructed on the Northern campus. The third campus building was completed at the height of the Depression. Originally a dormitory for female students, today's Donaldson Hall was funded by the Public Works Administration (WPA) loan. Completed in 1936 at a cost of \$178,398.08, the building is actually the first completely "new" building constructed on campus, providing accommodations for 116 young women. Then, in 1941, the WPA funded the relocation and remodeling of the Men's Co-op. The basic frame building, first located west of Havre and used as the Hill County Poor Farm, was purchased using \$2,000.00 of Chamber of Commerce funds. New Deal money was used to move the building to the campus, where a lower floor and extended wing were added.⁶⁷

While the original Men's Co-op was demolished in 1968, other World War II-era buildings live on. The 1945 Art Deco Style Industrial Arts building functions today as it did after construction. And the following year, thirty-three World War II barracks were moved from Gore Field in Great Falls to a location on the eastern side of the campus. These simple residential units helped meet the need for new student and faculty housing created when World War II ended and large numbers of veterans returned to campus' around the country using the G.I Bill. Collectively referred to as "Vets Housing" (though referred to by residents as "Upper and Lower Slobovia) and originally intended as temporarily solutions to the campus housing crisis, the barracks were used as housing for over twenty years. Constructed without foundations and with little insulation, the units were no longer in use by the 1960s, though several were sold and moved to Beaver Creek County Park for use as summer cabins.⁶⁸

1947 saw the beginnings of new additions to the Northern campus. Prior to the outbreak of World War II, the state legislature had approved construction bonds for use on campuses statewide. Unused during the war, those bonds by 1947 were valued at \$4,500,000, and lawmakers and campus communities statewide began a battle over how those funds would be distributed. By the end of the 1947 legislative session, Northern was allocated \$400,000 for new construction and \$33,480 for maintenance. This disappointing level of funding meant changes for the proposed Cowan Hall. Named for former Montana State Senator William T. Cowan, the brick building was planned as a four-story Gothic Style building intended to house the library, administrative offices, a gymnasium, and a host of academic departments. Instead, the building was redesigned to meet the funding restrictions.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 31-33

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 39-41

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While construction began in the summer of 1947, the project slowly continued until money ran out in 1949. Work did not resume for two years. The building was not weatherproofed during that time and moisture took its toll until construction was resumed. Finally dedicated in 1953 and today an imposing landmark on the Northern campus, the building cost in excess of \$1.3 million and was still incomplete at the time of the dedication.⁷⁰

Havre in the Great Depression

The October 1929 Wall Street crash is generally heralded as the beginning of the Great Depression. However, rural America had been teetering on the edge of depression since the first drought year of 1917, with only a few years of mild economic recovery in the years following World War I. And as with 1917, 1929 saw the start of a new drought cycle. By 1931, for example, over half of the counties in Montana appealed to the Red Cross for aid. Prices continued to plunge—Montana wheat worth \$100 in 1920 was worth about \$19.00 in 1932.⁷¹

By the 1932 elections, Americans had grown weary of the laissez-faire attitude of the Herbert Hoover Administration, and the reform-minded administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt swept into the White House. Roosevelt introduced Americans to his “New Deal,” an immense package of banking and labor reforms, new federal agencies, and increased federal spending so staggering in scope that it forever altered the relationship between the federal government and its citizens. With a national unemployment rate at 25%, the New Deal was designed to return Americans to work and to provide relief to the poor. Between 1933 and 1939, the Administration spent nearly \$382 million on federal relief projects.

In Montana, the New Deal brought relief to the state in the form of various projects and agencies. The economic crisis hit the state hard, as mining and logging came to a standstill, and the collapse in agricultural prices compounded the misery. As a response, the federal government sent over \$523 million to the state, making Montana the nation’s second most subsidized state in the country. The money arrived through payments to farmers; construction projects such as the massive Fort Peck Dam, which in 1936 employed more than 10,000 people; rural electrification loans to farmers’ cooperatives; loans; and direct relief. As the 1920s, Montana experienced a net loss of working farms during the 1930s, declining by nearly 6,000 over the decade. According to one prominent historian, federal jobs programs provided income to a quarter of Montana households by 1935.⁷²

In Havre, the New Deal’s National Relief Agency put seventy people to work locally, though residential and commercial construction nearly came to a complete standstill. Only 31 new homes were built in Havre during the entire 1930s, and in 1934, no new homes were built. Still, local newspapers sought to shore up confidence, with the *Hill County Journal* editorializing in 1931 that

Havre is still able to keep her head up and smile, while the rest of the country is in gloom, is best told by the way that saws and hammers have been pounding away for the last month....[T]o say that Havre is backward is out of the question. The people of the town are up and coming and are prepared to show the outside world that conditions in Havre are on the upward climb.⁷³

In 1933, the Chamber of Commerce undertook a campaign to bring a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp to Beaver Creek, located fifteen miles south of town. The CCC was a prominent New Deal initiative that had a resounding impact on the American landscape. Nationally, CCC work projects included conservation, disaster relief, historic restoration, construction, and national defense. In April 1935, Company 501, the Beaver Creek Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, was established.⁷⁴ The camp

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

⁷¹ Axline, p. 36.

⁷² Malone, Roeder and Lang, *Montana, A History of Two Centuries*, pp. 296-297.

⁷³ Axline, p. 31.

⁷⁴ James F. Justin, Civilian Conservation Corps Museum. Online resource viewable at <http://www.geocities.com/ccchistory/>.

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was designated a "Sp," camp meaning that these enrollees maintained state parks under the guidance of the National Park Service.⁷⁵ Across America, the number of CCC work camps related to parks rose from 70 in 1933 to a peak of 115 in 1935 and during the peak years, as many as 150,000 CCC enrollees worked in National Park Service-related programs. Remains of the Beaver Creek camp still exist as part of the Boy Scout Camp, and the park is known today as Beaver Creek County Park.

During this era, people began to leave the country for life in nearby towns. Between 1930s and 1940, Havre enjoyed a slight growth in population, but from 1940 to 1950, the city grew at a much greater rate, adding nearly 1,600 people.⁷⁶

State and federal governments also instituted a variety of programs aimed at rural recovery. Local irrigation projects sought to stabilize water supplies and in 1937, the New Deal agency Farm Security Administration began the Northern Montana Land Use and Resettlement Project, organized to rehabilitate the land. Further, New Deal federal Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Project Administration (WPA) provided employment for the desperate worker.

Overall, the Great Depression capped an already devastating economic era in rural Montana. Commercial development essentially ceased during the 1930s, commensurate with the national crisis. New Deal programs and the halting establishment of MSU Northern aided the Havre community through the troublesome decade, though the lack of meaningful construction in Havre's commercial core only continued as World War II loomed. Wartime rationing and the scarcity of materials and manpower only exacerbated the difficult situation through the early 1940s. Natural disasters also beset the community, such as the 1938 fire that nearly destroyed the Havre Commercial Company. Fortunately, local shoe store owner Aaron Praude was able to build upon the foundations of the HCC at 201 Third Avenue and construct a multi-storefront building and annex in its place (24HL1308 and 24HL1309).

Post World War II Recovery

Montana agriculture experienced a revival at the onset of the war, aided by abundant rainfall and tremendous demand. 1942 saw the highest yields since World War I, and 1943 was the most profitable year ever enjoyed by Montana farmers, with a combined crop value of \$188 million dollars. Soaring demand for minerals revived the mining industry, and the lumber industry experienced a similar recovery. The railroad industry rebounded as well, and the switch to diesel engines required new infrastructure in Havre, including the 1945 Great Northern Diesel Shop (24HL1290). Emphasis on passenger rail and the need for expanded office space resulted in the Great Northern's major remodel of their depot in 1949 (24HL1288).

The optimism and relative prosperity resulted in a new vibrancy in Havre, with refreshed, more modern storefronts announcing the modern age and better economic times. Modern buildings such as the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Building at 200 Fifth Avenue (24HL1314) are representative of these commercial trends. While commercial development rose through much of the 1950s, Havre did not thrive. Though agriculture fared better through the 1950s than it had in the 1920s and 1930s, there were several hard years to be endured. By the 1960s, the railroad found itself competing with the trucking industry, becoming more dependent on passenger service, and requiring fewer employees.

The arrival of World War II brought economic recovery to Montana, though the rural population never reached the density of the Golden Age of the early century. Since that time, small-scale farming operations around Havre have been generally eliminated by larger farm acreages, and the demographic trend from the country to the city has accelerated. Havre-area farmers have overwhelmingly mechanized their operations in response to technological innovations and market demands. Further, agricultural production has become less diverse, with most farms and ranches concentrating on hay production and cattle, with some wheat production in valley bottoms—a small repetition of early historic wheat production practices. Although agriculture is the undisputed

⁷⁵ Colorado State Archives, Civilian Conservation Corps Collection. Online resource viewable at http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/ccc/mesa_ccc.htm.

⁷⁶ Online U.S. Census Data. Viewable at <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/23761117v1ch07.pdf>.

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financial mainstay in the area, the Havre area economy is diversified with hospital and health services, education, professional and retail business, manufacturing, and railroad industries.

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Associated Property Types

- I. *Name of Property Type:* Commercial Buildings in Havre
- II. *Description:*

This property type includes buildings associated with the context of commercial development in Havre between 1889 and 1959. The commercial properties encompass a range of functions and uses, including business blocks with retail stores and professional offices, single-story storefronts, storefronts with first floor retail space and upper-story hotels and/or apartments, fraternal halls with quasi-commercial functions or uses, department stores, automobile-related buildings, hotels and apartments, railroad-related buildings and structures, and warehouses.

The locational patterns of property types related to Havre's commercial development are largely confined to the area south of the railroad tracks, between Front and Fifth Streets and First and Sixth Avenues. Though many commercial buildings and structures within the area are not longer extant, those that remain are basically in good condition, though they have experienced various degrees of alteration, both within and after the period of significance. The historic commercial buildings in Havre were constructed over a sixty-year period and represent a chronological sampling of building types, styles, construction techniques, materials, and aesthetic qualities.

Prior to the Fire of 1904, Havre's commercial area consisted largely of one-story frame buildings that lined First Street and Third Avenue. Commercial building plans generally were a product of lot size, which, in commercial blocks, was long and narrow due to premium placed on street frontage. The storefronts featured large glass plate windows that often filled the elevation, recessed entrances with transoms, and modest clapboard parapets that featured unadorned cornices and large painted signboards. One of the most substantial buildings, the wood-frame, multi-story Windsor Hotel, burned down in 1898. The 1904 fire was even more devastating along First Street, sparing only the Security State Bank Building on the south side of the 300 block. That bank building and the Brainerd Grady Building at 224-228 Fourth Avenue are the only extant buildings in the building study that predate the fire, and both are of masonry construction. Following the fire, new construction in the commercial area was limited to fire-resistant masonry buildings.

As the downtown quickly began to recover in the Spring of 1904, new buildings tended to be larger and more substantial, featuring brick exterior walls, more decorative facades, larger footprints, and more than one story. Nearly all the buildings constructed during this period, between 1904 and 1920, were predominantly Western Commercial-style two-part business blocks, with retail storefronts at the street level, often highlighted by large display windows, recessed entries, and pressed iron or other decorative fronts, with professional or residential spaces above. Influences of other styles, particularly Neoclassical Revival elements, tile highlights, and/or decorative brickwork, are also present. An exception to this is the Havre Laundry, a one-story stucco building constructed in 1904 and displaying Mission-style influences.

The economic downturn associated with the collapse of agriculture and bank failures of late 1910s and 1920s resulted in a significant slowdown in construction activities through that period. Buildings surveyed that date to the 1920s generally follow the same design trends of the previous decade, and include the 1927 Valley Motors at 115 First Street, the Clack Building at 120-140 Fourth Avenue which was reconstructed after a fire in 1927, and the 1920 Neoclassical Revival IOOF Hall at 230-234 Fourth Avenue. The 1922 Telephone Building at 317 Second Street displays a more streamlined design than the other 1920s-era buildings, and subtly reflects the Art Deco influences of the period.

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The dearth of building activity in Havre's commercial area continued through the early and mid-1930s. H. Earl Clack, the automotive and oil supply entrepreneur, rebuilt his grain elevators after a fire in 1931. Valley Motors, relatively successful in association with the burgeoning automobile market, expanded their 1927-era building in 1936 to include a showroom and offices that fronts First Street. This addition melds architecturally with the earlier commercial properties, however, with a decidedly Western Commercial design. By the early 1940s, Havre and the rest of the nation began to emerge from the Depression and gear up for a wartime economy. Rationing and shortages in materials restricted new construction. However, in 1941, the "Havre Cyclone" destroyed the Havre Commercial Company on Third Street, and the property was rebuilt that year. The resulting building is clearly of mid-century modern design, with metal awnings, a sleek, unadorned exterior, asymmetrical proportions, and aluminum-framed ribbons of display windows.

After the war, as the local economy began to improve, several storefronts were remodeled to have a more modern appearance. Aluminum-framed windows and doors and smooth exterior finishes were often used, and many of the buildings studied in the Havre downtown still display this important design trend that coincided with an upswing in consumerism and general economic expansion. The improvement of the railroad facilities, including a new diesel machine shop in 1945 and major renovation of the depot in 1949, reflected this expansion. Both projects used traditional brick construction, and blend in well with the earlier buildings in the area, but are clearly more modern in design. The 1959 Mountain States Telephone Building is the most striking example of modern design trends in the study area. Stacked brick detailing, aluminum industrial sash windows, horizontal emphasis with multicolored banding combine in this excellent local example of modern construction techniques.

III. Statement of Significance

The property type of commercial buildings in Havre clearly relates to the historic context of commercial development in Havre 1889-1959. They are a selective representation of the long-term developments that occurred in Havre through the mid-twentieth century. These buildings convey the pattern of growth from a small tent city to a regional railroad and commercial center. Few buildings in the study are survived the devastating fire of 1904, and most were constructed in the years immediately following that event, reflecting the resilience of the community as well as the overall expansion of agricultural activity, influx of homesteaders, and expansion of the Great Northern Railroad. The establishment of Hill County and its associated courthouse and other government buildings further consolidated the community. The residential units, hotel rooms, and professional offices located above the numerous storefronts in the core commercial area convey the nature of the population through the first decade of the twentieth century as railroad workers, land and real estate agents, attorneys, bankers, and other professionals and businessmen rode the wave of economic prosperity. After droughts and depression deflated the regional economy in the late 1910s and 1920s, commercial development was limited to reconstruction after catastrophic events, such as fires and natural disasters, or were related to the burgeoning automobile industry and its corresponding oil and natural gas development. Only after World War II did the overall commercial activity in Havre begin to revive. Modern design trends in the railroad buildings and utility services, combined with modern finishes and storefront remodels are reflective of this trend. Clearly, the built environment in the building study area of Havre's commercial district accurately conveys the history of commercial development from the community's founding the late 1880s through the post-War economic upswing of the late 1940s and 1950s. For these reasons, those buildings retaining historic and architectural integrity from that era are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

IV. Registration Requirements

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Commercial Buildings in Havre generally have to be evaluated as representative examples illustrative of the commercial development of the community corresponding to their date of construction and/or reconstruction or remodel. The design and construction techniques inherent in the building's appearance should be reflective of the trends spanning the 1889-1959 period.

Generally speaking, to qualify for independent listing in the National Register of Historic Places, commercial buildings must be sufficiently documented to demonstrate that they clearly represent the historic context discussed in this Multiple Properties Documentation form and possess sufficient integrity to be recognizable as good examples of their property type.

Setting and Location: Commercial buildings must possess integrity of location to help mark the extent of the historic downtown. Evaluation of integrity of setting must be made with the recognition that, in many cases, adjacent historic buildings have been demolished or significantly remodeled, to the point of adversely affecting the setting of the buildings being evaluated.

Design, Materials, and Workmanship: Several buildings that possess the best integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There are few remaining examples of commercial buildings in the study area free from some form of exterior and/or interior alteration. If buildings clearly meet the basic data and informational requirements identified with the context and property type discussed above, some degree of remodeling on the first floor and at the rear of the building is acceptable for listing of a property in the National Register. Upper floor integrity should be more intact in terms of design, materials and workmanship. First floor remodels are generally façade changes and are usually acceptable for two-story or higher buildings if the majority of design features and materials on the upper floors remain identifiable and relatively intact. It is preferable that the preservation of the upper portion of the building be complete, including original openings and banding patterns. First floor remodeling can further be considered mitigated on larger commercial buildings of more than two stories where the scale of the upper portion of the building tends to reduce the comparative size and impact of the first floor. Good integrity of the rear or sides of the building, where visible, also tends to reduce the adverse impact of the loss of some integrity on other portions of the building.

Evidence of historic craftsmanship and workmanship should exist on the facades of commercial buildings. Greater latitude is permissible where buildings are the sole or one of the few representative examples of a particular historical association.

Feeling and Association: Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are necessary in order for commercial buildings to evoke a sense of a historic time period, especially in light of the general loss of integrity of the study area as a historic district. Integrity of feeling and association is bolstered by the presence of historic signs and other features evocative of the period.

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Geographic Information:

The geographic area covered by this Multiple Properties listing is limited to approximately twelve blocks in the commercial and railroad area of the City of Havre. For the purposes of the building study, the area was divided into three distinct portions. Area A consists of the east third of the north and south sides of the 10s blocks of Main and First Streets, as well as the north side of the 10s block of Second Street. It also includes the four full city blocks between Main and Second Streets and First and Third Avenues, and the north side of Main Street between First and Third Avenues, extending to the railroad tracks. Area B includes the six full city blocks between Main and Third Streets and Third and Fifth Avenues. Area C is located area north of First Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. See attached maps.

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The Havre Preservation Commission [HPC] and the Montana Preservation Alliance [MPA] worked together to research and document the community's origins as a railroad town and hub of commerce along the Great Northern Railway. Work commenced in three phases.

PHASE 1: MPA and HPC cooperated to conduct a historic building study of twenty-seven select commercial buildings within the downtown and railroad area, and make those findings available to the public. Local survey of these buildings created the framework for an overview of prominent historic properties in the study area. From this information, the groups identified properties of outstanding historic or architectural attributes, and broaden understanding of how Havre evolved.

MPA met with HPC to plan the study and methodology for HPC and public-led research. This research included both secondary sources, such as county histories, city histories, and statewide contexts as well as other resources including Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, city directories, newspaper reviews, photo archives, courthouse research and vertical files. With this information, MPA and HPC presented the project to Havre's City Commission. MPA reviewed and recommended buildings for the study, in consultation with HPC. Together, the groups created a database and electronic survey form. They conducted background research and compiled existing documentation on buildings in the study group. MPA then photographed the study buildings and input known information and data onto the survey forms. This information and data was then provided to HPC.

PHASE 2: Local survey data of the twenty-seven historic properties in the study area were incorporated into a contextual overview that outlines background and development history of Havre's downtown and railroad district. With completed survey research and other information provided from the HPC study, MPA finalized inventory forms. MPA then synthesized and wrote the narrative for contexts on Havre's historic downtown and Great Northern railroad area, and the historical patterns and events that shaped their development. With this information in hand, MPA then recommended properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

PHASE 3: Using the building study data, MPA formulated a Multiple Properties Document for the study area that identified historic contexts, significance, property types and recommendations for listing properties in the National Register of Historic Places. The final phase of the project resulted in the creation of this Multiple Properties Document to support nomination of historic properties in the study group to the National Register.

Work Standards:

All work performed by MPA was consistent with the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation", and the Standards for Identification and Evaluation (Federal Register, September 29, 1983). All work was conducted by professionals whose qualifications meet the Secretary of the Interior's "Professional Qualifications Standards" (36 CFR 61, Appendix A). In addition, all work submitted conforms to the recording and cataloging standards specified in the Montana State Historic Preservation Office *Consulting with the Montana SHPO* manual.

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The Havre Plaindealer
The Havre Promoter
The Havre Daily Promoter

Courthouse Records

Grantor-Grantee Books, Clerk and Recorder's Office, Hill County Courthouse, Havre, MT.
Tax Assessor's Records, Hill County Courthouse, Havre, MT.

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Photo Collections:

Havre-Hill County Library Photo Archives

Havre Chamber of Commerce.

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Historic Photographs

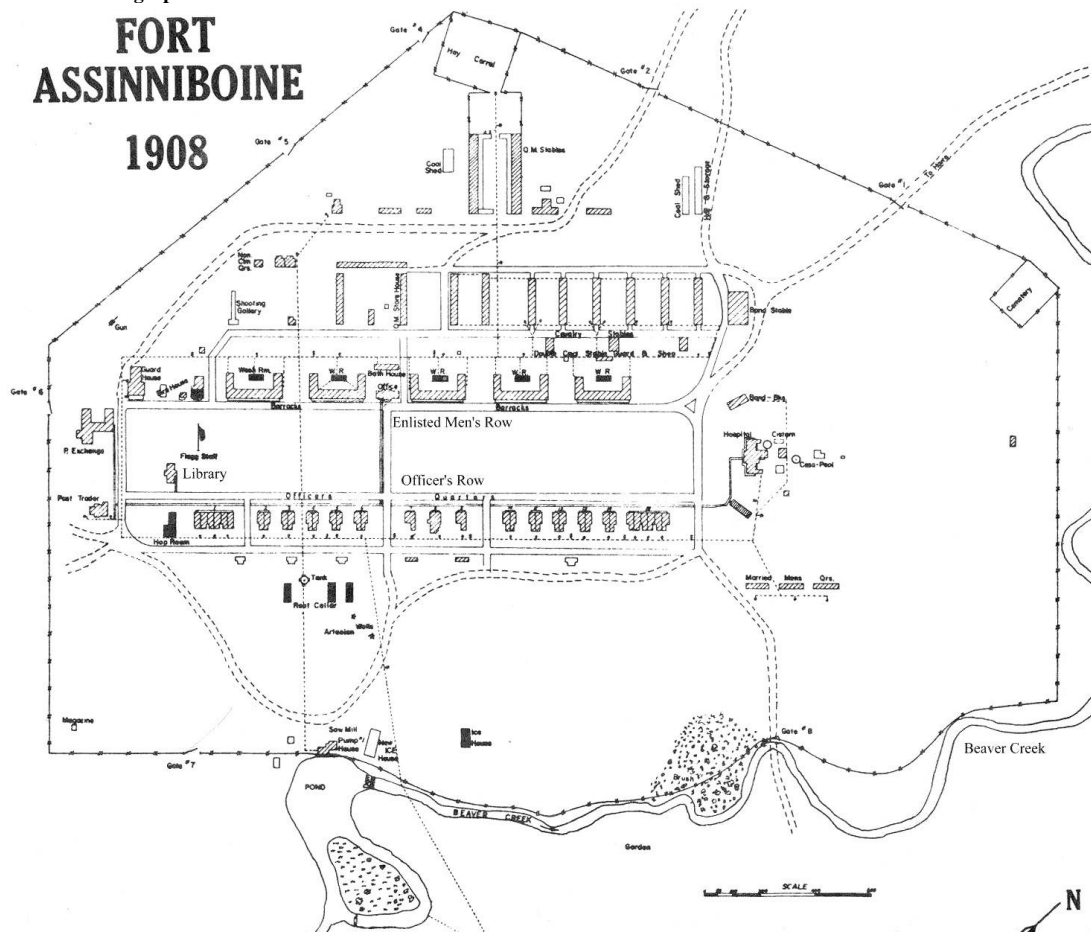


Photo #1: Map of Fort Assiniboine, 1908.

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Photo #2: Exor Pepin, nephew of Simon Pepin, had this homestead shack only five blocks from the railroad depot. The log cabin stood as a reminder of the significance of the family to the founding of Havre. Photo courtesy of the Havre Chamber of Commerce.



Photo #3: One of the original homesteaders of the Havre Townsite, Gus Decelles was instrumental to the founding of the town. His log barn stood south of the commercial area, on First Avenue between Fourth and Fifth Streets, as shown in this November 10, 1918 photo. Photo courtesy of the Havre Chamber of Commerce.

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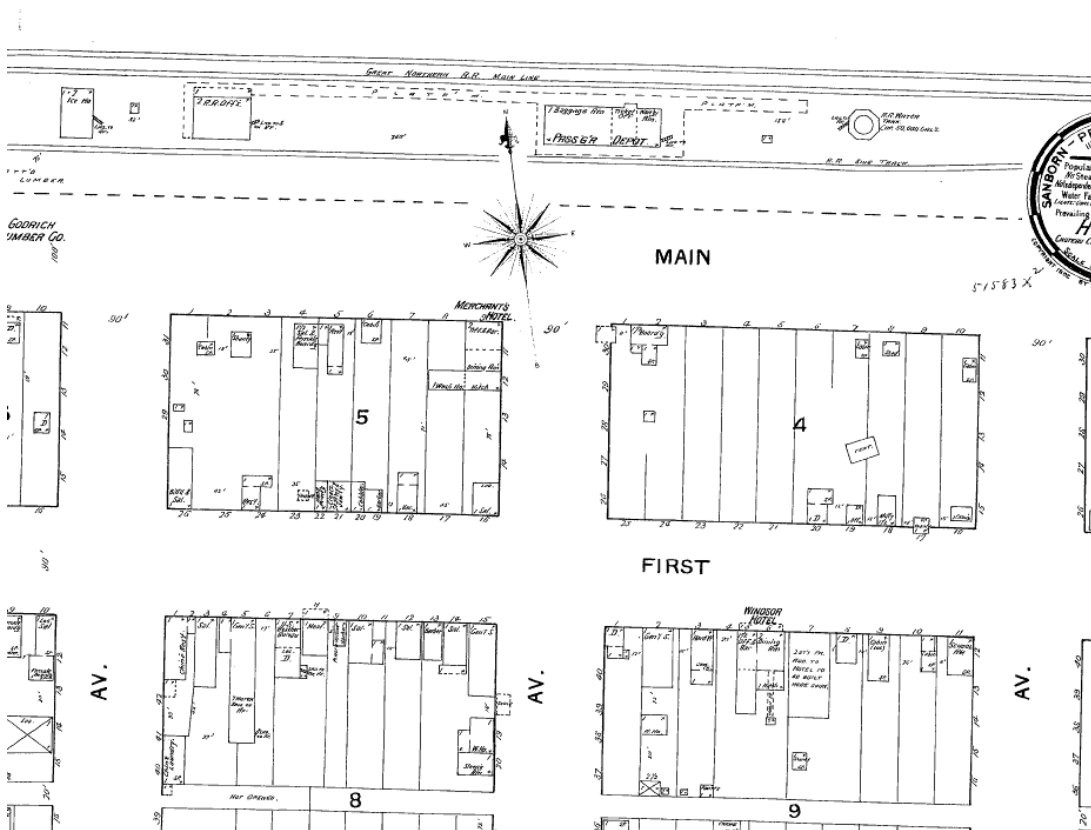


Photo #4: Detail of 1892 Havre Sanborn Map. At this time, the south side of First Street was lined primarily with one-store frame buildings. The Windsor Hotel, at the center of First Street's 300 block, was the most substantial building in the commercial area. The hotel burned down in 1898.

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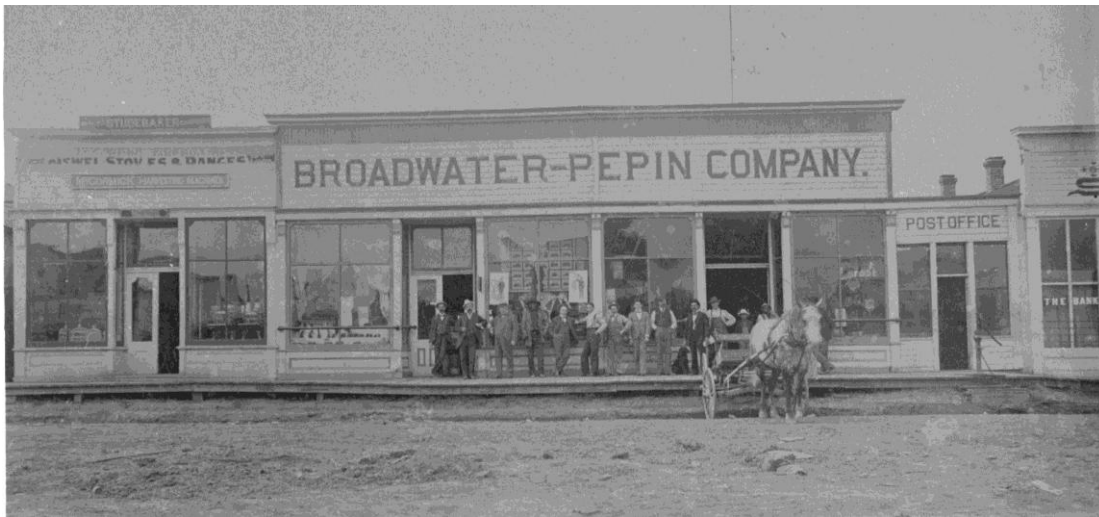


Photo #5: The Broadwater-Pepin Company on the south side of First Street, between Second and Third Avenues, c. 1890s. Photo courtesy of the Havre Chamber of Commerce.



Photo #6: Alice "Ma" Plaz's Home Café was an institution in Havre for many years. Photo courtesy of the Havre Chamber of Commerce.

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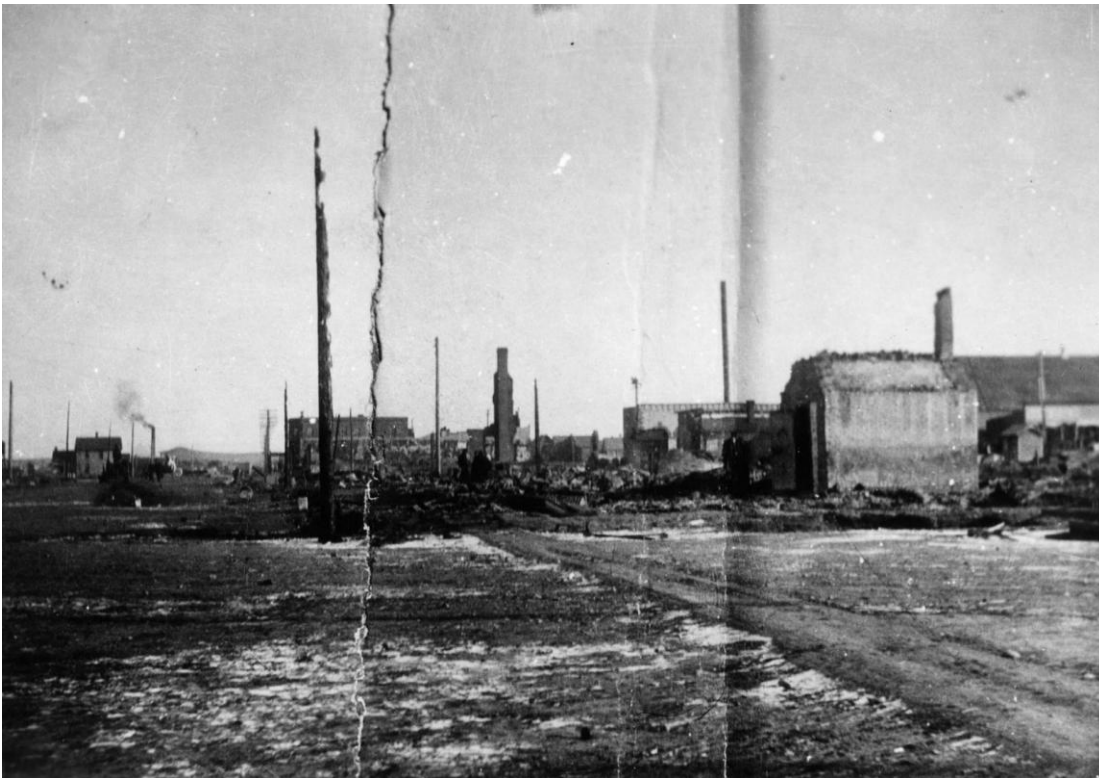


Photo #7: The January 1904 fire leveled Havre's burgeoning commercial area as the wood-frame buildings were engulfed by flames spurred on by high winds. Photo courtesy of the Havre Chamber of Commerce.

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Photo #8: Undated view of Third Street, looking north to the depot. Note Buttre's store to the left (west) and Stringfellow's Havre Commercial Company to the right (east). Photo courtesy of the Havre Chamber of Commerce.

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*Photo #9: Joseph Gussenhoven, Sr., 1869-1955. Photo credit:
<http://www.webbblue.havre.k12.mt.us/Teacher/havre/magera/gussenhoven.html>.*

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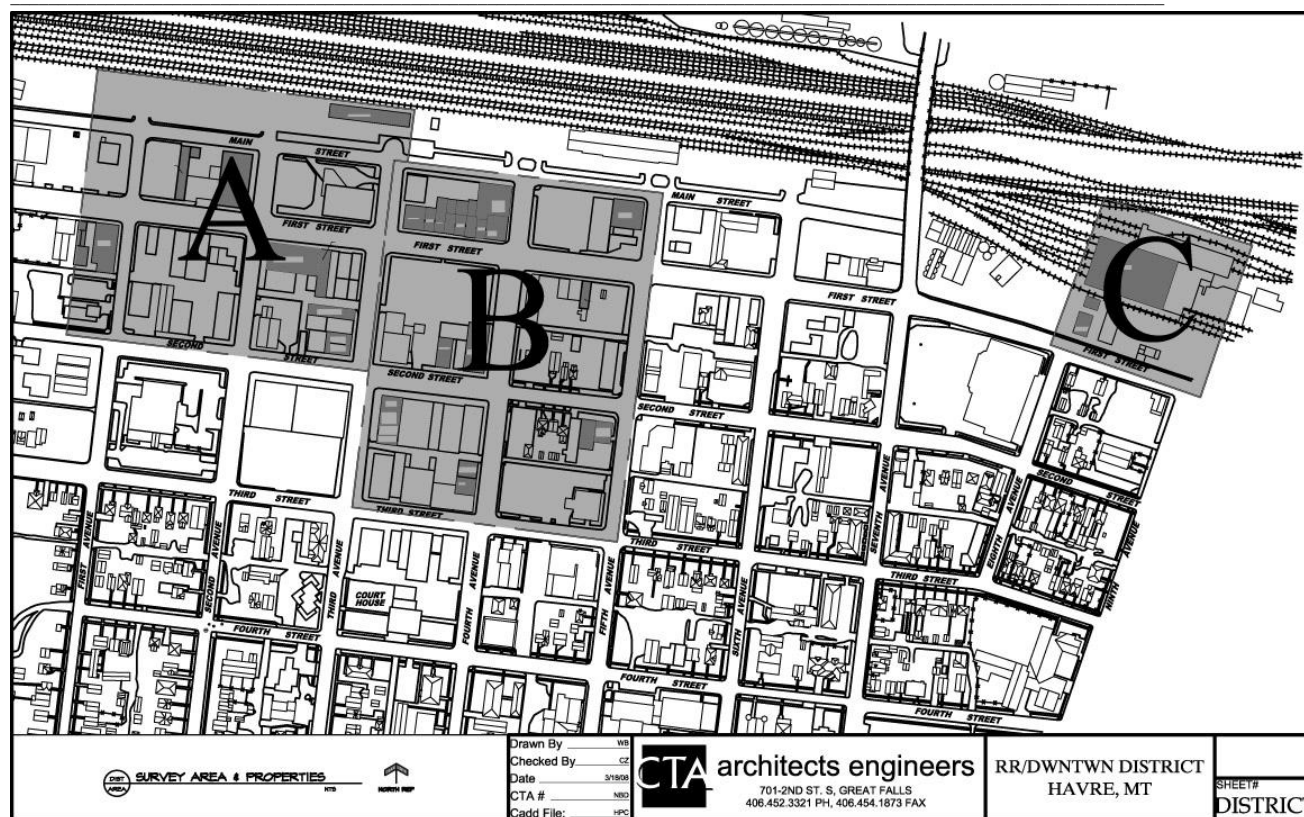
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Building Study Area A



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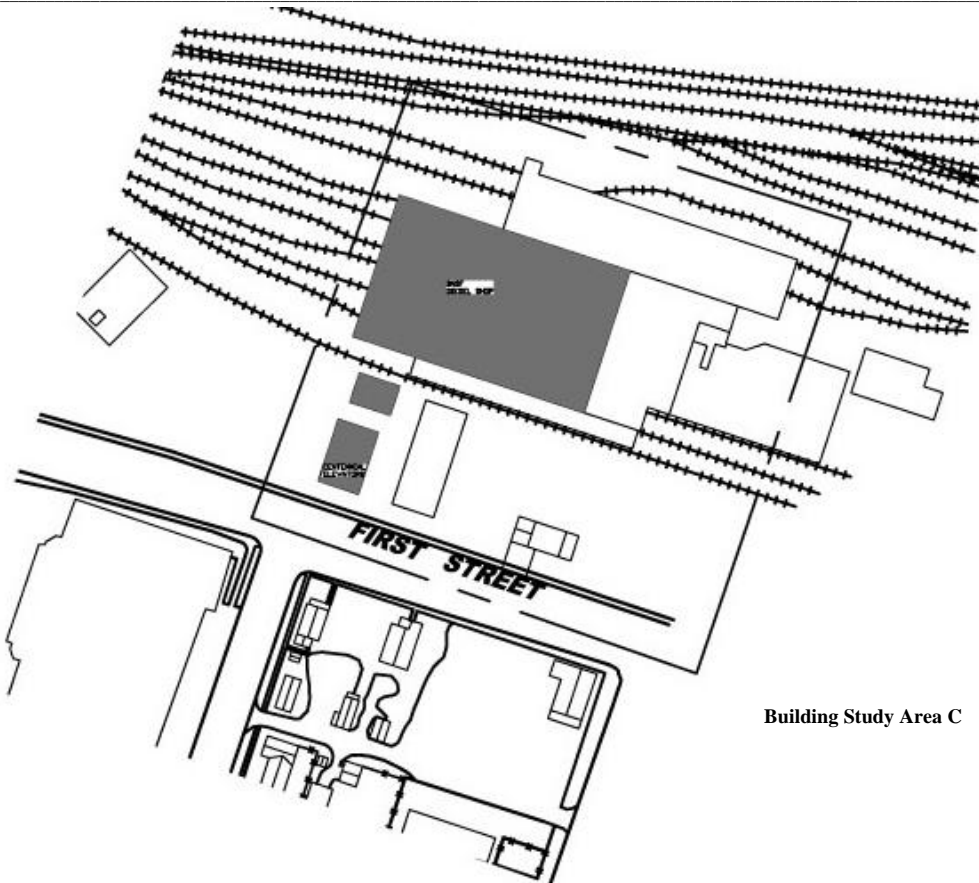
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Building Study Area C