

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 13 1987

date entered APR 9 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Knowles Building

and or common same

2. Location

street & number 200-210 South 3rd St. West n/a not for publication

city, town Missoula n/a vicinity of

state Montana code 030 county Missoula code 063

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name KLS Partnership: Laura Lehtola, Marilyn Sullivan, Dale Kalberg

street & number 200 South 3rd St. West

city, town Missoula n/a vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Missoula County Courthouse

street & number 200 West Broadway

city, town Missoula state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Missoula Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Montana State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Helena state Montana

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Knowles Building is composed of a pair of two story, masonry buildings, separated by a masonry party wall. The east building (200-204 S. 3rd St. W) was built in 1905, following plans and specifications by A.J. Gibson, a prominent Missoula architect. Knowles used the same plans to construct the west building (206-210 S. 3rd St. W) four to six years later. The Knowles Building is located on the south side of Missoula at the edge of the residential neighborhood that developed shortly after the turn of the century. The front facades are built to the lot lines of South 3rd St., while the rear of the buildings looks out over the Clark Fork River to the north. The two buildings initially shared common water and sewer systems, which were divided in 1934 after court litigation determined separate ownership of each section.

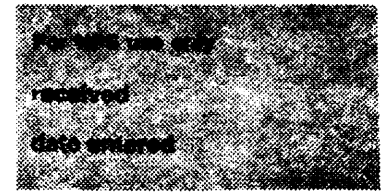
Typical of the Commercial Italianate style, verticality is emphasized in both of the three-bay buildings. Corner and sidewall piers draw the eye up to the decorative corbeling at the cornice line, which is capped by a sandstone coping. The apartment entrances, set in the central bay of each building, are given prominent play in the architectural scheme. These entrances to the upper floors project slightly from the wall surface and break the cornice line. A feeling of additional height is gained through the use of small transoms placed directly above the street level doors and Romanesque arched windows framed with hood molds at the second story level. The original architectural drawings show that a decorative iron grill with the name "The Bachelors" was to be placed above the apartment entries, but a photo of the building in 1909 does not show such ornamentation, leaving doubt as to whether it was ever physically in place.

The street level of both buildings was designed to accommodate two commercial businesses each. The commercial storefronts feature recessed front entrances, plate glass commercial glazing, and amethyst glass transoms. On the west building, a belt course of ornamental pressed metal stretches above the transom glass. A large commercial oven was added to the rear of the exterior of the east building prior to 1912, when the commercial space was occupied by a bakery. At present, the two buildings contain three commercial businesses; one business occupies both commercial spaces of the west building and an interior doorway was cut to combine the spaces.

The second stories contain four apartments in each building. These are entered by the two street level, recessed entries described above, which are spaced between the two commercial storefronts of each building. Oriel windows serve as the major decorative features on both the front and rear elevations of both buildings. These oriels light each of the eight apartment units. The rear elevation of the east-side section also has a small, centrally placed, second story balcony with stairs to ground level. Tall, one-over-one double hung windows with jack arch lintels light the second story apartments on the sidewalls. A narrow stringcourse of sandstone encompasses the building at the second story window sill level and the corbeled brick cornice also encircles the entire building.

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The interior of the Knowles Building retains much of its material integrity. The ceilings in the commercial spaces are painted pressed metal. Lighting has changed as have some interior wall surfaces. Part of the building in the commercial spaces has been dry walled, while other parts have been stripped to bare brick. The second story apartments have experienced few material changes. Above each central stairwell is a large skylight. Moldings, doors, stairways and balustrades are original throughout the building. The older, east building features spindle balusters and ornamental door and window moldings, while the west building was finished with square balusters and broad, flat moldings. The apartments in the west building also have fireplaces. The apartments are large, well lighted and comfortable, continuing to appeal to the middle class, white collar worker for whom they were originally designed.

Alterations to the original design of the Knowles Building have been minimal. A small 12' x 16', one story, masonry addition on the east building was built prior to 1929. This addition is set back from the lot line approximately 15' and serves as additional commercial space. A large, multi-bay, wooden garage was built perpendicular to the rear wall of the Knowles Building sometime after 1929. The transom of the west building has been covered with redwood siding but the original amethyst glass was left intact behind. The windows of the west oriels still possess their original windows but the window framing has been covered with redwood siding. The original windows of the east oriels have been replaced with plate glass and new double hung units set in the original openings. The material and structural integrity of the Knowles Building is very good.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1905, 1909–12      **Builder/Architect** A.J. Gibson, architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Knowles Building is actually composed of two separate buildings. The plans and specifications for the original, 1905, east building were prepared by the locally prominent architect, A.J. Gibson. The same plans were used to construct the west building four to six years later. The two buildings comprise an architecturally significant whole that is a distinctive example of Commercial Italianate styling. The Knowles Building gains additional significance due to its association with the Honorable Hiram Knowles, a man who played an important role in the planning and development of the southern residential and commercial sector of Missoula. In addition to his speculative land dealings, Knowles served as an associate justice on the Supreme Court of the Montana Territory and, later, as a U.S. District Court judge for the State of Montana.<sup>1</sup>

### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Knowles Building was one of a large number of Missoula structures designed by A.J. Gibson. Gibson was the most prolific architect in Missoula from 1887 until his retirement in 1909. "When Mr. Gibson first settled in Missoula, he saw the possibilities of the town, and as soon as he was able to do so he began purchasing business lots...To drive over Missoula is to see on every hand evidence of his skill and ability. He built the Missoula High School, the Hawthorne School, the Sacred Heart Academy, the Harnois Theatre, all of the University of Montana buildings, and innumerable others."<sup>2</sup> Gibson recognized that the beauty of Missoula's natural setting enhanced the city's potential for planned growth as a residential and academic center that would stand in pleasant contrast to the burgeoning, industrial, mining cities of Western Montana. The Knowles Building represents Gibson's later work, and, as a combination commercial and residential structure of the Italianate Row House style, its understated urban elegance well illustrates Gibson's versatility as a designer.

The Knowles Building incorporates the primary characteristics of the later period Commercial Italianate apartment building, with its symmetrical plan, arched windows framed with hood molds, corner piers, polygonal oriel windows, and vertical emphasis in volume and openings. This particular style was Gibson's contribution to the white collar residential boom of Missoula's southside, which also included several other middle class flats, such as the University Apartments (listed in the National Register on April 28, 1985).

<sup>1</sup> Progressive Men of the State of Montana, A.W. Bowen & Co., Chicago, 1901, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> Sanders, Helen Fitzgerald, History of Montana, Volume III, Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago and New York, 1913, p. 1356.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Southeast Missoula, MT

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	2	2	7	1	4	8	0	5	1	9	4	5	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 11 & 12, Block 35, Knowles Addition to the City of Missoula

NE $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 21, T. 13N. R. 19W.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathy Marx

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date January, 1987

street & number 4415 South Ave. West telephone 406-721-2756

city or town Missoula state Montana

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Maurella Slenfy*

title SHPO

date March 9, 1987

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

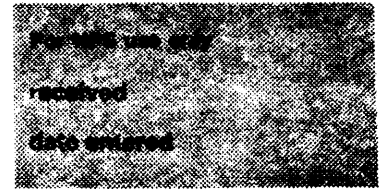
date 4-9-87

*for Alton Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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## COMMUNITY PLANNING SIGNIFICANCE

Between 1890 and 1910, Missoula's southside was experiencing accelerated growth and accompanying change. The University of Montana was opened September 11, 1885 at South 6th St. West, and moved to its present site in the southeastern section of Missoula upon completion of Main Hall and Science Hall in 1899. The Garden City Commercial College located at 120 South 4th St. West, was dedicated in 1905.<sup>3</sup> The Milwaukee Railroad Depot, directly east of the Knowles Building, was completed in 1910. The completion of the Milwaukee rail line, which offered competition to the Northern Pacific Railroad, secured Missoula's future as a thriving supply and trading center.<sup>4</sup> Missoula promoted itself as the logical residential city of the State, with the intention of luring Butte businessmen to establish their residences in the comfort of the "Garden City"<sup>5</sup> while maintaining their businesses in the "Ugliest Town on Earth".<sup>6</sup>

Hiram Knowles was an economic opportunist with foresight. Although Knowles lived and worked as a lawyer and on the bench of the Territorial Supreme Court in Butte prior to his move to Missoula in 1891, he invested heavily in the development of the nascent townsite, as evidenced by his appointment to the Board of Directors of the First National Bank of Missoula in 1873 and his purchase of a large tract of homesteaded land south of town across the Clark Fork River in 1887. Knowles' Missoula investment property was bordered to the south by land homesteaded by two other lawyers, W.J. Stephens and W.M. Bickford. Stephens and Bickford combined their quarter sections and platted the town of South Missoula. The grid of South Missoula was laid out diagonally in a northwest-southeast pattern, with the main thoroughfare, renamed Stephens Ave., paralleling the well-used wagon road leading from downtown Missoula, across the Higgins Ave. Bridge, and on to Fort Missoula and the Bitterroot Valley to the south.<sup>7</sup> Judge Knowles defied the Stephens-Bickford grid scheme, and platted his Knowles Addition using a traditional north-south grid pattern, which made for some very odd intersections between the two subdivisions.

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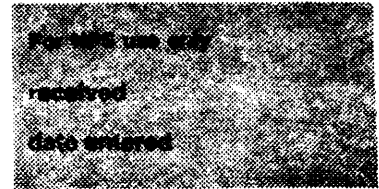
<sup>3</sup> Missoulian, Centennial Edition, 1960, Sec. B, p.1

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 24

<sup>5</sup> Progressive Men of the State of Montana, A.W. Bowen and Co., Chicago, 1901, p. 257

<sup>6</sup> Sanders, Helen Fitzgerald "Redeeming the Ugliest Town on Earth (Butte, Montana)", The Craftsman, June 1907, pp. 315-326.

<sup>7</sup> Koelbel, Lenora, Missoula, The Way It Was, "A Portrait of an Early Western Town", Gateway Printing and Litho, Missoula, MT, 1972, p. 68

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The Missoula Gazette, in July and September 1891, reported a conflict between the south-side developers as to where the southern terminus of the soon-to-be-replaced Higgins Ave. Bridge should be placed. Previously, the bridge connected with Stephens Ave. (now Orange St.), but a group of citizens including the prominent F.G. Higgins and Judge Knowles were in favor of a more eastern terminus that would connect the commercial district with South Higgins Ave. and continue with Brooks Ave. serving as a new, main southern arterial out of town. A bond issue voted upon by the people of Missoula favored the new terminus site.<sup>8</sup>

John Knowles' property interests gained in value as the City of Missoula prospered, while South Missoula continued to flounder as a separate townsite. With the sustained push for residential land south of the river, lots in the Knowles Addition sold briskly and Judge Knowles requested his land be annexed by the City of Missoula, which occurred on November 8, 1905. Shortly thereafter, Knowles filed a plat for the Second Knowles Addition, which encompassed the small parcel of land at the southern terminus of the Higgins Ave. bridge. Knowles planned for commercial development along South Higgin Ave. and South 3rd St. West, and a small service-oriented business sector soon became established.

The personal and political influence of Judge Knowles was in large measure responsible for the demise of South Missoula. South Missoula, after the annexation of the Knowles Addition, had the larger city as its immediate neighbor, making separate incorporation impractical. The annexation of South Missoula followed soon after the Knowles Addition, which resulted in the tripling of the population of the city - to the pride and continued residential building fervor of Missoula citizens. South Missoula's diagonal grid pattern has survived to the present day to the consternation of traffic planners and high speed automobile drivers.

Between 1905-1910, Judge Knowles had several flats constructed as rental properties in the vicinity of the Knowles Building. The Knowles Building was unique in that it was the most substantial investment and the only of the Knowles flats to combine commercial and residential use. The commercial bays have had a variety of uses over the years, housing a dance studio, bakery, grocery, auto garage, drapery shop, second-hand and furniture stores. The upper story residential flats continue as popular rentals.

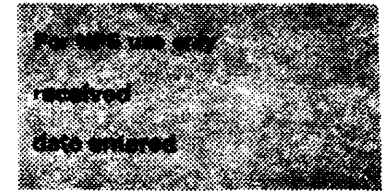
The construction of the Knowles Building remains a clear statement of Judge Knowles' confidence, political power, and entrepreneurial foresight in the rapid residential and commercial development of Missoula's southside.

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<sup>8</sup>The Missoula Gazette, July 8, 1891, Vol. 3, No. 128, p. 1

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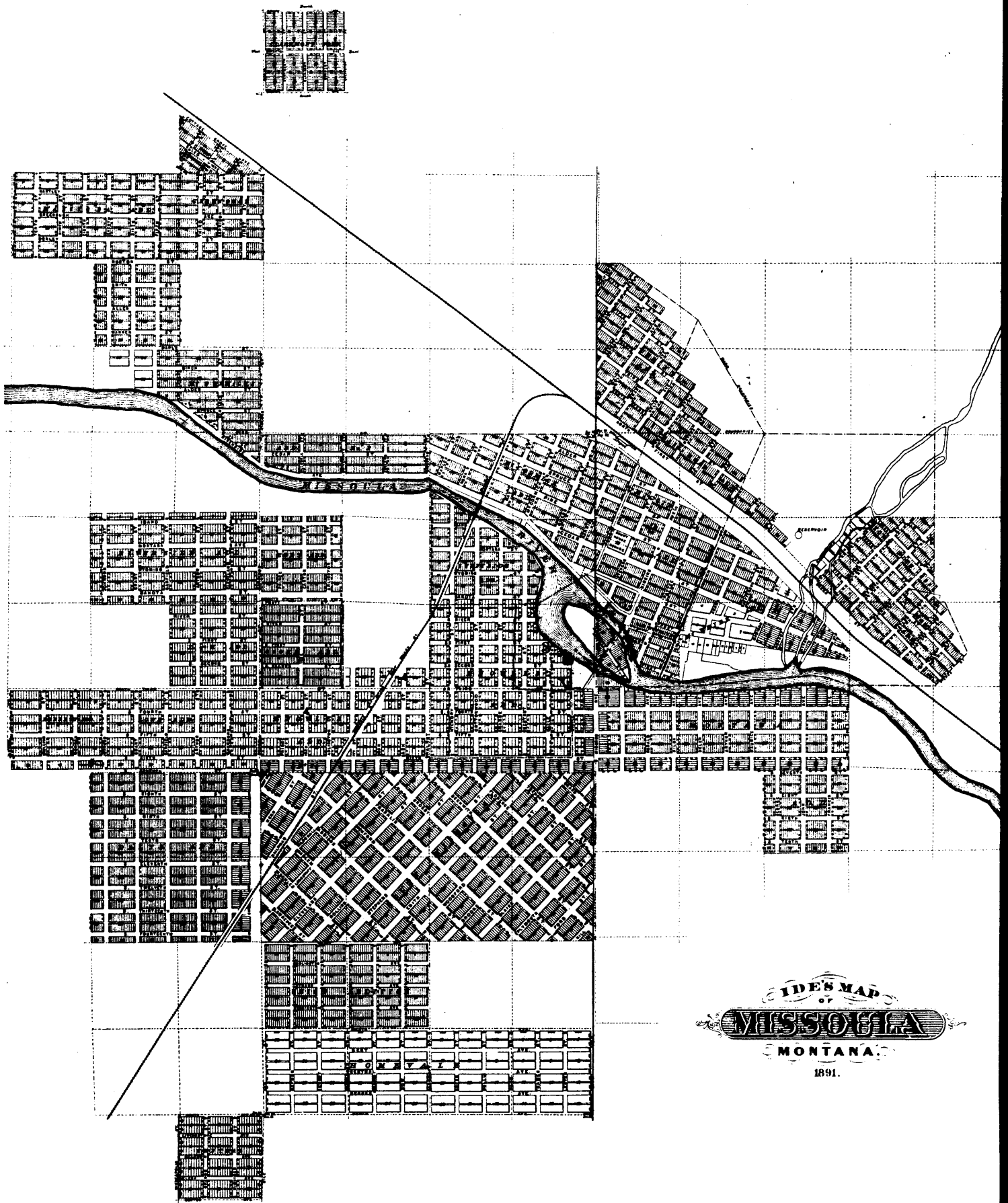
The Missoula Gazette, July 8, 1891, Vol. 3, No. 128, p.1

The Daily Missoulian, Nov. 8, 1905, p.2

The Daily Missoulian, March 9, 1906, p.2

Missoulian, Centennial Edition, 1960, Sec. B, p.1





IDE'S MAP  
OF  
**HELENA**  
MONTANA  
1891.