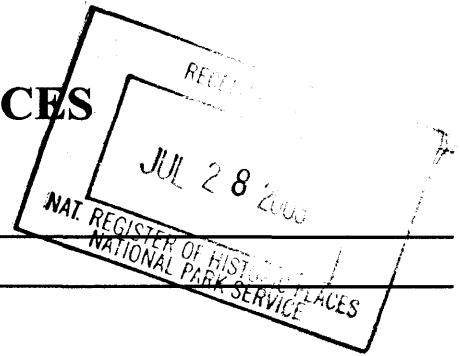


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: Walrond and Elizabeth Snell House

other name/site number: William and Carolyn Ladd House

2. Location

street & number: 402 South Lake Street

not for publication: N/A
vicinity: N/A

city/town: Miles City

state: Montana code: MT county: Custer code: 017 zip code: 59301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

Mark F. Kummer / State Historic Preservation Officer 7/24/2003
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
 State or Federal agency or bureau (_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

 Signature of commenting or other official Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 __ see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
 __ see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
 __ see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register
 __ see continuation sheet
- other (explain): _____

Robert
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
9.11.03

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:	Private	Number of Resources within Property	
Category of Property:	Building	Contributing	Noncontributing
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:	N/A	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u> building(s)
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
		<u>0</u>	<u>1</u> structures
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
Name of related multiple property listing:	N/A	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: DOMESTIC/single dwelling **Current Functions:** DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification: OTHER/Folk Victorian

Materials:

foundation: STONE/sandstone; BRICK
 walls: BRICK; WOOD/clapboard
 roof: METAL/steel
 other: N/A

Narrative Description

The Walrond Salter and Elizabeth Carter Snell House is in a centrally-located neighborhood in Miles City, Montana, south of the Main Street Downtown thoroughfare. The quiet, tree-lined streets are oriented in a north/south-east/west grid. The historic Snell home was one of the first constructed in the area, and is more substantial than others on the block. It dominates grassy corner lots, and the lawn is filled with outbuildings, including a garage, laundry, coal shed, and modern gazebo. The house is an unassuming mix of several late Victorian architectural styles.

Residence (contributing)

This two story home of bearing-wall brick construction has a historic two-story frame addition at the south east corner. The original house was built in 1882/3 as a simple symmetrical T-plan with an intersecting gable roofline. The front half of the house is two full stories and covered with a side-gabled roof. The rear portion is one-and-one-half stories in height with a front gable roof that extends to cover a frame addition to the south and the enclosed porches to the north. The addition was constructed between 1910 and 1916, and a green metal roof installed in 2001 covers asphalt shingles. The roof features wide eaves with plain fascia and frieze boards. The original, soft red local brick of the house was painted yellow in the 1930s and is currently painted. The 1882/3 portion of the houses rests on a sandstone foundation, while the 1910s addition has a brick wall foundation.

The façade (west elevation), facing Lake Street, features a one-story open porch with unfluted Doric columns. The veranda ends flush with the south side of the house but continues around the north side to a screened side porch. Its shallow-pitched roof is hipped at the northwest corner and is covered with asphalt shingles. A railing runs along the roofline that together with a second-story door cut from a window opening during the 1910s remodel, creates an open balcony at the second story level.

The brick portions of the house have tall, narrow wood-frame one-over-one windows under flush segmental arches. The sashes were installed during the 1910s remodel, replacing the 1882/3 vintage six-over-six light double hungs. The façade of the building is rigidly symmetrical, featuring single windows centered at each level in the north and south bays of the front elevation. Both the first- and second-story doors are centered in a slightly protruding central bay covered by a cross-gabled dormer. Slightly inset bricks in this gable end form a stepped-triangle pattern that echoes the roofline. At the first-story level, the entry was originally a double door, as evidenced by remaining hinge cuts and a catch plate still extant in the doorframe. These were replaced during the 1910s remodeling by a single door with two narrow inset panels of wood with four over four beveled glass panes above. This door is framed on both sides by narrow wooden inserts, each with a crosspiece set slightly below center. At the second story, a modern metal door with an etched glass window over two raised panels provides access to the balcony. This door opening replaced a window during the 1910s remodeling and features the segmental arch that is above the windows. Only six of the louvered shutters that originally functioned at all the windows of the brick portion of the house remain, as evidenced by the hinge mountings still attached to the window frames. However, the six that remain are mounted to the house so that they are no longer functional, and all are on the façade.

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The north elevation, facing Dickinson Street, features three bays. The west bay consists of the brick two-story gable end of the original portion of the house. There is a single, wood-frame one-over-one light double-hung window, topped with flush brick arches, centered at both the first and second story levels. The front porch and balcony continue across the west bay of the north elevation. The central bay is an enclosed section of the porch that was screened during the historic period. Beadboard half-walls surround the enclosure, and modern metal-framed one-over-one windows with screens provide light. Inverted wooden pickets extend below the roofline to the top of the windows and entries across the three sides of the enclosure. These decorative wooden features duplicate the trim on the original 1882/3 side porch. There are three windows across the north elevation of the bay and one to the north side of the west elevation of the enclosure. A modern metal door with an aluminum storm provides access from the open porch on the south side of the west elevation. The enclosure's east elevation contains a modern metal door and storm to the north side and a window to the south. The easternmost bay of the north elevation consists of a one-story wood-frame enclosed side porch original to the 1882/3 house, which now functions as a mud room. Beadboard sides the exterior walls. Two evenly spaced, modern, one-by-one sliding windows are centered in the bay. A single one-light wooden door fills the east elevation of the porch. Original inverted wooden pickets are attached below the roofline, and a chamfered column original to the porch is cut in half to form the cornerboard.

The east elevation of the house also contains three bays. The northern bay is the enclosed side porch described above. The central bay is the 1882/3 one-and-one-half-story masonry portion that formed the rear wing of the original house. An original window opening off-center to the north, featuring the familiar flush arch design, is visible but infilled with wood and a modern awning window. Two original window openings appear at the second-story level, one above the first-story window topped with a flat arch and the other slightly higher and off-center to the south. Both are one-over-one light double-hung installed during the 1910s remodel, replacing the 1882/3 vintage six-over-six light style. The southern bay of the east elevation contains the 1910s frame addition to the house. It is covered with narrow wooden clapboard and features one original window centered at each of the two levels. The first-story window is a wood-framed one-over-one light double hung style with unadorned milled wood trim. Milled wood trim also surrounds the second-floor window, which is a short but wide awning style. The gable end across the east elevation is covered with wooden shingles, painted white.

The south elevation of the building is visually divided into two bays: the 1910s frame one-and-one-half story east bay and the original two-story brick west bay. The frame addition features narrow clapboard siding with milled cornerboards, and several wood trimmed, wood frame one-over-one light double hung windows. There are two window openings across the first-story level: a single window centered in the east third of the elevation and a bay window with three functioning sashes filling the west half of the addition. The bay window is structural, and its protruding footprint is incorporated in the foundation wall. There is a pair of windows above the bay window at the second floor level, and a single window to the east. The masonry bay of the south elevation mirrors that on the north elevation, featuring single, wood-frame one-over-one light double-hung windows, topped with flush arches, centered at both the first and second story.

The interior of the residence retains its original floorplan, with the exception of the side porches, which now serve as a three-season sun room and mud room. The interior finishes, including original plaster walls, narrow tongue and groove hardwood floors, built-in cabinets, interior doors, and decorative wood trim, remain intact. The kitchen was updated with modern appliances and new cabinetry during the 1990s.

Garage (non-contributing)

The one-story, rectangular, gable-roofed garage is constructed of concrete block cast to look like cut stone. According to the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the building was constructed between 1910 and 1916, most likely when the main house was remodeled. Indeed, the garage features three, six-light wood frame windows that may have been original to the house. There is a modern, metal overhead garage door centered in the north elevation, within a historic opening. The west elevation features three evenly-spaced openings: windows at the center and to the north, and a wood-framed multi-paneled original pedestrian door to the south. A single window is centered in the south elevation of the building and the east elevation has no fenestration. While the building retains much of its integrity, the original hipped roofline was recently overbuilt to create gable ends, compromising its integrity of design. It is therefore considered a non-contributing resource within the property. The garage is in the northeast corner of the lot, directly on the alley and almost flush with the sidewalk.

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Coal Shed (contributing)

Behind the garage and slightly to the south, also flush to the alley, are two outbuildings. The first is a small, single story rectangular wood-frame coal shed. The building has no foundation, and has shiplap siding and milled cornerboards. Rolled asphalt covers the front-gable roof. Fenestration is limited to a multi-paneled original wood door on the south side of the west (front) elevation, and a centered opening on the east elevation. Set midway up the wall, this large opening was used to load the building with coal from the alley, and is covered with a side-hinged plywood door. According to the Sanborn maps, the building was constructed between 1916 and 1928.

Laundry (contributing)

The laundry is located immediately south of the coal shed and is nearly identical in design, size, and materials. The front-gabled roof is covered with rolled asphalt and features a brick interior chimney at the northeast corner. The building rests on a concrete pad foundation. Shiplap covers the exterior walls, and the cornerboards and trim are milled lumber. Fenestration on the laundry includes three single one-over-one light wood-frame double-hung windows, one centered on the east elevation, and two across the south elevation. There is a single multi-paneled wood pedestrian door on the north side of the west elevation. On the interior, the building is a single room with a concrete floor, a water tap, and at one time was wired for an electric light. According to the Sanborn maps, the building was constructed between 1916 and 1928.

Gazebo (non-contributing)

There is a wooden gazebo in the center of the south lawn. This is a modern (1983) structure.

There was a carriage house at the extreme southeast corner of the lot, directly on the lot line and the alley, which burned in the 1950's. At one time, another small outbuilding stood between the laundry and the carriage house but it has also since disappeared.

Integrity

The Snell house retains a high degree of architectural integrity from both the 1882 original design and the 1910s remodel. Original siding, trimwork, and windows are found throughout, with the exception of three modern windows at the rear of the building. The house also features a winterized side porch, with modern windows and doors replacing screens from the historic period. The metal roof is not overly distracting, and the layers of historic roofing material are intact beneath. Despite these changes, the overall integrity of the house and two of the outbuildings is sufficient to convey their significance.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT;
SOCIAL HISTORY; ARCHITECTURE

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Period(s) of Significance: 1883-1953

Significant Person(s): N/A

Significant Dates: 1882, c.1913

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Byron Vreeland, architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Snell House, located at 402 South Lake Street in Miles City, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its associations with the development of the town. Built in 1882/1883, it is one of the first masonry residences in Miles City, and its construction coincides with the first wave of economic development in the area, as well as the arrival of the railroad. A major remodel of the house between 1910 and 1916 is reflective of the economic prosperity realized in the area during that time. The Snell family, successful and influential in the sheepraising and banking businesses, purchased the property in 1891, and enjoyed a long and prosperous association with the community. The building is also eligible for listing under Criterion C, as a representative example of Late Victorian architecture, and its association with the first and most prominent architect in Miles City, Byron Vreeland.

History of Miles City

The Miles City area has been permanently occupied since 1876, when Colonel Nelson M. Miles established Fort Keogh as a strategic military post for the U.S. Army. "Milestown" was created by settlers associated with the military camp, who erected the first commercial buildings two miles east of the cantonment. The "new" Fort Keogh was completed in 1878 west of the Tongue River and Colonel Miles donated the ferry landing on the east bank of the river to Milestown. Merchants and settlers quickly moved to the new site to take advantage of the security offered by the nearby fort. The town's main street originally served as a military supply route from the ferry landing and the first residential shacks were erected in the area (near 10th and Pleasant Sts.) in 1877. The original city grid, also oriented to the ferry landing, was platted in 1878 in a northeast-southwest orientation. Until 1881, the fledgling town residents were dependent on the Yellowstone River steamboats for transportation and shipment of goods. The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in November 1881 spurred a period of growth and increased settlement in the surrounding ranchlands, and the population soared. Twelve hundred people stayed the first year, which doubled the size of the town. Milestown was renamed Miles City and the Northern Pacific quickly introduced a new geometry to the city. New additions were platted to conform with the alignment of the railroad tracks. New fashion and the need for safety stimulated the development of local brickyards and in the period of 1881-1887, Miles City's Main Street was transformed into "an almost unbroken line of brick business houses."¹ Community boosters brainstormed and financed improvements to push the city to prominence over its rivals.

Miles City's population soared until the disastrous winter of 1886-87, which ruined many stockgrowers and caused the financial ruin of many leading businessmen.² The population dropped from 2500 in 1887 to a low of 1400 in 1892. Although Miles City showed little growth between 1890 and 1905, the boosters never failed to promote and advertise the city. Their efforts were rewarded when the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad extended its lines to Miles City in 1908. W.H. Wilkerson describes the impact of the Milwaukee Road on the city: "From around 1910 to 1953, Miles City was the major shop for repairing steam locomotives on the lines between Mobridge, South Dakota and Tacoma. Peak employment in Miles City was around 1000 and held pretty steady to the end of the steam era..."³ Both the Milwaukee and the Northern Pacific Railroads promoted southeastern Montana to homesteaders and spurred a period of growth and prosperity unequaled in the city's history.

The Enlarged Homestead Act passed in 1909, and settlers flocked to eastern Montana. In 1910, Miles City's population was 7,000, more than twice what it had been in 1904. By 1918, the population stood at 9,000. In that year, Samuel Gordon wrote *Recollections of Old*

1 John V. Goff, *Miles City, Montana: An Architectural History*, rev. ed. by Susan R. McDaniel and Dena L. Sanford (Miles City: Star Printing Company, 1988), p. 27.

2 Overgrazing and poor forage, together with extraordinarily cold weather, ice, and snow led to the starvation of nearly 60 percent of the cattle stock of central and eastern Montana. For more information, see Michael P. Malone, Richard Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, rev. ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), pp. 165-7.

3 W.H. Wilkerson, "The Milwaukee Road in Miles City," published in *Custer County Area History: As We Recall, A Centennial History of Custer County, MT, 1889-1989*, Helen Carey Jones, ed. (Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corp, 1990).

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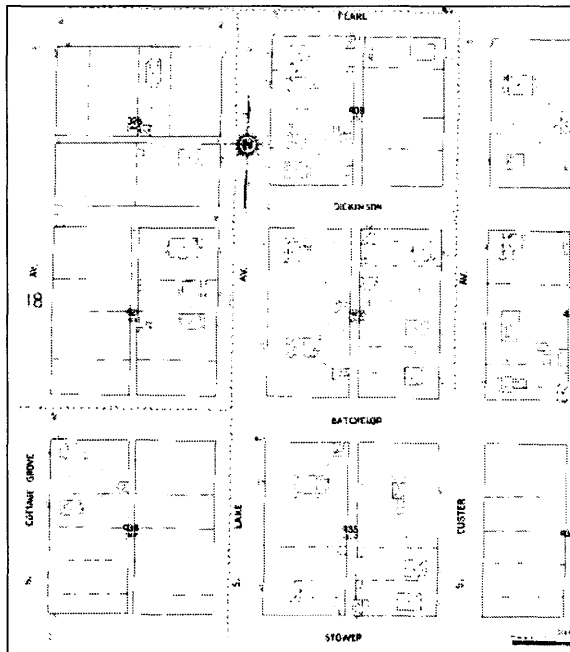
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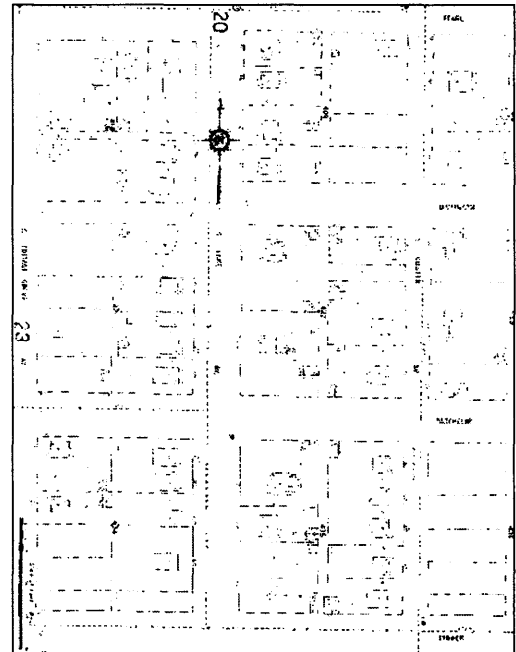
Milestown to provide the "newcomers" with an understanding of the city's origins, and in recognition of "the desirability of collecting and reducing to some form of permanent record, the fast fading scenes and incidents of the early days of this community."⁴ Gordon speaks to the changes in the community over its first forty years:

Writing of only forty years ago, in this age of rapid development, is writing very close up to date, in so far as history is concerned, but in the individual life it seems an almost immeasurable gap between then and now. Many who were then full of life and hope have gone "over the divide," children have grown to be matured men and women and the shadows of age are fast gathering over those who were the active spirits of the Milestown of these "Recollections." But they have lived to see a Milestown far beyond their expectations. Those who have lived here during that period have had to change their predictions on the future of the city more than once since the days when we won incorporation with a somewhat questionable population of fifteen hundred. Though we forged ahead steadily, it was not until the coming of the Milwaukee road that we began to talk hopefully of a possible five thousand. With the influx occasioned by that event we passed the five thousand mark without knowing it and have more than doubled that aggregate since then with every material prospect bright for the future. What we may achieve in the time to come is anybody's guess, but there is one thing that we old-timers know -- and that is that we are no longer the happy-go-lucky, care-free "kamerads" of the early days, and one purpose of writing these "Recollections" was to portray that life before it had faded into the forgotten past.⁵

The prosperity and population increases noted by Gordon resulted in a housing shortage through most of the decade. New additions to the city where single family homes were rapidly constructed sprawled to the east of downtown. Mile City residential growth had been limited to north-south expansion, blocked to the east by the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks. A small number of "rural" farmhouses, such as the Snell House, had been built east of town in the Leighton and Garlock Addition as early as the 1880s, but the distances from Fort Keogh and the business district discouraged heavy development in the area until the 1910s. As shown on the Sanborn Maps for Miles City, the number of houses in the Leighton and Garlock Addition increased considerably between 1910 and 1916.



Miles City Sanborn Map, 1910, sheet 19, detail.



Miles City Sanborn Map, 1916, sheet 24, detail.

⁴ Samuel Gordon, *Recollections of Old Milestown* (Miles City: 1918) "Foreward," <http://www.milescity.com/history/ebooks/room/foreword.asp>.

⁵ Gordon, *Recollections*, "A Post Mortem," <http://www.milescity.com/history/ebooks/room/postmortem.asp>.

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The economic boom of the early and mid 1910s ended abruptly when years of severe drought descended on Montana, the Dakotas, and Wyoming beginning in 1917. In 1919 eastern Montana homesteaders faced humidity that averaged four percent, massive grasshopper infestations, and prairie fires. The effect was devastating. Homesteaders enticed by boosterism about the fertile lands of eastern Montana saw their investments literally blown away by the dry wind. Historian Joseph Kinsey Howard described the continuing disaster:

In the spring of 1920, however, it rained...but the rain stopped and the wind came. These winds were the first “dusters” the northern plains farmer had ever seen. Day after day he watched, first incredulous, then despairing, as the gale whipped his fields into the sky...The ruined homesteaders gathered in little groups in the towns to compare notes...the fourth dry year, and now the wind! Nothing like it had happened before...But the stockmen grinned wryly, knowing it had happened before and would happen again...⁶

By the early 1920s, over 11,000 Montana farms “blew away,” leaving more than 40,000 people in eastern and central Montana destitute. Some farmers turned to the towns for alternate employment; others moved on to more fertile locales. Those that managed to hold on bought up the abandoned homesteads, giving them a broader agricultural base (often thousands of acres), and better prospects for the future. The dry years of the 1920s led to the dust bowl and Great Depression of the 1930s. Like other larger Montana towns, Miles City did not experience much population restriction or growth during the 1920s and 1930s, remaining at just over 7,000. By 1940, however the drought years began to end, and the population again increased. By 1950, Miles City again boasted over 9,000 persons.⁷ Above average rainfall from 1940 through the 1950s, together with a national economic upswing and World War II resulted in higher commodity and livestock prices. Historian K. Ross Toole explains:

A new wet cycle coincided with a tremendous boom caused by World War II. In this cyclical picture, if bad seems to compound the bad, than good seems to combine with the good. It is a business of extremes. Continued rain and good prices after World War II led to continued prosperity. Wheat farmers and cattle ranchers enjoyed rather spectacular success from 1941 until 1954 when a leveling off occurred.⁸

In addition to a “leveling off” of the agricultural market in 1954, another economic setback affected Miles City that year. The Milwaukee Road, whose arrival helped spark the growth of the city during the 1910s, ended its steam operations.

They tore down the 24 stall roundhouse...They also tore down the large brick store department that had employed as many as 36 employees, and every other building they could get rid of...In December 1959, the Division Headquarters was closed...More powerful diesel locomotives pulling heavier trains steadily reduced the number of engine and train crews. There had been two passenger trains a day each way until 1955, and by February 1964, the last passenger train was discontinued...All operations west of Miles City were discontinued April 1, 1980...When the Milwaukee shut down at Miles City April 1, 1982, there were only a total of 35 employees left.⁹

Since the 1950s, the overall population of eastern Montana has decreased, and since 1980, Miles City has lost 11% of its population. Despite this trend, Miles City remains a vibrant community. Its historic Main Street (listed in the National Register 7/21/1989), elegant Carriage House Historic District (listed 6/7/1991), and other historic properties such as the Snell House serve as a physical representation of the endurance of the community through the twentieth century.

⁶ Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Montana: High Wide and Handsome*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press/Bison Books, 2001), p. 202.

⁷ Census and Economic Information Center, Montana Department of Commerce, “Population Of Incorporated Places* (Cities/Towns) In Montana, 1890 to 2000,” <http://ceic.commerce.state.mt.us/Demog/historic/censusplace18902000.htm>.

⁸ K. Ross Toole, *Montana: An Uncommon Land* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 14th printing, p. 241.

⁹ Wilkerson, “The Milwaukee Road in Miles City.”

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The Snell Family

Walrond Salter Snell, a native of England, first came to the United States in 1872 and settled at Fort Buford, North Dakota at the mouth of the Yellowstone River. There he was associated with the Leighton Brothers who were post traders. Five years later, Snell moved on to the new town on Miles City, approximately 180 miles upriver. He had a major influence in the economic development of Miles City and the surrounding area. His descendants continue to be vital contributors to the economic and political life of Custer County.



*Walrond Salter Snell and Mary Elizabeth Carter, married in
October 1883 in England.*

enough by 1883 to commission someone, probably Miles City's first architect, Byron Vreeland, to design and construct a two-story brick house to be built in the empty prairie east of town. When the house at what is now 402 South Lake Street was constructed, it was the first brick house east of the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks, in an area two Miles City businessmen were promoting as an "addition" to Miles City. The Leighton and Garlock addition was, in fact, nearly two miles from the center of town, where there was no electricity and no running water.

When Walrond Salter Snell arrived in the raw frontier town of Miles City, he found crude log buildings and canvas tents lining streets that were either dirt or mud, depending on the weather. His first business venture in Miles City was a crockery business in partnership with William Ladd. There were plenty of saloons and brothels in early Miles City but when Snell and Ladd went into partnership and opened their store on Main Street, there weren't many men in the practical crockery business. Later, Snell and Ladd expanded into another needed business: they sold furniture.¹⁰

The two men prospered, enough that Snell sold out to his partner in 1883 and returned to his native England to marry his childhood sweetheart, Mary Elizabeth Carter. He returned to eastern Montana but rather than continue as a merchant, decided to try something new, sheep-ranching. With his wife, Snell returned to the United States and the Miles City area, settling on unsurveyed land they acquired in the Hathaway area, about twenty miles from Miles City. They lived at the mouth of the creek that was later called "Snell Creek" and raised sheep.¹¹

The government had not yet officially surveyed the land that the Snells took as their own. There were no formal homestead claims filed. Instead, the Snells were recognized as owners under "squatter's rights." Wolves and coyotes preyed on bands of sheep, winters were bitterly cold and summers brutally hot. Months could go by with no communications between ranchers in the hills and their friends in the towns. Roads were few and poorly established, often impassable due to weather. There was no telegraph, no telephone, no way for anyone to call for help. No one could be sure that sheep or people would survive in such harsh conditions but the Snell family took the risk, survived and prospered.

William Ladd, Mr. Snell's former partner, had taken a risk when he moved to Miles City and like Mr. Snell, prospered. In his case, he was successful

¹⁰ Helena Carey Jones, ed., *Custer County Area History: As We Recall, A Centennial History of Custer County, Montana 1889-1989* (Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corp, 1990), pp. 485-6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

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By the time W.S. Snell bought the house on Lake Street from his former partner in 1891, Miles City and the Snell family had grown. Sheep ranching had become one of the economic mainstays of eastern Montana. The Snell family had a tremendous influence on that industry. On Nov. 6, 1891, Snell bought the house from W.R. Ladd, and moved in with his wife Elizabeth and their six children: Carter, Mary, Margaret, Gwynn, George, and Dorothy.

The Snells were part of the leading "social set" of early Miles City. As members of a large contingent of British expatriates who formed the core of Miles City's social elite in the early days, Snells were part of the inner circle of the wealthy and influential. Elizabeth, in particular, is frequently mentioned in the *Yellowstone Journal*, the most prominent newspaper in Miles City at the time, giving or attending bridge parties or musical soirees. Elizabeth was also the first music and piano teacher in Miles City.

When his brother-in-law Charles Carter retired from the First National Bank of Miles City, Mr. Snell took over his position and was associated with that bank for twenty years, eventually becoming director. In addition, Mr. Snell was one of the founders of the Custer County Building Association, serving a long term as its secretary and was still a trustee at the time of his death. The Custer County Building Association, of which W.S. Snell was a founding member and on whose board he served for many years, was also very influential in the growth of Miles City. The C.C.B.A. provided the funds and the expertise for many homebuyers in early Miles City. Mr. Snell was an early county commissioner (1889-1894) and served on the city council of Miles City as an alderman (1899-1900, 1909-1910). He was active in the business community of Miles City, serving on numerous civic committees and boards. The economic prosperity that occurred in Miles City, and indeed much of eastern Montana, through the 1910s allowed Walrond Snell to construct a major addition to his brick house on Lake Street. The frame addition nearly doubled the size of the home, and the space was undoubtedly needed, as his six nearly grown children all still lived there.¹²

The eldest son of Walrond and Elizabeth Snell also was an important figure in Miles City during his lifetime. Walrond Carter Snell, always known as Carter, was born July 18, 1884, on the family sheep ranch near Hathaway. One of the chief reasons the Snell family moved into Miles City was to allow the older Snell children to attend high school. Carter Snell graduated from the Custer County High School in 1901. Although Carter Snell went to college to study law, his real interest lay in the wool business, which was booming in the early years of the twentieth century.¹³

When he returned to Miles City, in addition to working as a wool buyer, Carter Snell had a business partnership with E.B. Clark, starting in 1908, handling locally mined coal, wood, feed, hides and pelts. He also operated the Kircher Coal Mine in partnership Scotty Elder, later buying out a competitor who shipped in "hard" coal from western Montana. Perhaps Carter Snell's greatest contribution to the economy of eastern Montana came when he purchased a grain elevator in 1914 in partnership with his brother, George. The elevator was the only one in the area. It was through this elevator that the brothers began the first seed processing plant in Montana that processed alfalfa seed, cleaning and preparing the seed. Carter also opened the first feedlot in the area.



Four of the Snell children:
Carter, Mary, Margaret, and Gwynn.

¹² Ibid.: R.L. Polk and Company's *Miles City, Glendive, Forsyth, and Ekalaka City Directory and Custer Dawson, Rosebud, and Fallon Counties, 1914* (Helena: R.L. Polk & Co. of Montana, 1914).

¹³ Ibid., p. 484.

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In addition to his "in town" activities, Cater Snell also operated a cattle ranch. The family ranch northwest of Miles City in Garfield County still remains in the Snell family. He was active in the wool, seed and cattle businesses until the time of his death in 1976.¹⁴

Mr. Walrond Salter Snell died on June 14, 1927, and is remembered as an early "community builder who exercised great faith in the future of the territory. He watched the growth of [Eastern Montana] with an interest...he believed in its ultimate destiny and pinned his faith in its substantial development in the future."¹⁵ Elizabeth Snell continued to live in the family home until her death in 1944. Daughter Margaret Snell, who worked as a librarian at the Veteran's Home, lived in the house with her parents and throughout her lifetime.¹⁶ When she died in the mid-1970s, the house was sold to the Haughian family, who lived on a ranch outside of town.

Mary Haughian explained that her relatives lived in the house, including her daughter, from time to time over the years, but the family never considered the property their permanent residence. During their tenure, the Haughians rewired, painted, wallpapered, and "put cement under 3 or 4 columns of the front veranda." Recognizing its historical value, Mary wrote to the Montana Historical Society in 1996 to inquire if the Society would like to purchase the property, exclaiming, "I just don't want to see it fall into the wrong hands!"¹⁷ Mrs. Haughian found the right buyers when Miles City Historic Preservation Officer Ammorette Allison and her husband, Steve, purchased the property in 1999.

James Snell, son of Carter Snell and grandson of Walrond, still lives in Miles City and has remained active in the economic and civic activities of the area. As of this writing Gladys Snell, widow of Carter, is still alive and well after her 100th year. The Snell family, although they sold the house at 402 South Lake in the 1970s, after the death of Margaret, the last member of the family to live in the home, remain closely linked with the house. To most people in Miles City, it is still recognizable as "The Snell House." And the back door, the letters C-A-R-T-E-R can still be discerned where they were scratched into the brick.

Clearly, the Snell House at 402 South Lake in Miles City is significant for its associations with the earliest development and social history of Miles City. The substantial residence was the first constructed in the Leighton and Garlock Addition, at a time when the Northern Pacific Railroad had just arrived in the city. Confidence in the future of the community is represented in its substantial brick façade. Major renovations to the building date to another period of exuberance in Miles City, when the second railroad, the Milwaukee arrived. Like the town itself, the size of the Snell house nearly doubled during the 1910s. The Snell family is important to the history of Miles City, and their influence on agriculture, banking, civic associations, and society is widely recognized in the community. Their status and legacy is well represented in the stately home on South Lake Street. For these reasons, the property is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A.

Brick Architecture in Miles City

Miles City enjoyed a period of great prosperity during the early 1880s, which inspired its residents to "display their success in more permanent, worldly and aesthetically significant buildings."¹⁸ In addition, a number of intense fires devastated the wooden buildings of the city during the late 1870s and 1880s. The call for safety and desire for fashion resulted in a number of brick buildings being constructed between 1881 and 1887. At first, brick had to be shipped in from St. Louis at prohibitive cost. Two local brickyards quickly went in to business. "Brickyard King" Tom Malloy ran the Broadwater, Hubble & Company yard on the Tongue River Slough, and Christopher P. Slater opened the yards on the Fort Keogh side of the Tongue River after 1884. It was architect Byron Vreeland (1844-1889), however, who almost single-handedly transformed the streetscapes of Miles City as the brick buildings he designed replaced the easily burned wooden structures of the earlier era. Vreeland worked in both Miles City and Bozeman, contributing many important structures to both cities. However, it is in Miles City where most of his buildings, both commercial and residential, remain.¹⁹

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Jones, *Custer County Area History*, p. 486.

¹⁶ Margaret's name appears in the Polk Directories for Miles City through 1977. *Polk's Miles City (Custer County, MT) Directory, 1948* (Omaha: R.L. Polk & Co., 1948); *Polk's Miles City (Custer County, MT) Directory, 1954* (Omaha: R.L. Polk & Co., 1955); *Polk's Miles City (Custer County, MT) Directory, 1965* (Omaha: R.L. Polk & Co., 1966); *Polk's Miles City (Custer County, MT) Directory, 1977* (Omaha: R.L. Polk & Co., 1978).

¹⁷ Mary Haughian to Montana Historical Society, personal correspondence, April 2, 1996, "Snell House" National Register File, Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, Montana.

¹⁸ Goff, *Miles City, Montana: An Architectural History*, p. 27.

¹⁹ Ibid.

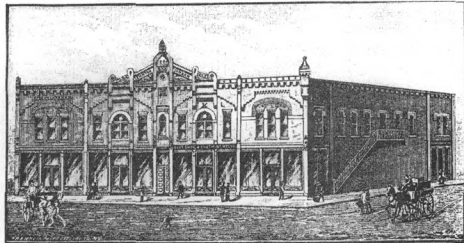
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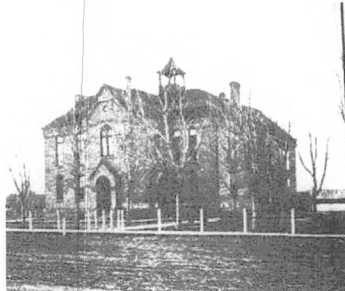
*Leighton and Jordan Block, 500-506 Main Street, Miles City.
Designed by Vreeland between 1883 and 1885.*

dramatic profiles against the sky. Most of his brick buildings in Miles City were constructed of the soft, local brick. He also used local sandstone for the sills and lintels of his commercial buildings. The commercial fronts frequently had large panes of glass, and sheet metal was sometimes used to create fancy cornices and crestings.²⁰ The Leighton & Jordan block at 500-506 Main Street (part of the Main Street Historic District) is one of the earliest multi-store commercial blocks in Montana, having been constructed between 1883 and 1885. This building, although missing the towers and pediment that once rose above the roofline, is still extant and very much recognizable. Across the street, the 509-515 commercial block also remains, with its polychrome decorative brickwork on the second story.

Vreeland's contribution to the built environment of Miles City is not limited to commercial buildings. His designs included public buildings and churches, such as the 1884 Custer County Courthouse, the 1883 First Ward School, and the 1886 Emmanuel Episcopal Church (part of the Carriage House Historic District).



*Second Custer County Courthouse, constructed in 1884.
This Vreeland design featured the central pavilion style present on the Snell House. This Courthouse replaced the 1876 courthouse building, which was of low construction.*



*Vreeland's brick First Ward School, constructed in 1883.
This building was nearly identical to his East Side School in Bozeman. Both buildings have been demolished.*

Though little is known about Vreeland's early life, he and his brother Frank, a carpenter, moved to Bozeman, Montana during the late 1870s. There Byron partnered with architect Herman Kemna. Kemna moved on to Anaconda, Montana and Vreeland moved to Miles City and opened his own architectural office there in 1882. He made the move permanent in 1886, when his family left Bozeman to live in the thriving eastern Montana city. Vreeland was the first professional architect to work in Miles City, contributing at least thirty buildings to its streetscape during the 1880s. (See building list at the end of this section.)

Vreeland was the master of bearing wall brick construction. He liked to mix severe Ruskinian Gothic with flamboyant Romanesque and Queen Anne styles. Well versed in designing corbelled brickwork, he created bold "toothed" friezes, stepped patterns and pronounced towers, piers and chimneys to create

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 27-9.

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He also gained a reputation for "picturesque Victorian brick residences" in both Miles City and Bozeman. In addition to the Snell House, these include his own residence at 707 Washington Street in Miles City (Carriage House Historic District) and William A Tudor Queen Anne Cottage in Bozeman (Bon Ton Historic District). As Miles City's first architect, Byron Vreeland and his design skills gave the city much of the character it still retains.

The Walrond and Elizabeth Snell House located at what is now 402 South Lake Street in Miles City has been attributed to Byron Vreeland for a number of reasons. At the time of its construction in 1882/3, Vreeland was the only architect/builder in Miles City at the time who was working in local brick. The construction of the house is soft, local brick forming load-bearing walls. The design of the house, with its central Gothic pavilion, narrow, Second Empire windows with corbelled arches above and the stepped triangle in the brickwork below the front gable are all distinctive Vreeland designs.

In addition, the house on Lake Street was constructed in the Leighton & Garlock addition. Vreeland was very closely associated with Joseph Leighton during his time in Miles City. Leighton sold the property to William and Carolyn Ladd, and it is a reasonable assumption that Leighton recommended his favorite architect. Structure, design, period and personal association all support the assumption that Byron Vreeland, master architect in early Montana, was the architect for this house. Among Vreeland's surviving buildings in Miles City, the house on Lake Street is the last example of his popular central pavilion design. The other primary examples of this style-the First Ward School and the 1884 Custer County courthouse pictured above-are no longer in existence.

The Walrond and Elizabeth Snell House is an excellent representative example of Late Victorian folk architecture, displaying influences from many popular styles but remaining an understated building. The centered protruding bay at the façade exhibits influence from the Gothic Revival style, and the tall, narrow, arched windows are reminiscent of the Second Empire style. The remodel during the 1910s featured other fashionable architectural trends of the Late Victorian period, the wrap-around porch popular with Queen Anne design, and newly available plate-glass windows. This reconstruction not only substantially changed the exterior of the building but also added a bathroom and expanded interior space. Architectural historians Virginia and Lee McAlester report that such modification of simple folk homes with Victorian detailing reflected the ready availability of mass-produced wood products in the industrial age and therefore represented a significant post-1900 trend in American architecture: "fashion-conscious homeowners...updated their older folk houses with new Victorian porches."²¹ For its association with Byron Vreeland and as an example of Late Victorian design trends, the Walrond and Elizabeth Snell House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

²¹ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2000), p. 310.

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Building list for Byron Vreeland:

Bozeman

Gallatin County Courthouse, 1880 (demolished)
Gallatin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, 1880 (demolished)
East Side School, 1882-3 (demolished)
Smith's Palace Saloon, 1882 (NR)
Bozeman City Hall and Opera House, 1887 (demolished)
Gallatin County Poor House (demolished)
Frank Esler Building, c.1883 (demolished)
Tracy-Barnett Block, Main St., 1889 (NR)
Christian Church, Grand St., (altered)
Thomas Lewis House, South Willson, 1883 (NR)
William A Tudor Queen Anne Cottage, South Willson, 1889 (NR)
Odd Fellows Hall, Main St., (NR)

Miles City

First National Bank (and Odd Fellows Hall), 508 Main St., 1882
Leighton, Jordon & Co. Store, 409 Main St., 1882 (facade covered)
Custer County Courthouse, 1882 (demolished)
Custer County Poor House, 1882 (extant?)
Episcopal Church, frame building, 1882 (demolished or moved)
Episcopal Church, brick building, 1886
"The Rink" for Perkin Russell, 1883 with 1884 addition (demolished)
First Ward School, 1883 (demolished)
Residence for Morris Cahn, 1882 (demolished?)
Dr. Redd's Brick Building, 510 Main St., 1883 (front removed, but sides extant)
Byron and Ada Vreeland Residence, 707 Washington, 1886
Leighton and Jordan Block, 500 Main St., 1885
Bach and Helhi Saloons, 8-10 South 5th, 1883 (facade covered)
Miles City's first Opera House, 20 South 5th, 1885 (facade survives)
Commercial Block, 605-611 Main St., 1885
Gilman and Huffman Blocks, 717-719 Main St., 1886
Butler Block, 602 Main St., 1886
Schmalsle Building, 600 Main St., 1886 (facade partially replaced)
C.B. Towers Residence, 819 Pleasant, 1886
E.H. Johnson Residence (also Harmon House), 1005 Palmer (NR)
A.I. Furstnow frame house, 106 Pleasant, 188?
W.S. Snell Residence, Dickinson and Lake, ca. 1882
Brandenberg & Van Gasken Butcher Shop (also 2nd Odd Fellow's Hall) 609 Main, 1885 (demolished)
J.J. Graham Brick Block, 608 Main St. 188? (demolished)
Konrad Schmid Block, 604-606 Main St., 1886 (demolished)
R. Orchel Residence, 903 Pleasant
L.A. Huffman Residence, Cordon and Phillips, 1883
Maxwell-Foster Building (rear portion, original) 700 Main St., 1886
Miles Block (rear portion, original) 607-609 Main St., 1885
Judge Garlock brick residence north of First Presbyterian Church, Main St., ca. 1885 (demolished)

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than 1 acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
 13 435625 5139096

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): NW ¼ NE ¼ SW ¼ Township 8 North, Range 47 East, Section 34

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 1, Lots 1-5 in the Leighton and Garlock Addition

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn, based on legally recorded boundary lines, to include the land that has been historically associated with the Snell House since its construction and conveys the property's historic setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Amorette Allison
 organization: date: September 2002
 street & number: 402 South Lake telephone: (406) 232-3090
 city or town: Miles City state: MT zip code: 59301

edited by

name/title: Kate Hampton/NR Coordinator
 organization: MT SHPO date: July 2003
 street & number: 1410 8th Avenue telephone: (406) 444-3647
 city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620

Property Owner

name/title: Steve and Amorette Allison
 organization:
 street & number: 402 South Lake telephone: (406) 234-3090
 city or town: Miles City state: MT zip code: 59301

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West and north elevations of garage (noncontributing)
Photo taken June 2003 by Steve Allison.



East elevations of garage (noncontributing), coal shed (contributing) and laundry (contributing)
Photo taken June 2003 by Steve Allison.

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West and south elevations of laundry (foreground) and coal shed.
Photo taken June 2003 by Steve Allison.



Gazebo (non-contributing)
Photo taken June 2003 by Steve Allison.