

# MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Site # PE#63



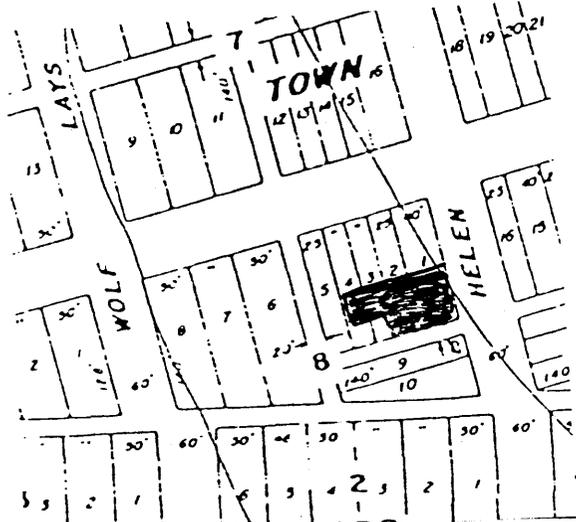
Legal Description: Original Town, Block 8, Lots 1-4

Address: 18 Helen St., Lodge Grass, MT

Ownership: Name: W. Jay Havener

private address: Lodge Grass, MT 59050  
 public

Roll # 3 Frame # 20



Location map or building plan with arrow north



Historic Name: Jay Sharp's store

Common Name: George Cooley's store

Date of Construction: 1920  estimated  documented

Architect: N/A

Builder: Jay Sharp

Original Owner: Jay Sharp

Original Use: Mercantile store

Present Use: Cafe

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

Title Search: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Records: yes

Bldg. Permit: \_\_\_\_\_ Census Records: yes

Sewer/Water: \_\_\_\_\_ Sanborn Maps: \_\_\_\_\_

Directories: yes Newspapers: yes

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

(see Footnotes)

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

The Jay Sharp Store is a one story, wood frame building with a false front. The main portion of the building is the northern section, which has a flat roof, and a central recessed entry on the front (east) facade. A small shed-roofed addition was built to the south of the original portion on the building during the 1940's. The fact that this small addition was recently used as a barber shop is indicated by the remains of a barber pole attached to the east facade, north of the door. On the south elevation of the addition are three windows and a door. The windows are one-over-one double hung units, which are now boarded over as this portion of the building is not currently in use. The exterior sheathing of the building is of horizontally laid milled lumber siding. The building retains very good historic architectural integrity and the only incompatible change to the structure has been the enclosure of the commercial plate glass on the north portion of the front facade with vertical siding. A shed roof addition was built to the rear of the building ca. 1925 for use as a residence.

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

Mr. and Mrs. Jay Sharp supposedly ran the bakery and restaurant first located in the hotel built by Fellows Pease on First Avenue around 1915.<sup>1</sup> In 1916 Jay Sharp was listed in the Directory for Lodge Grass as operating a restaurant and pool hall.<sup>2</sup> Pease's old hotel building burned down around 1920 and Sharp then built this building on Helen Street to be used as a store.<sup>3</sup> The county assessor's records show that Jay E. Sharp owned lots 1-2 of Block 8, Original Town of Lodge Grass, in 1920 with \$600 worth of improvements.<sup>4</sup> He operated the business as the Lodge Grass Mercantile Company, and in 1925 Sharp put the addition on the rear of the original building as a living quarters.<sup>5</sup> In 1935 Jay Sharp was appointed U.S. Postmaster for Lodge Grass, and operated the post office out of his store. Jay Sharp passed away in 1938 and the duties of Postmaster were taken over by his wife. William T. Shaw was appointed Postmaster for Lodge Grass in 1939, and continued to operate the post office from the Sharp store.<sup>6</sup> He suspected that Mrs. Sharp stole money from the post office till.<sup>7</sup> After Pat Nichols built his store across the street from the Sharp store, in 1947 Shaw moved the post office over there. In 1949 Mrs. Jay Sharp sold her store to George and Catherine Cooley.<sup>8</sup> (continued)

**Footnote Sources:**

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. John Noblett, "'Greasy Grass' Attracted Early Traders," Hardin Tribune Herald Golden Anniversary Edition 16 May 1957, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>R.L. Polk, Directory of Billings, Red Lodge, Yellowstone, Carbon, Stillwater and Big Horn Counties (Helena: R.L. Polk & Co., 1916). (Cont.)

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

The site has good integrity. The original portion of the Sharp store, built in 1920, still stands in good condition, including the 1925 rear addition, with its false front facing Helen Street. On the north is a later addition, perhaps built by George Colley after 1949. This building is a good representation of what it once was, and conveys the essence of its historical associations.

**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.

This building is associated with persons important in the history of Lodge Grass, and with broad patterns of the town's early development. Jay Sharp and his wife were residents of the town from about 1915 on. Sharp was a well known local merchant, and the town's postmaster from 1935 until his death in 1938. The store was also the town's post office at that time. In 1949 the property was acquired by George Cooley, another prominent local merchant, whose wife was the daughter of one of the first settlers of Lodge Grass. The building embodies the characteristics of a particular period (early Lodge Grass 1911-1921), and type and style (commerical), with its wood construction and false front so typical of the first commerical structures built in town.

This site is considered to have both historical and architectural significance.

**FORM PREPARED BY:**

Name: P. Friedman, Powers Elevation

Address: P.O. Box 2612, Denver, CO 80201

Date: 1-7-1986

**GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

Acreage: Less than one acre

USGS Quad: Lodge Grass, 7.5, 1967

UTM's: 13 | 314650 | 6020420