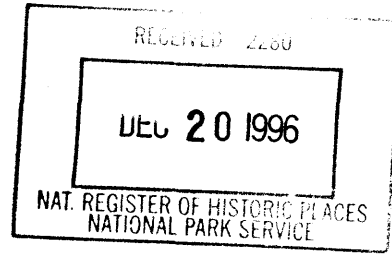


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Thorn House

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 140 Second

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Alberton

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Mineral

code: 061

zip code: 59820

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. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

12-16-96

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

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

Erson R. Beall

Date of Action

1-13-97

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic Resources of Alberton, Montana

Number of Resources within Property	
Contributing	Noncontributing

_ 2 _	___	building(s)
___	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
_ 2 _	___	TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Domestic: Single dwelling

Current Functions:

Domestic: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements:
Craftsman

Materials:

foundation: concrete
walls: wood
roof: asphalt shingle
other: n/a

Narrative Description

The Thorn House is a 1 1/2 story, single family residence exhibiting Craftsman style influences. The house is of frame construction, with a rectangular plan. It is sheathed with clapboard and rests on a concrete foundation encompassing a daylight basement. The roof is moderately sloped, with exposed rafter ends and a shed dormer on the south side. It is covered with green asphalt shingles.

The gable-fronted design is symmetrical, and spanned across the front by a single story porch. The porch is covered with a hip roof, featuring latticework underneath and concrete steps. Primary entrance is placed centrally in the porch, and includes a historic, upper-light wooden door. Large fixed windows with multi-light transoms open onto the porch. A pair of double-hung, 1-over-1 windows are framed in the upper gable end, completing the design of the front facade.

Fenestration elsewhere on the house includes similar double-hung units, along with small fixed windows and casement windows in the basement. A rear addition clad with T-1-11 siding has been made to the house in recent years.

To the rear of the property, an historic open shed remains. It is a gable-roofed building with beveled clapboard siding.

Integrity

The Thorn House is one of only four houses in Alberton which still retain a high degree of historic integrity. Original design, fabrics, and workmanship are all well preserved, along with the location and general setting. The recent addition, while incompatible with the original design and materials of the Thorn House, is located at the rear where it cannot be seen from the streetscape. Therefore it impacts little, and the house still very accurately recalls the period of the town's founding and development between 1908 - 1925.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, B, C

Areas of Significance: Exploration/Settlement, Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1915 - 1925

Significant Person(s): William "Bill" Thorn

Significant Dates: ca. 1915

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Thorn House is a well-preserved residence representing Alberton's founding years. It is a typical family residence of the era, reflecting the working class character of this railroad town. One of only four residences in the community with the integrity to reflect Alberton's developmental years, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to Criterion A. The house gains significance under Criterion B, for its associations with Bill Thorn, an early businessman and the town's first postmaster. Thorn was instrumental in the crusade to establish Mineral County during the 1910s. Finally, the Thorn House is significant according to Criterion C, as a strong local example of popular early 20th-century architecture reflecting pattern book and Craftsman style influences.

The Thorn House is the original residence of William "Bill" Thorn, an early Alberton businessman. Thorn moved his store from Lothrop when Alberton was platted and opened shop in the present Chet's Bar building. Thorn's store held the first Alberton Post Office. Thorn and Co., general merchandise, is one of two general stores of a total of five listings in the 1907 Alberton directory. In addition to his business ventures, Thorn was politically active in the founding and early governing of Mineral County. Thorn and seven other western Missoula County citizens posted a \$4,000 bond during the election to found Mineral County (failure to pass the ballot would have resulted in forfeiture of the bond). When the county came into being on August 4, 1914, Thorn was appointed one of three original county commissioners.

The local historical significance of individuals in the development of a small community is often very difficult to ascertain, without extensive oral history documentation. Bill Thorn's significance in Alberton can be inferred with a relatively high assurance of accuracy. Thorn served as the area postmaster for a number of years, which was a politically appointed position that generally indicated local community support when held for longer than a single term. Alberton's geographical position at the southern boundary between Mineral and Missoula Counties indicates that Thorn's involvement in the formation of Mineral County (which split off from Missoula County) was instrumental in determining the southern limits of the new county boundary. The motivation for county-splitting during the teens in Montana rested primarily with the perceived needs of new, outlying communities for road, bridge and school construction. Successful county-splitting efforts required a very strong commitment on the part of the majority of the citizens and most often resulted in intense campaigns of local boosterism, which were carried on for a number of years.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Browman, Audra "Alberton, MT". Looseleaf notebook, p. 12.

Kinney, Della "Yesteryears in Montana". Unpublished manuscript, p. 12.

Polk, R.L. & Co. City Directory for Alberton, Montana: 1907.

See *Historic Resources of Alberton, Montana* MPD

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:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	11	691450	5208600

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): Located in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 2, T14W, R23W.

Verbal Boundary Description

The Thorn House is located on Lots 20-21, Block 1, West Alberton, Montana.

Boundary Justification

These are the lots which have been associated with the Thorn House since its construction ca. 1915.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: James R. McDonald Architects, P.C.
street & number: P.O. Box 8163 telephone: date: 1986
city or town: Missoula state: MT zip code: 59801

revised by: Mike Koop, SHPO staff, 1986
updated, 1996

Property Owner

name/title: Shawn Lake
street & number: 140 Second Street telephone: ~
city or town: Alberton state: MT zip code: 59820