

MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Site # 14



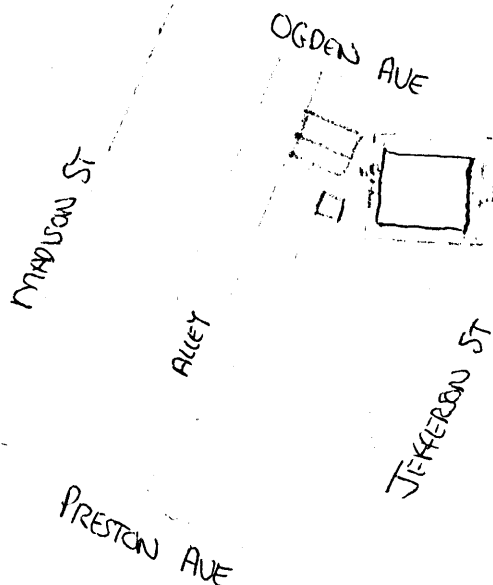
Legal Description: Block 25, lots 1-4

Address: 109 Jefferson Street, Thompson Falls, MT

Ownership: Name: Grace Ann Dubbers

private address: Box 568, Thompson Falls, MT 59873
 public

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Location map or building plan with arrow north.

Historic Name: Thayer House

Common Name: Dubbers House

Date of Construction: 1907 estimated documented

Architect: N/A

Builder: Albert W. Thayer

Original Owner: Albert W. Thayer

Original Use: residence

Present Use: residence

RESEARCH SOURCES: Note all records consulted to determine dates of construction, original owners, builders, uses, etc.

Abstract of Title: Deedbook 4, p. 367

Plat Records: Thompson Falls Original Townsite

Tax Records: Assessment Book 1907, p. 104

Building Permits: not applicable

Sewer/Water Permits: not applicable

City Directories: Polk, Missoula County 1907, p. 505.

Sanborn Maps: 1914 & 1927

Newspapers: Sanders County Ledger, 1905-1912

Other: Cornerstone of building

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Describe present appearance of structure/site, then contrast and compare that with it's original appearance, noting additions, alterations, and changes in materials. Discuss significant architectural features.

The Thayer House represents a unique adaptation of the French southern colonial vernacular building tradition. Built of rough-hammered stone blocks, the square-shaped structure is completely encircled by a porch which serves as an extension of the hip roof to shelter the entire one story house. The porch is supported by simple, round wooden columns, and has a wooden balustrade around one side overlooking the slope that the house is built on. The primary facade has a slightly off-center door flanked by a 1/1 double hung sash window on one side and a fixed two-light window with a leaded transom on the other side. Both windows have stone sills and simple wooden lintels. A hip roofed dormer with two single pane fixed lights pierces the roof above the entrance. The south elevation features a small, centrally-located single pane fixed window and two 1/1 double hung windows; each window has a stone sill and wooden lintel. Below the porch, lattice work panels which cover the stone foundation span the entire width of the dwelling. The rear (west) facade has an entrance leading off the porch flanked by two 1/1 double hung windows, and a small wooden addition (post-1927) currently used as a pantry. The north elevation is pierced by four 1/1 double hung windows, two of which are paired in the center. A corbeled brick chimney is located in the northeast corner of the house. A cornerstone laid in the south-east corner reads "A.W. Thayer AD 1907." The interior of the house underwent considerable alterations in the 1960s and 1970s. All ceilings have been lowered except in the front vestibule. West of the house is the stone foundation of a warehouse. A carriage house which has been converted into a storage shed stands adjacent to the icehouse. Both structures were built in 1907.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION: Describe the persons, important events, and/or historical patterns associated with the structure/site and surrounding area.

"The most portentious residence in Thompson" (as the Sanders County Ledger referred to it) was conceived and built by Arthur W. Thayer, a Ponderay, Idaho mining entrepreneur who came to Thompson Falls in 1906. He swiftly became a leading citizen of the town during the heady years of being named county seat for Sanders County. He extended his interests into timber, business, local politics, and in 1911 became editor of the Sanders County Ledger during the boom years of the dam building. Thayer left the Ledger in 1915 and began traveling around the country. He gradually began to sell off his Sanders County holdings after that time. This house was sold in 1917 to a W. Morrison who sold it six months later to Alex Allan. Allan kept the house till 1935. The present owner bought it in 1979.

The stone came from Thayer's own quarry on the Thompson River. It was chisled out in the Fall of 1906, and teamster Eugene Preston waited for snow to fall before hauling the stone on two four-horsed pulled sleighs to the building site. No builder is ever mentioned along with this building so Thayer probably supervised the construction.¹ The interior plastering was done by M. M. McGregor of Plains, MT. Including the ice house and carriage stable, the total cost was \$4,000.

¹David Clark (Plains, MT) is mentioned as having worked on the building. Sanders County Ledger, 9/6/07.

Footnote Sources: Sanders County Ledger: 9/16/06; 9/30/06; 12/7/06; 1/11/07; 3/1/07; 4/26/07; 9/6/07; 1/13/10; 9/29/11; 4/3/14; 3/5/15.

Interview with Grace Ann Knight by John Lazuk

Polk City Registers, Missoula County: 1907, p. 506; 1909, p. 710; 1913, p. 580;

Picture of A. Allan residence by Harry Billing, ca. 1925-1927.

INTEGRITY: Assess the degree to which the structure/site, and surrounding area accurately convey the historical associations of the property.

The exterior of the house retains its original integrity except for the west side add-on wooden pantry which is compatible to the structure. (This was done after 1927.) The interior has been radically changed. The ceilings have been lowered (only a small front interior vestibule kept the original height.) Closets have been added, a kitchen wall added, the bathroom enlarged, a downstairs bedroom made, and a new interior staircase to the basement built to replace an older stairway. The changes date from the 1960s & 1970s

HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: Justify how the persons, important events, or historical patterns associated with structure/site lend the property significance and/or describe the ways in which the structure embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular period, building type, or style.

The Thayer House in Thompson Falls, Montana is significant as an excellent example of a French southern colonial building style common to dwellings in the Lower Mississippi Valley and Louisiana. This particular type of house provided a brilliant solution to the problems of a warm, moist climate typical of areas near the Gulf Coast. Its broad roof acted not only as an umbrella against the rain, sheltering plaster-covered walls from weathering, but also as a parasol shading the house during hot days. Labeled "the most portentious residence in Thompson" [Falls] by the Sanders County Ledger, the Thayer House is obviously derived from a southern colonial vernacular tradition. Stone for the building came from the builder's own quarry on the Thompson River. It was chiseled out in the fall of 1906, and teamster Eugene Preston waited for a base of snow before hauling the stone to the building site on two horse-drawn sleighs. Total costs for the construction of the dwelling, ice house and carriage house was \$4,000.

(cont.)

FORM PREPARED BY:

Name: John Lazuk

Address: 350 Strand, Missoula, MT

Date: Octob 10/5 89

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Acreage: Less than one acre

USGS Quad: Thompson Falls, MT

UTM's: 11/624160/5272600

SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

The dwelling was built by Arthur Thayer, a mining entrepreneur who came to Thompson Falls from Idaho in 1906. Thayer was one of the leading advocates of obtaining the Sanders County Seat designation for Thompson Falls. His interests extended into the timber business, local politics, and real estate. In 1911 he became editor of the Sanders County Ledger. In 1915 he left the Ledger to travel around the country.

Clearly one of the most stylish and unique residences in Thompson Falls, the Thayer House has been well-maintained since its construction. Minor alterations to the exterior have not compromised its integrity.

