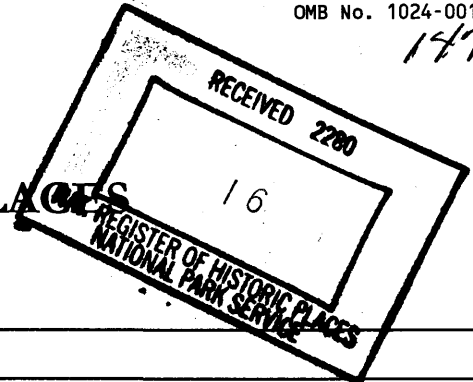


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: Donovan-Mayer House

other name/site number: Edward and Johanna Donovan House; Fred and Zetta Mayer House

2. Location

street & number: 46 South Howie Street

not for publication: na
vicinity: na

city/town: Helena

state: Montana code: MT county: Lewis and Clark code: 049 zip code: 59601

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.

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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

John M. Beall

12/28/05

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	na	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> building(s)
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> structures
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
Name of related multiple property listing:	na	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:
DOMESTIC/single family residence

Current Functions:
DOMESTIC/single family residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification:
No Style

Materials:
foundation: Concrete
walls: Stucco
roof: Asphalt shingle
other: n/a

Narrative Description

The Donovan-Mayer House at 46 South Howie is located in one of the oldest sections of the city, in a neighborhood convenient for laborers working in industries downtown. Nestled on a narrow street on the southeast slope of Mount Helena, the modest house displays a complicated roofline. The property also includes a garage, two sheds, and a wrought iron fence, all of historic age and contributing to the significance of the place.

Residence

The 1200 square-foot wood-frame, stuccoed house appears, from the front (east) elevation, to be a gable-front and wing type building, with an open porch within the "ell". The front-gable bay extends across the south side of the building. Along the north elevation, the side-gable is paralleled by another, slightly wider side gable roofline directly behind it, to the west. Both of these wings intersect the front gable roof. The side gable bays are connected at the central valley. Shed-roofed additions extend from the rear (west) elevations of the house. Asphalt shingles cover all of these roofs. The irregularly-shaped footprint rests on stone and concrete foundation walls. Unless otherwise noted, the windows throughout the home are tall, wood-frame, two-over-two light, double-hung style.

The front (east) elevation of the home features two windows evenly spaced within the south, front gable bay. Decorative picket shutters are located on the south side of the south window and north side of the north window. Five wooden steps lead to the south side of the porch located within the ell. The porch has a shed roof at its north side, which extends from the side gable of the house. A shallow pediment protrudes from the south side of the porch roof. Another slope of the porch roof extends from the ridgeline of the pediment to the midway point on the front gable of the house. The roof is supported by a milled lumber column at the north side of the steps and a decorative, turned spindle column at the northeast corner. A knee wall defines the east side of the porch. The full-sized north porch wall features a round, wood window frame surrounding a square, four-light window. The porch shelters a multi-light wood entry door on the south side of the north bay, and a single window to the north.

The south elevation of the house features two windows spaced within the rear two-thirds of the main house. A small shed pantry addition extends from the west elevation, and this pantry's south elevation contains an entry at its east side and a small window to the west. Historic shed-roofed additions at both the north and south sides of the west elevation obscure the original exterior walls. The two-room pantry addition to the south contains a single window at its south side. The 1926 bedroom/sleeping porch addition at the north end of the west elevation contains a single window off-center, and a pair of windows to the north.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A
Significant Person(s): N/A
Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Areas of Significance: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Period(s) of Significance: 1887-1952
Significant Dates: 1887, 1926
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

Located near Helena's bustling downtown, within the original townsite, the Donovan Mayer house is a simple home, modest in size and character. Constructed by Edward Donovan in 1886, it was the home of a typical Helena laborer and his family. The residence remained largely unchanged through the turn of the century, and in keeping with local patterns, was added to and remodeled by new owners in the mid-1920s. The house is an excellent representative of a 1880s laborer's residence, and gains additional significance for its associations with the design trends and the physical development of the community through the first half of the twentieth century. For these reasons, it is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A.

Helena Established

In May 1864, Reginald Stanley, John Cowan, D. J. Miller and John Crabb (later to be known as the Four Georgians) left Virginia City with 90 days of supply of food and supplies. Finding no gold on the Kootenai or on the Marias River, the party started the return trip, prospecting as they traveled. With supplies nearly depleted, they camped on a small stream that entered the Prickly Pear Valley from the south, and proceeded to test the ground. One of the four said, on starting out for the afternoon's search, that it was their last chance. Before the afternoon was over, encouraging gold prospects were found. The casual remark concerning their "last chance" suggested the name for this new discovery. After finding pay prospects, the men took their time, thoroughly testing the gulch before they selected their claims.

Two of the men returned to Virginia City for supplies, keeping quiet about their find, while the other two remained to protect their claims and dig a ditch to bring water from the creek to their gravel bar. The secretive manner of the returning pair prevented the typical stampede to the new strike, but a succession of small ones took place in 1864. Laws were drawn up by the discovery party on the basis of those from other camps. Claims were 200 feet wide, north to south and extended rim to rim in the gulch.

Helena Townsite

This section taken directly from Helena: A Historic City, by Herbert L. Jacobson, Donald L. Byrd, and Chere Jiusto, prepared for the City of Helena and MTSHP, January, 1982.

The growth of Last Chance Gulch was rapid, and the need for laying out the town was soon apparent. On October 30, 1864, the miners met at the cabin of Captain Wood. Three commissioners were chosen to survey the town. They were Captain Wood, H. Brown and C.L. Cutler. Rules were adopted respecting pre-emption and occupancy. Original lots were thirty feet front by sixty feet deep and a person might pre-empt a lot by laying out a foundation on it. Captain Wood was assigned the task of laying out the streets numbering the lots and recording them. At that same meeting, the name of Helena was selected by ballot.

The compiler of the first City Directory (1868) vividly recalls the immediate effect of plotting out streets and lots: "No sooner was a town laid out than a furious rush was made for lots, choice locations being jumped and re-jumped. High words and hard blows, followed by hard feelings and bloody noses and broken heads were the natural incidents upon the acquisition of sites in the young city of Helena."

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 one

UTM References: UTM Zone 12 E 420034 N 5159618

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): SW ¼ SE ¼ SE ¼ of Section 25, Township 10 North, Range 4 West

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1 and 20, Block 58, Helena Original Townsite

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Beatrice Vogel

organization:

date: December 2004

street & number: 46 South Howie St.

telephone: (406) 442-1514

city or town: Helena

state: MT

zip code: 59601

Property Owner

name/title: Beatrice Vogel

street & number: 46 South Howie St.

telephone: (406) 442-1514

city or town: Helena

state: MT

zip code: 59601

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The north elevation of the house features three bays: the sleeping porch addition to the west, a central gabled bay and the east gabled bay. The east bay contains a single, centered window. The central bay contains a pair of three-over one-light double-hung windows. Three ribboned windows fill the north elevation of the sleeping porch.

Garage

The simple, shallow-gabled, one-story garage features a single bay. Its clapboard-clad walls rest on a concrete foundation walls. Asphalt shingles cover the roof, and its wide eaves are enclosed. A wide, historic, overhead garage door dominates the south elevation, and opens to the alley at the south side of the property. The west and north elevations contain no fenestration. The east elevation contains a single wood-paneled pedestrian door at its north side, and a tow-by-tow wood-frame sliding window to the south.

Garden shed

A one-story, rectangular, clapboard shed is situated in the back yard, across the lawn from the garage at the north side of the property. This simple garden shed rests on a concrete foundation and features a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. Entry is gained from the south elevation, via a wood-paneled door at the east side. There is a four-by-four-light sliding window at the west side of the south elevation. Another window of the same style is centered on the west elevation, while the east elevation contains a single, fixed, four-light window. The north elevation has no fenestration.

Tool Shed

A second shed is located on the north side of the property, west of the garden shed. This shed-roofed, one-story building rests on a concrete pad foundation. Asphalt shingles cover the roof. Painted plywood sheets form the exterior walls. Fenestration is limited to a one-by-one sliding window centered on the east elevation, and a fixed, four-light window on the west elevation. A wood-paneled door, set on the south side of the east elevation, provides the only entry to the building.

Integrity:

The house, outbuildings, and fence retain a high degree of integrity. Alterations to the residence, including stuccoing and rear additions took place during the historic period, and indeed are associated with the patterns of development in the City of Helena from the late 1800s through the 1940s. Each of the contributing resources retains its integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, and the workmanship, materials, and design are intact.

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Helena's physical growth, that is the actual buildings, was largely determined by its topographical features. By virtue of the rich gravel bars extending from the surface to bedrock located at the lowest levels of the gulch, placer mining usurped that location as building sites for the first year. Bridge Street, located to the east side of the gulch, became the first commercial area of the mining camp.¹ The earliest pictures of Helena in 1865, shows business establishments extending from Main Street to the top of the hill at Rodney Street. Nearly all of the structures were constructed of log. Bridge Street was also the center of Helena's first residential neighborhood because there were building sites available there and because the proprietors of its first businesses lived in the back portions of their stores. It was impossible for the town to develop to the west because of the steep hillsides that comprised the gulch's western edge. Main Street was extended north, down the gulch as mining was terminated, claim by claim, and it was here that the first permanent structures of stone and brick were located.

As far as Helena's early business district is concerned, it should be remembered that as late as 1884, it was only four blocks long, extending from the corner of Bridge Street, north on Main Street to Sixth Avenue, and only two blocks deep, from Jackson Street on the east to Clore (Park Avenue) on the west. The site now occupied by the Power Block (southwest corner of Sixth and Main), was taken up by the Holter's Lumber Yard and Mill.

The development of local industries in Helena was largely a response to the construction needs of the community. The first industry was lumbering and by the summer of 1865, two sawmills and a planing mill were operating at capacity. Stone quarries were opened both east and west of Helena and by 1867, brickyards had been constructed. The basic bedrock formation in the Helena area is limestone and lime kilns were built in Oro Fino and Grizzly Gulch just a mile south of town.

By 1884, several other basic industries had been added. There were three sawmills and a planing mill, four breweries, two foundries, two brickyards, an electric light company, a soda water factory, and a sash, door and blind factory. Within six years, two more sawmills and planing mills had been established, another electric light company, a vinegar works, a sampling works and a gas works (coal-gasification plant).

The height of Helena's building boom was 1889. No less than 425 homes were built in 1888. The City Directory of 1889 lists nine architectural firms, four brick manufacturers, two stone quarries, eight lumber companies, three tile manufacturers, five stone contractors, fourteen carpenters, eight painters, four wallpapers, and three calciminers. There were also four cornice manufacturers, three mantel firms, and two sky light manufacturers.

Although the townsite of Helena was laid out in 1864-65, there was a definite need to have it resurveyed, which was done by a professional in 1884. There is relatively little difficulty in tracing the ownership of various lots within the original townsite. However, it is a far different question in the adjoining land that was incorporated into the city later. A definite pattern of the original ownership emerges. Nearly all of it was first a mining claim. With little or no thought to actually mining the land, filing a claim upon it was tantamount to gaining ownership. And enterprising miners, with an eye to the future and ambition to establish a permanent city, quickly claimed all of the land surrounding the townsite. The government land office, established in Helena 1867 deeded the title of the land to those having filed claims, creating the basis for a quick fortune in real estate development. The next step in the process was the surveying, sub-dividing and filing of addition plats to the city with the county commissioners. Then, sale of lots to prospective builders and real estate investors and speculators completed the process.

One of these foresighted individuals was Christmas Gift Evans, who with his business partner John B. Sanford, owned and operated a successful feed store. Evans and Sanford built their homes just west of downtown in the early 1880s, but had purchased several lots in the area, including the original townsite Lots 1 and 20 of Block 58 as early as 1875. Edward Donovan, a local laborer, built his house on those lots in 1887, when laborers were in demand and the local economy was booming. Skilled artisans and unskilled laborers were relatively well-paid, and as a result, Donovan was able to constructed a modest house for his family.

¹ Bridge Street became State Street in 1890 to commemorate Montana's statehood.

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Edward and Johanna Donovan Family

Edward Donovan was Michigan native who traveled to the West in search of prosperity. Following a pattern typical of many Irish in the West, he married a woman from Ireland. Thirty-five year-old Edward married twenty-four year old Johanna "Annie" Doyle in the Catholic Church in Helena on May 6, 1875. The 1880 Helena census record indicates that the couple soon had two children, Charles E. born in 1876 and George in 1878. Two years later, son Garfield was born, and daughter Mary ("Mamie") followed two years after that, in 1882. In 1883, the family lived at the north end of Jefferson Avenue just north of miners' residences at Readers Alley and Chinatown, and just south of the exclusive West Side neighborhood. The area was very convenient to downtown, and little more than a block from where they would build their own home.

There was a diverse ethnic population in Helena during its early days. Helena was truly a cosmopolitan community in 1870, its residents representing twenty-nine foreign countries. The cosmopolitan flavor of Helena in the 1870s was typical of communities that offered wide employment opportunities for unskilled labor. The U.S. Census figures show that 74% of Helena's population, including Johanna Donovan, was foreign-born. Of that number, one quarter (633) were Chinese. The largest number of foreign-born whites were from Germany, and many others were from the British Isles, including 147 from Ireland.

The economic prosperity of the late 1880s instilled a confidence in Helenans regarding the permanence of the community, and inspired Donovan to build his home. Perhaps the arrival of son James in 1886 inspired the move as well. The modest building was just under 900 square feet, with a parlor, living room, two bedrooms, and a kitchen. The house is clearly visible in photographs of the city taken in 1890, on the edge of downtown with Mount Helena rising behind. The house was efficient and utilitarian, tidy and inviting, without the fanciful ornamentation common to middle and upper class homes of the Late Victorian period. Evidence suggests that the Donovans did not have title to the land at the time of construction, but that it was still owned by Evans and Sanford.

The Donovan family lived in the home through the early 1890s, and Edward continued to work as a laborer. This prosperous atmosphere was short-lived however, for Helena's "golden years" ground to a halt with the Panic of 1893. Sparked by federal curtailment of annual silver purchases, the ensuing depression sent Helena and other mining communities across the West into a tailspin. Construction in Helena stopped and the population began to drop:

In 1880, there were only 3,624 people living here, yet by 1890 the population nearly quadrupled, to 13,834. This was the decade of Helena's greatest population growth, coinciding with its greatest building period. The Panic of 1893 was devastating to Helena's economy; during the following decade its population loss was approximately thirty-five percent, shrinking to 10,700 in 1900.

Opportunities for laborers decreased, but Donovan and his family stayed on. Tragically, Edward died in the mid-1890s, leaving his widow and their five children. Johanna was able to purchase the house and land outright from Evans and Sanford on March 15, 1895 for \$563. Charles, nearly twenty when his father died, worked as a clerk. George was a laborer by the late 1890s, and middle son Garfield helped with expenses working as a messenger for the Western Union Telegraph Company. Daughter Mary took classes at the Englehorn Helena Business College in 1897, and worked as a clerk and stenographer to several businesses in town through the turn of the century.

Johanna and her children lived in the small house at 46 South Howie through 1907. That year, youngest son James moved to San Francisco. By 1908, the Donovan family had left the premises, and according to the Polk Directories, Johanna moved to Seattle. Title for the property did not transfer, however, until 1921, when Fred and Zetta Mayer purchased it on September 27.

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Fred and Zetta Mayer Remodel the House

Whereas the Donovans were representative of families that settled in Helena from points east – Michigan and Ireland -, Fred and Zetta Mayer were first generation Montana natives, from Wickes and Bozeman, respectively. Born in 1888, Mr. Mayer came to Helena with his family as a small boy. As a youth he worked at his uncle's local bakery, Wendells, and spent some time as a miner in Butte. At the age of 22, Mayer entered the postal service, and he remained in their employ for the remainder of his life.

In 1914, Fred married Zetta Sanders, who had attended school in East Helena. By 1921, when they purchased their home at 46 South Howie, Fred had worked in nearly every department in the post office, and the next year, he was appointed associate postmaster. Fred and Zetta had one child, a son named Lawrence. In 1926, they applied for a permit to add a bedroom, sleeping porch, and new roof to the small home. The permit was granted, and resulted in the present configuration of the house. It is likely that the new roof included updates to the porch roofline – with embellishments such as the shallow gable dormer above the steps and the shed extension between the front gable portion of the house and the original porch roof. These improvements not only increased the living space in the home, but also dressed the house with unpretentious embellishments that made it appear more modern, comfortable and inviting. There is no record of when the stucco finish was applied to the building, but it certainly follows that the 1926 remodel included the new finish material.

The Mayer remodel was typical of updates to Victorian era homes and commercial buildings throughout Helena during the mid-late 1920s through the 1930s. The Helena Historic District update in 1990 describes this trend:

"During this period [1928-1948], a movement to remodel many of the Victorian-era, downtown buildings in more contemporary architectural styles also reflected downtown viability. The popularity of stucco lent itself to readily masking old buildings, and many including the Bonneville Apartments, the Rio Theater and the Holder Hardware store were remodeled in Mission * or Spanish * influences."

Though clearly not a Modern, Mission, of Spanish influence style building, the tidy home at 46 South Howie did receive an updated look during the Mayer's tenure there, reflective of their stable middle class lifestyle and in keeping with local design fashions.

The Mayer family lived in the house for most of the twentieth century. Fred died suddenly May 15, 1952, but Zetta continued to live there until 1967. She then moved to an apartment at 320 North Warren, just on the other side of downtown. Zetta outlived her son, Lawrence, by twenty-two years. She died at the Cooney Convalescent Home in Helena in 1988, at the age of 98.

When Zetta left the Donovan-Mayer House, a succession of people lived there for the next few years, including businessman Bob Atkins, and Kenneth Dana. James and Barbara Bernet purchased the home in 1972, and lived there for the next fifteen years. In 1988, Beatrice Vogel took up residence. Ms. Vogel has taken great care to maintain the Donovan Mayer House, and her pride in its history is apparent.

It is important to recognize that residences in Helena each have their own unique stories to tell. Properties such as the Donovan-Mayer House are particularly significant as they are representative of the patterns of settlement of the laborers and middle class families of the community. The steadfastness and determination of immigrants and first generation citizens of Helena allowed the community to flourish and survive during the boom and bust periods of its history. Its simple, functional design, and practical yet fashionable remodel is reflective of local patterns of development. For these reasons, the Donovan-Mayer is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A.

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Helena: A Historic City, by Herbert L. Jacobson, Donald L. Byrd, and Chere Jiusto, prepared for the City of Helena and MTSHPO, January, 1982.

Polk Directories, City of Helena, 1883-2003.

Marriage Records, Book A, p. 136, Lewis and Clark County Courthouse, Clerk and Recorder's Office.

1880 Census, Helena, MT.

1897 School Census, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT.

1900 Census, Helena, MT.

Books of Deeds, Lewis and Clark County Courthouse, Clerk and Recorder's Office.

"Fred W. Mayer Rites at 2 o'clock Tomorrow Afternoon," *Helena Independent Record*, May 16, 1952.

"Zetta Mayer," Obituaries, *Helena Independent Record*, March 6, 1988.

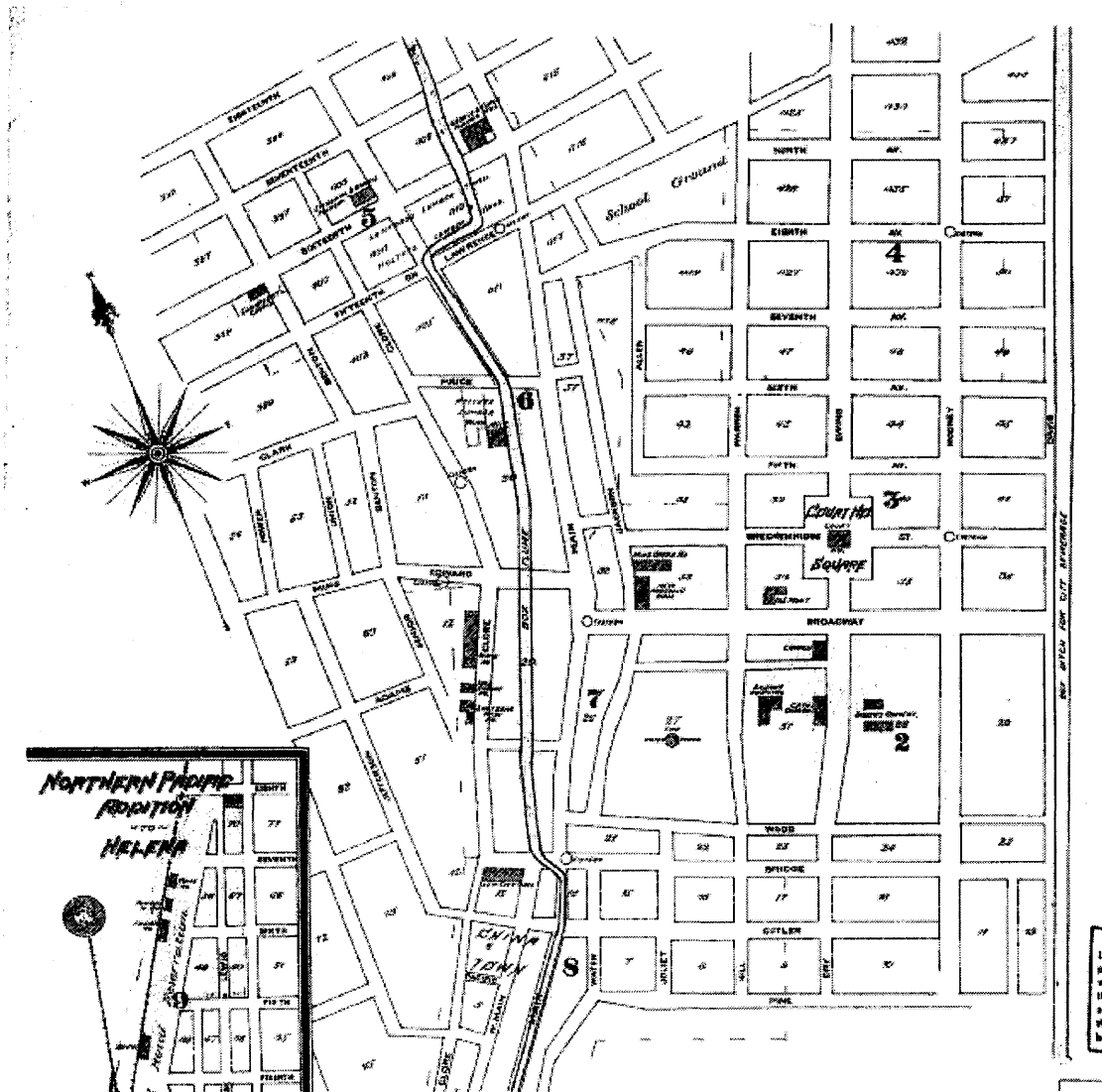
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Sanborn Map of Helena, 1884.

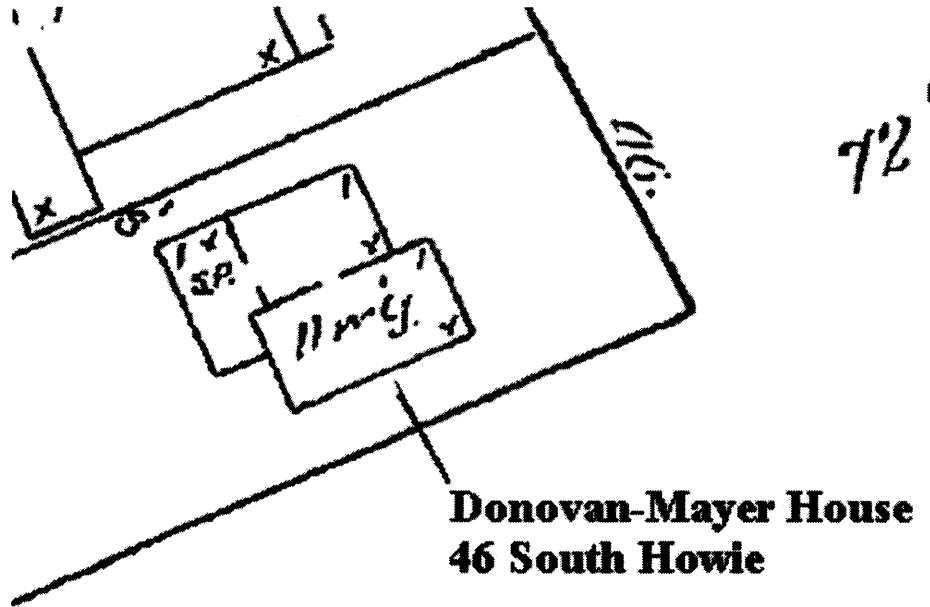
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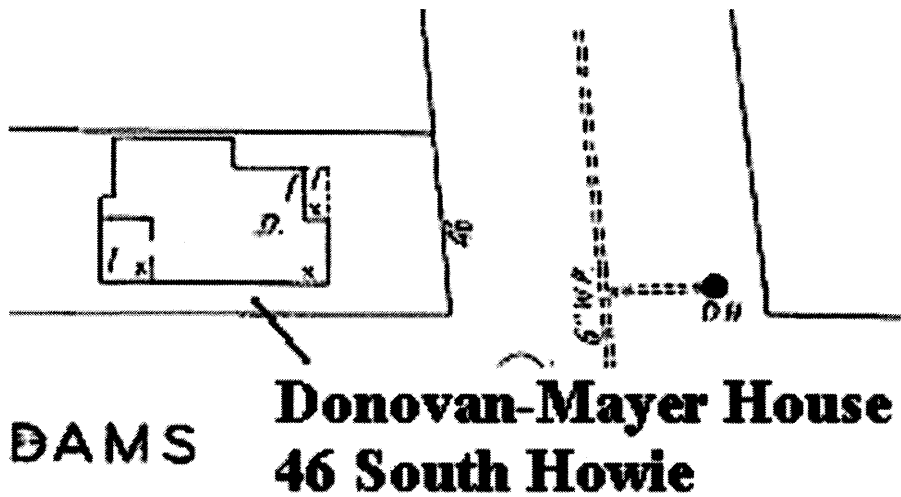
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**Donovan-Mayer House
46 South Howie**

Detail of Helena 1888 Sanborn Map



Detail of Helena 1930 Sanborn Map

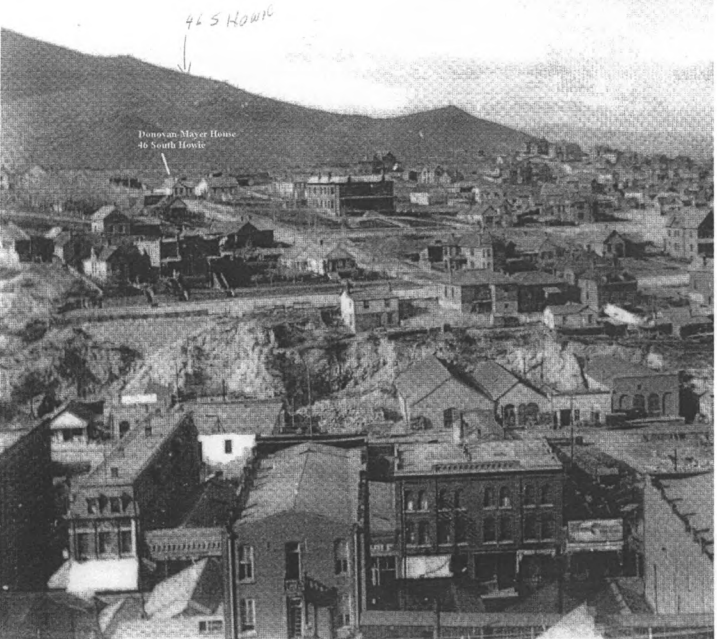
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Helena 1890. View to west toward Mt. Helena. Photo Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society

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Helena 1890. View to the east across Last Chance Gulch. Photo courtesy of the Montana Historical Society

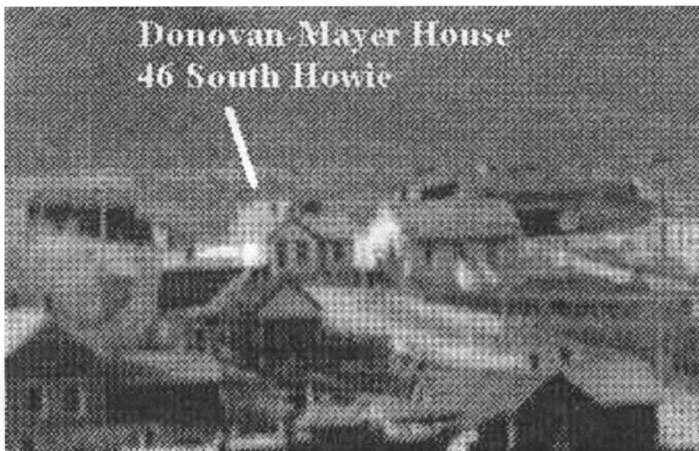
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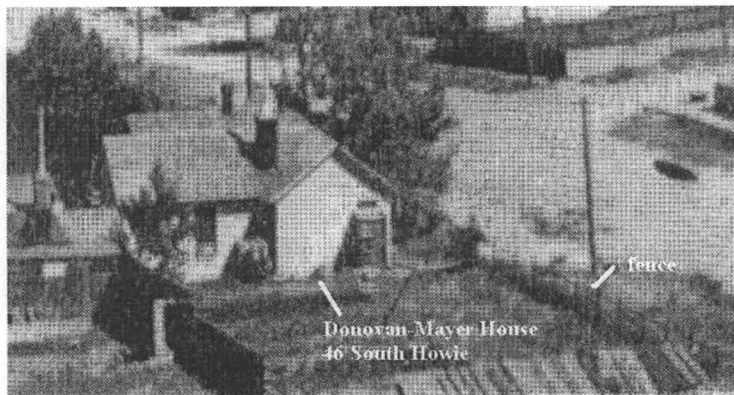
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Detail of 1890 Helena photograph. View to west, showing east elevation of Donovan-Mayer House



Detail of 1890 Helena photograph. View to west, showing west elevation and historic fence of Donovan-Mayer House.

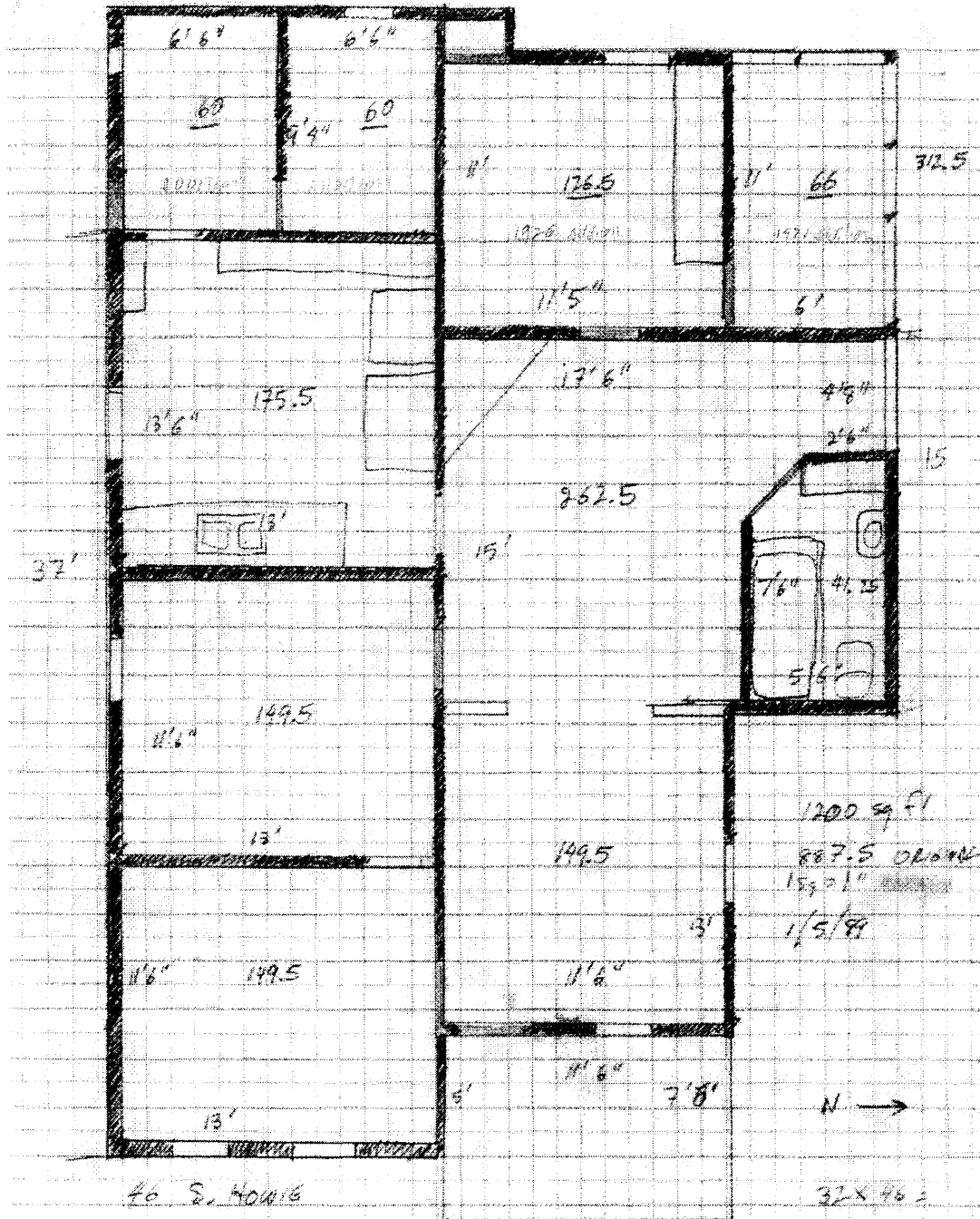
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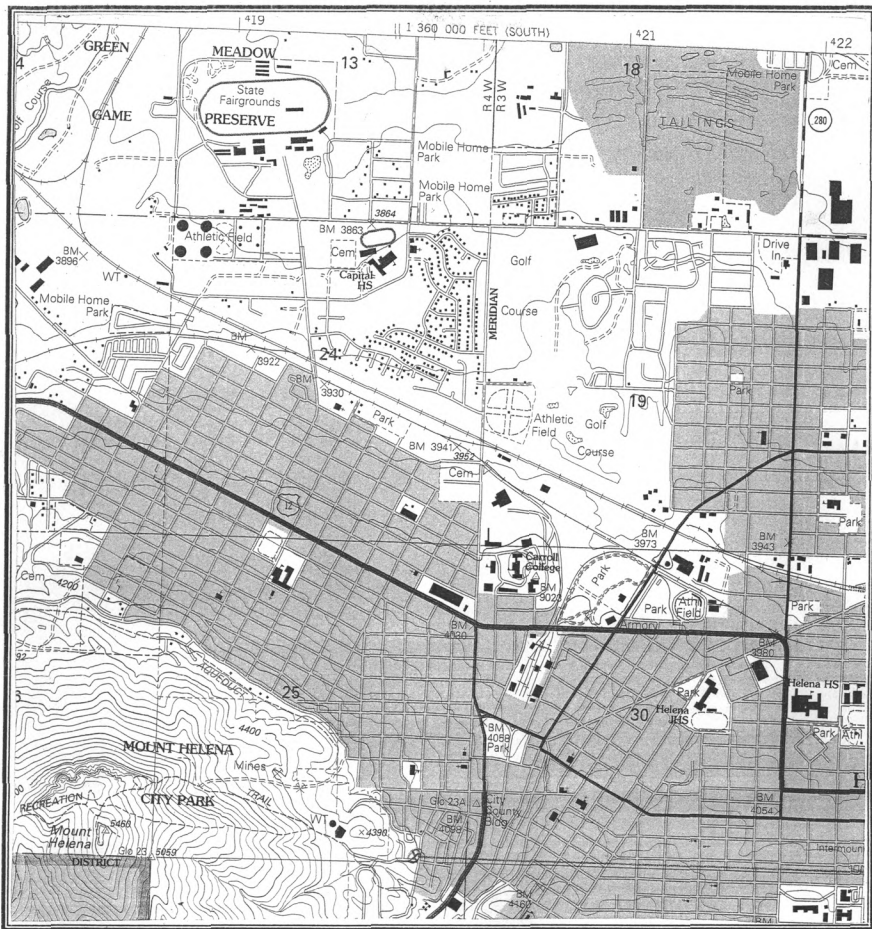
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Residence floorplan.



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UTMs: Zone 12, E 420034, N 5159618, Montana Prime Meridian (NAD27)
 SW ¼ SE ¼ of Section 25, T10N R4W (Montana Prime Meridian)
 Helena Quadrangle