MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **935 N. 31st Street** Historic Address (if applicable): City/Town: **Billings, MT 59101**	Site Number: **24YL2408** (An historic district number may also apply.) County: **Yellowstone**
Historic Name: **935 N. 31st Street; T.C. Molesworth Residence** Original Owner(s): **Rebecca McCracken** Current Ownership ☒ Private ☐ Public Current Property Name: **935 N. 31st Street** Owner(s): **Maurice R. Jr. & Darlene M. Holmes** Owner Address: **935 N. 31st Street** **Billings, MT 59101** Phone:	Legal Location PM: **Montana** Township: **1.0N** Range: **26.0E** **SW** ¼ **NW** ¼ **SE** ¼ of Section: **32** Lot(s): **31-32** Block(s): **8** Addition: **North Elevation Subdivision 1st filing** Year of Addition: **1905** USGS Quad Name: **Billings West** Year: **1975**
Historic Use: **Residential** Current Use: **Residential** Construction Date: **1916** ☐ Estimated ☒ Actual ☒ Original Location ☐ Moved Date Moved:	UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov/topofinder2 ☒ NAD 27 (**preferred**) ☐ NAD 83 Zone: **12** Easting: **693008.2** Northing: **5073535.95**
National Register of Historic Places NRHP Listing Date: Historic District: NRHP Eligible: ☐ Yes ☐ No	Date of this document: **9/1/2015** Form Prepared by: **Western Heritage Center (contact: Kevin Kooistra)** Address: **2822 Montana Avenue, Billings, MT 59101** Daytime Phone: **406-256-6809**
MT SHPO USE ONLY Eligible for NRHP: □ yes □ no Criteria: □ A □ B □ C □ D Date: Evaluator:	Comments:

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:
NRHP Eligibility: ☐ Yes ☐ No Individually Contributing to Historic District Noncontributing to Historic District
NRHP Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
Area of Significance: **North Elevation Historic District** Period of Significance: 1905-1945

Property Name: 935 N. 31st Street Smithsonian Number:

Architectural Style: **Craftsman** If other, specify:
Property Type: **Domestic** Specific Property Type: **Single Family Residence**

Architect: **Unknown** Architectural Firm/City/State: **Unknown**
Builder/Contractor: **Goddald and Fulmen** Company/City/State: **Unknown**
Source of Information: **Yellowstone County Deed Records**

Architectural Description

This one and one-half story Craftsman home features a front gabled roof and sits upon a concrete foundation. The home's siding is large horizontal wood siding. The front façade has five false triangular knee braces and exposed rafters are seen on the north and south sides of the home. The attic slide windows located in the center of the gable above the porch, are not original, but keep with the overall Craftsman theme. The porch and entryway are now enclosed by screens, but appear to have been originally open. They fill the gap between the stone porch railing and gabled roof overhang. Although the screens are not an original feature of the home, they do not interfere with the home's integrity. The screen door and steps up to the porch are offset to the north side. Columns act as the porch's edges, reaching from the railing to the gabled roofline. The south facing side of the home features a small center extension. Five windows fill this portion and they have been exteriorly covered by modern windows, while the interior appear to be original. The multi-car garage is located behind the home on the southeastern corner of the lot. It is front gabled and has the same large modern horizontal siding as the home. It is accessed from N. 31st Street via a driveway located on the southern portion of the lot.

History of the Property

Austin North originally owned this property and sold it to John Murphy in 1908.[i] This home was constructed in 1916 by Goddald and Fulmen. In 1918, the home was bought by F.B. Reynolds from Ward Nye.[ii] The first recorded resident was Rebecca McCracken in 1919, clerk for the Wiggenhom Brothers.[iii]

Thomas C. Molesworth lived in the home from 1922 to 1930.[iv] He was the Secretary/Treasurer for the Rowe Furniture Company. On October 17, 1924 (Billings, Gazette) an attempt was made to enter T.C. Molesworth's home sometime in the evening. There was a sliced screen door and opened window. Thomas C. Molesworth (1890–1977), was an American furniture designer who was figured significantly in creating a distinctly Western style of furniture and accessories, using hides, horn and natural wood. He is credited with popularizing the "cowboy furniture" style. Returning after WWI, he worked in a bank in South Dakota, then managed the Rowe Furniture Company in Billings, Montana. Molesworth's company and career received a major boost in 1933 when he was commissioned by publisher Moses Annenberg to design the interior furnishings for Annenberg's Ranch A retreat near Beulah, Wyoming. [v] Annenberg noticed Molesworth's work in the company's storefront in Cody and gave him the commission for the new ranch. Molesworth created 245 pieces of furniture for Ranch A, as well as lighting fixtures and accessories, choosing Navajo rugs and taxidermy to set off his designs.[vi]

In 1932, Chris and Elizabeth C. Schaffer had purchased the home, living there until 1937.[vii] Chris was the Vice President for Midland Empire Package Company. By 1940 Arthur F. and Elizabeth V. Camp were listed as the residents.[viii] Arthur worked as a salesman. In 1942, Margaret Kennedy, widow of Thomas Kennedy, is listed as the resident.[ix] In 1948, Grover C. and Beulah Wolfe purchased the home.[x] Upon Grover's passing Beulah Wolfe continued to live in the residence until 1965.[xi] A Mrs. Gertrude Williams, widow of Carl G. is also listed at this residence from 1965 until 1970.[xii] The current owners and residents, since 1970, are Maurice R. Jr. and Darlene M. Holmes.[xiii]

Statement of Significance

The house at 935 N. 31st Street retains its integrity and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and Criteria C.

Under National Register **Criterion A**, the property at 935 N. 31st Street is associated with the expansion of Billings' residential areas outside of the original railroad plat and the rapid growth of an early automobile suburb, 1905-1945, and would be a contributing element in the North Elevation Historic District of Billings. The home at 935 N. 31st Street was built in 1916. The home's garage was constructed during the period of significance c.1916. It also is in its original location and maintains its original architectural designs lending to its integrity. It is a contributing building

Under National Register **Criterion C**, the home at 935 N. 31st Street is significant for its representation of the broad patterns of architecture during the first half of the 20th Century in the western United States. Even though Billings, Montana, is a relatively isolated location, the house at 935 N. 31st Street is architecturally consistent with those found in other contemporary, western, urban neighborhoods. It is also a well-preserved example of the popular trends in design prevalent in western states in the first half of the twentieth century.

Integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association)

The historic integrity of the property at 935 N. 31st Street has been retained. The home is in its original location and maintains its key craftsman architectural elements. These are seen in the triangular knee braces, porch entryway, porch columns, exposed rafter tails, and front gable construction. All of these design features are in good condition. As one of many craftsman homes in the area, it is a key contributor to the North Elevation's overall feeling and its association as a historic neighborhood. It is a contributing property. The home's garage was constructed during the period of significance. It also is in its original location and maintains its original architectural designs lending to its integrity. It is a contributing building

Photographs

include property name, direction of view, date of photo and photographer.



MT_Yellowstone County_North Elevation HD_131.01
Photo of **935 N. 31st Street**: Facing northeast toward front of property. Photo by Julie Larsen, 1/26/2015.



MT_Yellowstone County_North Elevation HD_131.02
Photo of **935 N. 31st Street**: Facing northeast toward front of property. View of front gable. Photo by Julie Larsen, 1/26/2015.



MT_Yellowstone County_North Elevation HD_131.03
Photo of **935 N. 31st Street**: Facing northeast toward south side of property. View of original windows. Photo by Julie Larsen, 1/26/2015.

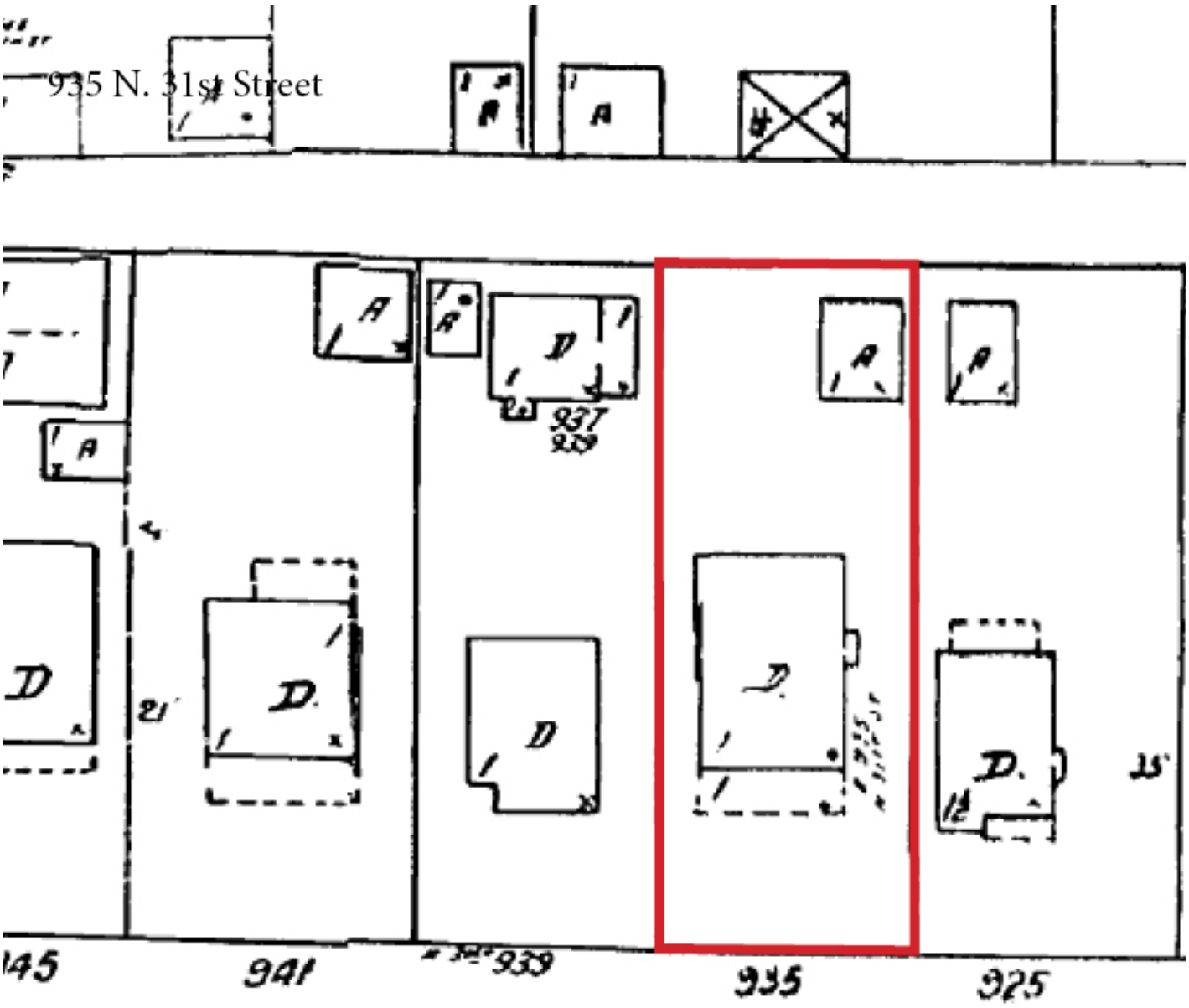


MT_Yellowstone County_North Elevation HD_131.04
Photo of **935 N. 31st Street**: Facing east. View of garage and driveway from N. 31st Street. Photo by Larry Mayer, 5/21/2016.



MT_Yellowstone County_North Elevation HD_131.05
Photo of **935 N. 31st Street**: Facing southwest. View of garage from alleyway. Photo by Larry Mayer, 5/21/2016.

Site Map



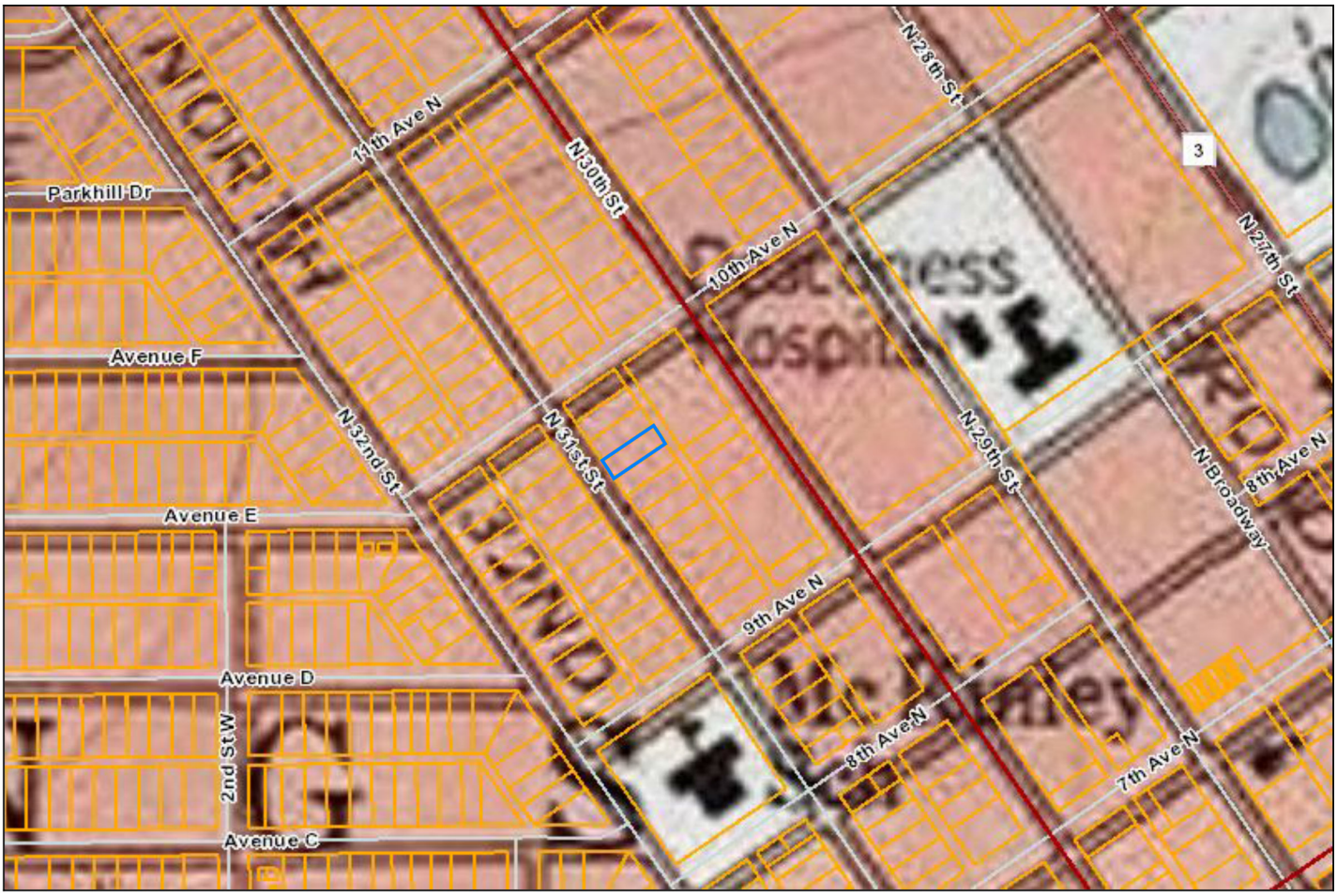
Sanborn Map, 1923-May 1949, Sheet 28

Aerial Image



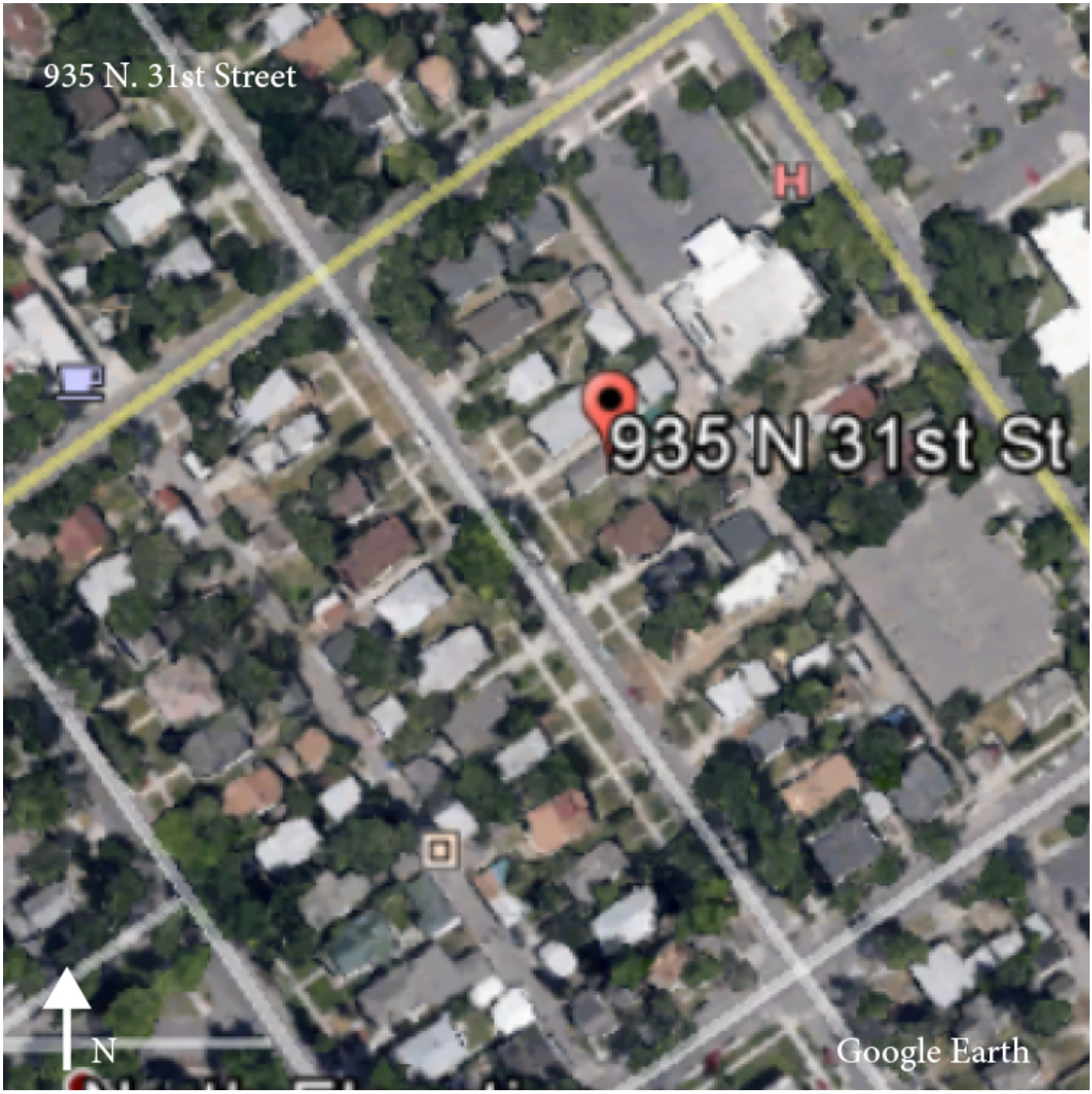
935 N. 31st Street, Billings, MT 59101

Topographic Map



935 N. 31st Street, Billings, MT 59101

Google Earth Image



Information Sources/Bibliography

Information Sources:

Mapping and UTM coordinates derived from Google Earth on-line at https://www.google.com/earth/

Property boundaries and building footprints established in Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. "Billings, Montana." New York, New York. Sheet 33. 1923.

Property information located at Cadastral search on-line at http://svc.mt.gov/msl/mtcadastral/

Search for residents of found in R.L. Polk & Co, Polk's *Billings (Yellowstone County, Montana) City Directories. 1920-1990.*

Tax and Assessment records data search from Yellowstone County Courthouse records and on-line at *http://www.co.yellowstone.mt.gov/gis/index.asp*

Records, house histories, historic photographs and bibliographic information derived from newspaper searches at newspapers.com, newspaperarchives.com, Billings Public Library, and Western Heritage Center, Billings, collections.

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[i] Yellowstone County Courthouse, Deed and records, 5/12/1908.
[ii] Yellowstone County Courthouse, Deed and Records, 1918.
[iii] R.L. Polk & Co., 1919 Polk's *Billings (Yellowstone County, Mont.) City Directory*
[iv] R.L. Polk & Co., 1922 Polk's *Billings (Yellowstone County, Mont.) City Directory*
[v] Lead Daily Call (Lead, South Dakota) April 4, 1933, page 1
[vi] Adapted from Wikipedia
[vii] Yellowstone county Courthouse, Deed and Records, Book 158, Page 170
[viii] R.L. Polk & Co., 1940 Polk's *Billings (Yellowstone County, Mont.) City Directory*
[ix] R.L. Polk & Co., 1942 Polk's *Billings (Yellowstone County, Mont.) City Directory*
[x] Yellowstone County Courthouse, Deed and Records, Book 312, Page 552
[xi] Yellowstone County Courthouse, Deed and Records, Book 753, Page 255
[xii] Yellowstone County Courthouse, Deed and Records
[xiii] Yellowstone County Courthouse, Deed and Records, Book 925, Page 35.