

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000808

Date Listed: 7/21/89

Main Street Historic District
Property Name

Custer
County

MT
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick W. Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

7/21/89
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The nomination form for the district did not provide an acreage figure. Gretchen Graham with the Montana SHPO informed us that the nominated district includes 40 acres. The form is now officially amended to add this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 07 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Main Street Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 400 - 1400 Main Street and Cross Streets N/A not for publication
city, town Miles City N/A vicinity
state Montana code 030 county Custer code 017 zip code 59301

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>64</u>	<u>30</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
	structures
	objects
<u>65</u>	<u>30</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Marcella Steffy

Date 6-1-89

State or Federal agency and bureau SHPO

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

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Patrick Andrews

Date of Action 7/21/89

Signature of the Keeper Jan

Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade
Domestic
Government
Landscape

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade
Domestic
Government
Landscape

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

High Victorian Gothic, Renaissance Revival
Beaux Arts, Chicago Style
Art Deco, Moderne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick, Concrete
walls Brick, Concrete, Stucco
roof Composition
other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The 93 buildings in the Main Street Historic District are primarily two-story masonry and masonry-clad concrete buildings erected between 1882 and 1920. Although the rhythm of Main Street is interrupted by an occasional vacant lot, the district is densely developed and unified by a predominance of two-story commercial structures. Older buildings are concentrated at the west end, nearest Riverside Park, with newer buildings predominating towards the east. Main Street shows a progression from High Victorian Gothic brick buildings from the earliest period (1882-1887), to Renaissance Revival and Beaux Arts buildings after the turn of the century (1898-1920). Interspersed among these major types are examples of Art Deco, Moderne and International Style buildings constructed in the 1930's and 1940's. The different styles reflect three major periods of Miles City's history.

Miles City, Montana is one of the oldest cities in the Yellowstone River Valley. This region of the Great Plains is a broad, arid prairie 2,400 feet above sea level. The city is located on the valley floor south of the Yellowstone River, which cuts across 500 miles of southern and eastern Montana. A dramatic expanse of sandstone cliffs rises 80 feet above the north bank of the Yellowstone, where the river has cut into the ancient glacial moraine. From its source beyond the lands of the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indians to the southwest, the Tongue River flows into the Yellowstone beneath these cliffs, forming a natural western boundary to the city. Prominent buttes with coal and other mineral strata accent the prairie expanses covered with grass, sagebrush, scattered trees and diverse wildlife.

The most prominent landscape feature in Miles City is Riverside Park, located between an original bend of the Tongue River--now Scanland Lake--on the west, Park Street on the south, South 5th Street on the east, and Main Street on the north. Since the creation of the town, the park has been a buffer between the relatively undeveloped country to the west (the Fort Keogh Reservation) and the built-up city grid to the east. The Army donated its Ferry Landing Lot, now Riverside Park, to the city in 1877. It remains the Main Street Historic District's strongest link to its military past. The park shows remains of a radial path system designed in 1910 and is remarkable for its many tall cottonwood trees. The trees and the water form a tranquil, natural setting at the historic entrance to the city.

Main Street forms the north edge of Riverside Park and continues east as the major thoroughfare to Miles City's central business district. The Main Street Historic District extends from Riverside Park on the west to Prairie Avenue on the east boundary, and all but the easternmost properties lying within the Original Townsite plat. At the eastern edge of

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the district, the 1881 Main Street grid intersects a later, true north/south grid of the Miles Addition. The early 20th century Late Gothic Revival Presbyterian Church visually terminates the district, closing the view down Main Street from Riverside Park. The district extends south to the north side of Bridge Street and north to the alley between Main and Pleasant Streets, with minor inclusions of commercial property north of the alley.

North of Main Street lie two potential historic districts. The Northside District features a concentration of churches, a school and elegant residences constructed by leading businessmen between 1880 and 1920. The Milwaukee Historic District, bounded on the north by the Milwaukee Railroad tracks, contains smaller and more numerous houses, apartment complexes, and railroad-related landmarks from the early 20th century.

In addition to buildings of local, soft red and imported, pressed brick, the Main Street District contains numerous reinforced concrete or concrete block structures, usually clad in either brick or brick tile, natural limestone, granite, sandstone, marble, or terra cotta. Red, white and blue pressed and glazed brick used in many facades was introduced in the 1880's from cities as far away as St. Louis. During the early 1900's a wider range of pressed brick types, glazed in earth tones, was imported from factories in Hebron, North Dakota. In addition to similar massing and materials, historic buildings in the district are unified by contiguous or near-contiguous datum lines. First-stories on Main Street were originally designed as a zone of large plate glass windows framed by ornamental cast-iron columns.

The Victorian period brick business blocks of the 1880's, designed by the same architect, show a mixture of High Victorian Gothic, and Queen Anne styles best described as "eclectic." The Leighton and Jordan Block at 500-506 Main and the Commercial Block at 509-515 Main are the most representative of this style, with rhythmic multiple bays, narrow flat- and round-arched windows, Queen Anne corbelled brickwork, and polychromatic trim. Like most buildings of this era, these two large-scale, multi-store buildings no longer retain the elaborate metal-pedimented, turreted parapets with finials that distinguished the originals. Both the Queen Anne gable of the Leighton and Jordan Block and the Second Empire mansard towers of the Commercial Block have been removed. Only the Gilman-Huffman Block of this period at 717-719 Main retains its typical irregular roofline with towers. The Schmalsle and Butler Blocks at 600-602 Main also show alterations typical of later remodelling, when corner towers were "chopped" to present a more modern parapet.

The transition to Renaissance Revival is marked by the Bullard Block at 601-603 Main, a two-story building that combined the simpler, horizontal parapet and orders of classical styles with tall, narrow windows reminiscent of earlier Gothic designs. A third story addition to this building in 1912 continued the style of the original. Renaissance Revival architecture in early 20th century Miles City is epitomized in such buildings as the Olive Hotel at 501 Main [The Olive Hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places 6/9/88], City Hall at 19 South 8th, and the Y. M. C. A. at 24 North 8th. Constructed of or faced with pressed Hebron brick, these buildings show a high quality design in their symmetrical facades, bracketed or simple cornices, and Italianate window surrounds, often with keystones. In the Y. M. C. A. and City Hall,

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columns-in-antis mark even greater sophistication. A high point in Renaissance Revival styling is reached in the Palace Hotel at 14 North 7th and the Telephone Building at 908 Main. Both buildings display classical orders and entablature with pronounced cornices; polychromatic pressed brick piers create an appearance of quoins, extended to the parapets. The Foster Block (701-703 Main) also employs polychromatic elements--tile and brick--to accentuate piers and bays, but the entablature is much reduced. All of these buildings are in near original condition, with only minor alterations to windows and doors.

A more vernacular Renaissance Revival style is seen in the Miles Block (709-715 Main) Block, using the new material--decorative concrete block. After 1910 this honest use of concrete is common, as in the Schlichting building at 14 North 8th and the later Gregory Block at 1013 Main. The ground level entrances to the Miles building have been altered, and a second story has been added to the Schlichting building about 1940.

The Kentucky Block at 718 Main, and the Arnold and Jackson Blocks at 808-812 and 814-818 Main show the influence of the Chicago School on Renaissance Revival buildings after 1910. These buildings present a simplified facade of pressed Hebron brick with a heavier emphasis on the horizontal over the vertical in parapets and overall proportions. Tripartite Chicago-style windows of original designs are usually repeated in modern replacements. Continuous plate glass windows at ground level have been replaced by modern windows, with a net reduction in glazing.

The 1910 First National Bank building at 517-519 Main is the only true Beaux Arts building in Miles City, but the Renaissance Revival Masonic Temple at 907-911 Main, and the H. C. Smith Block at 510 Main utilize Beaux Arts detailing. The bank building, the most monumental structure in the city, is also the most academically "correct." The reinforced concrete building has limestone sheathing, colossal Doric columns framing windows, and a classical Greek entablature. Beaux Arts detailing includes enriched moldings, lion's head gargoyles, and granite and marble trim. The 1912 Masonic Temple superimposes Beaux Arts features--paired columns framing windows and decorative detailing--on a Renaissance Revival building. A more modest use of the style's detailing is seen in the 1915 facade of the Smith Block, with its classical entablature, delicate corner pilasters, terra cotta detailing, and marble facing. Modern alterations to all three buildings are minimal, occurring mainly in window treatments.

Art Deco, Moderne and International style buildings, such as the Montana Theater at 905 Main, Custer Motors at 1100 Main, Clarke's Insurance at 1009 Main, and the Courthouse at 1000 Main contribute to the diversity of the district. They also represent the historic eastward expansion of the district. Constructed after 1930, they follow the city's most historic periods of growth and are considered to be contributing resources.

Within the last 25 years, fires have significantly altered the profile of the Main Street Historic District. Around 1964, fire destroyed the three-story Renaissance Revival Wibaux Block at 700 Main Street, where the New Formalism Style First Security Bank now stands. The results of more recent fires are more evident, particularly the parking lot on the southeast corner of the 500 block, where the Renaissance Revival Commercial State

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Bank/Inghams/El Robo burned in 1983. Until 1984 the remodelled International Style Met Cafe and Miles Howard Hotel occupied 604-610 Main Street; now only the foundations remain behind a protective fence. The most recent 1987 fire destroyed the non-contributing Valley Motor building on the north side of the 800 block of Bridge Street.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture
Settlement

Period of Significance
1877-1940, 1949

Significant Dates
1882-1887
1905-1920
1935-1940
1949

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Byron Vreeland, Charles S. Haire
David and Brynjulf Rivenes, John G. Link
and others

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Miles City Main Street Historic District is historically significant for its association with the town's major growth periods: 1882-1887, 1905-1920, and 1935-1940. The buildings on Main Street reflect Miles City's role throughout the period of significance (1877-1940) as a regional trade, service, and cultural center for southeastern Montana. The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1881 spurred the construction of imposing brick business blocks in the Main Street District. The arrival of a second railroad, the Chicago, St. Paul & Milwaukee, in 1907, and a concomitant homestead boom were responsible for a sustained period of construction in the business district that lasted until drought and low commodity prices brought about the state-wide depression of 1920. From that time until the end of the national Depression, building activity in Miles City was limited. But between 1935 and 1940, buildings reflecting important national architectural trends were constructed in the Main Street Historic District. Therefore the period of significance has been extended to include this period in the district's history.

During the first period of growth, Miles City attracted one of the few architects working in eastern Montana, Byron Vreeland (1844-1889). Significantly, Vreeland moved his practice from Bozeman to Miles City in 1882; after the collapse of the agricultural economy in 1887 he returned to Bozeman, where many of his designs reflect Miles City prototypes.

From 1887 until the early 1900's, no known architects practiced in Miles City, a reflection of the stagnant economy. When the Milwaukee Railroad announced it would extend its lines to Miles City, businessmen employed a new generation of architects to remodel and expand the business district. Brynjulf (1874-1929) and David (1866-1936) Rivenes, and Charles S. Haire (1857-1925) and his junior partner John G. Link (1879-1954), were all active in Miles City between 1905 and 1920. With their state-wide affiliations, they brought Miles City into the mainstream of architectural design in Montana. By the 1930's, the flagging economy could support only one self-taught architect, Casper Strom (1888-1950). Strom was aware of national trends, and his buildings are significant for this period. But it was to the older architect, John G. Link, that Custer County

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turned to design a new courthouse in 1949.

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. The historic resources included in this nomination reflect the evolution of Miles City from a militarily-oriented frontier community in the 1870's to a prosperous commercial center in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With a present population of 9,600, this county seat continues to serve as a major commercial, political and cultural center for a vast ranching area.

Colonel Miles and his men arrived in August 1876, and by the fall, a crew of professional woodchoppers were erecting the first log structures at the Tongue River Cantonment. Sutlers, associated with the military camp from its inception, in 1877 erected the first commercial buildings two miles east of the cantonment, naming the new town Milestown.¹ In 1878, Colonel Miles completed the new Fort Keogh west of the Tongue River and donated the Ferry Landing on the east bank of the river to Milestown. Merchants and settlers quickly moved to the new site, desiring the greater security of proximity to the fort.

Between 1878 and 1881, Miles City's isolated residents and merchants were dependent on Yellowstone River steamboats for transportation and shipment of goods. But the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in November 1881 spurred a period of growth and settlement of the surrounding ranchlands, and the population soared. The railroad's main track along the southern boundary of the city, with the depot near the old Ferry Landing (now Riverside Park) transformed that area into a "gateway." South 5th Street, then called Park Street, led directly from the railroad depot past the Park and north to Main Street. This area was to be the center of Miles City's first building boom, supported by the town's role as a county seat, the center of a vast stockraising region, and a railroad transshipment point.

The first "boom" period lasted only until the disastrous winter of 1886-87 ruined many stockgrowers and caused the financial ruin of many leading businessmen. But during those six prosperous years the town was transformed from a wooden town to a city of brick. Miles City merchants such as George Miles, Joseph Leighton and Walter Jordan commissioned the construction of aesthetically significant buildings to display their success and optimistic visions for the future.

Most residents and businessmen in the early 1880's built with wood, a cheaper material than brick. The 1883 First Presbyterian Church at the corner of Main and Montana (later moved to 13 North Prairie), was built in Carpenter Gothic "Stick Style." Although this church is both a religious property (Exception A) and was moved to its present location in 1914 (Exception B), it is an architecturally significant example of late Victorian Gothic styling and has played a significant role in the life of the community as the early gathering place for religious and social functions. The arrival of the Northern Pacific in

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1881 and growth of the town provided a population base to support a permanent religious structure. George M. Miles, a founding father and leading businessman, was a primary force behind the construction of the church.

Most commercial wood frame construction, however, favored Italianate or Gothic false-front styles. No matter what the style, though, these wood buildings were vulnerable to fire. By the mid-1880's merchants realized the need for more permanent, fire-proof structures; by 1886 they could no longer obtain insurance for wood frame buildings. The individual who almost singlehandedly directed the shape of the emerging brick Miles City was architect Byron Vreeland (1844-1889). Vreeland, who worked in Bozeman and Miles City, designed all of the significant brick buildings constructed between 1882 and 1887.

Byron Vreeland was the first architect to design brick buildings in pioneer Miles City, arriving in 1882 from Bozeman, where he maintained his office. Drawn by the news of the rapid growth of the town, he soon gained his first commission from the town's chief booster, Joseph Leighton, president of the first bank and owner of one of the largest dry good's stores in Miles City. Vreeland's 1882 First National Bank (now remodelled) was typical of late Victorian period brick eclectic architecture, a vertically oriented building that combined a Queen Anne gable behind an Italianate parapet, with Italianate windows. Leighton commissioned Vreeland for all of the buildings he envisioned and financed: The Leighton and Jordan Store (409 Main) in 1882, the 1884 Courthouse (now destroyed), the Leighton and Jordan Block (500-506 Main) in 1885, and the first Miles City Opera House (now remodelled, 20 South 5th) in 1885.

The Leighton and Jordan Block remains a landmark of the 1880's era, still conveying a sense of Vreeland's original design and the aspirations of civic leaders like Leighton and his partner, Walter Jordan. Designed to support four separate commercial ventures, it was one of the first multi-store "blocks" in Montana and is still used for that purpose today. The St. Louis pressed brick facade has Queen Anne stepped corbelling and "tumbled bricks" beneath relieving arches; originally there were stained glass transom lights, a shaped Queen Anne parapet and corner towers.

Across the street from the Leighton and Jordan Block, Vreeland's Commercial Block repeated the architect's success in another then-radical, multi-store block. Here the corbelled, stepped brickwork is combined with polychrome tile ornament to create chains and "Moorish" arches. Italianate windows alternate with Romanesque-arched ones, all displaying stained glass transom lights. Originally the roofline was distinguished by metal Second Empire towers capping central pavilions, while metal finials terminated other piers. A sophisticated A-B-B-A rhythm unifies the structure. The prime backer and promoter of this block was George M. Miles, nephew of Col. Nelson Miles, for whom the town was named.

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George Miles arrived with the Army in 1876 and by 1879 owned a ranch and land east of town on which Miles City later expanded. By 1907 he was a president of Leighton's First National Bank. His land holdings, investments and pioneer hardware firm "Miles & Strevell" (later Miles & Ulmer) created the fortune that later built the Miles House at 28 South Lake Street [listed on the National Register on 2/17/82].

The Gilman-Huffman Block (717-719 Main) and the Schmalsle & Butler Blocks (600-602 Main) repeat many of Vreeland's motifs: vertical orientation, corner towers (extant on the Gilman-Huffman Block), and fanciful brick corbelling.

The expense and permanence of Vreeland's buildings reflect the booming economy of Miles City after the arrival of the Northern Pacific. In turn, these elegant buildings worked to attract new settlers and business people to the area. As the Yellowstone Journal editor commented in 1887: "Main Street shows an almost unbroken line of brick business houses, giving a metropolitan air to that portion of the city. One can hardly realize that eight years ago this spot was free from civilization...such rapid development is known nowhere except in the west."² But by this time the city's economy, ever dependent on the ranching community, had met a reversal. The disastrously harsh winter of 1886-1887 decimated livestock herds and caused the financial ruin of many leading businessmen. The population actually dropped after 1887 from 2500, reaching a low of 1400 in 1892; it did not rebound until 1904.³ Vreeland gave up his Miles City practice and returned to Bozeman, where his buildings such as the Tracy/Barnett Block of 1889 echo the motifs of his Miles City designs and provide a link between eastern and western Montana architecture of the 1880's.

During the 1890's, Miles City entered a period of reduced building activity. The few buildings that followed Vreeland's Main Street transformation tended to be more academically "correct" in new Renaissance Revival styles. The 1898 Hotel Leighton, now the Olive Hotel (501 Main), and Bullard Block (601 Main) are the first Miles City buildings in the emerging Renaissance Revival Style. By 1908 the Olive Hotel [listed in the National Register in 10/13/88] assumed its present look with the addition of a full-blown Renaissance Revival addition and facade designed by Miles City's major early 20th century architect, Brynjulf Rivenes.

Brynjulf Rivenes and his brother, David, emigrated to the U. S. from Norway, first settling in Glendive. By 1904 they worked primarily in Miles City, where their first designs can be dated to 1905. Both had architectural training, important to a city awaiting the arrival of a second railroad (the Chicago, St. Paul & Milwaukee, 1907) and its attendant population boom. Businessmen boosters were already raising money to acquire land for the Milwaukee right-of-way in 1903, and they began speculating heavily on land and real estate as well. By 1910 Miles City's population was 7000, more than twice that of 1904, the year the Rivenes came to the city.⁴ The Rivenes brothers, as well as other trained architects such as Helena-based Charles S. Haire and his partner, John G. Link,

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and Miles City Engineer Grover C. Pruett, were the architects of the rapidly expanding city. Their buildings in the Renaissance Revival and Beaux Arts styles changed the course of downtown Miles City development, stimulating a demand for new, light-colored, formal and symmetrical compositions.

The Rivenes' buildings stressed a facade tightly organized on a rectilinear grid. These buildings were "urban" in a 20th century sense, frequently cast of concrete, and veneered with an assortment of tough, new materials: light or earth-colored Hebron pressed brick, carved stone, ceramic tile, and terra cotta. Many of the more elaborate buildings utilized Renaissance-inspired keystone motifs. Like Vreeland, Rivenes favored leaded glass windows, though now clear, with bevelled edges to stress lightness.

In 1905 B. Rivenes designed a major building for George Miles at 709-715 Main, a "first" in Miles City, a concrete block structure with no decorative brick cladding. By 1907 he had begun a trend that was to continue when he renovated an earlier Vreeland building at 607-609 Main, again for George Miles. Chopping the gabled parapet and completely reconstructing the facade, Rivenes gave the building a distinct horizontal look, emphasized by the straight parapet and white tile bands above and below windows. He also utilized another trademark element, a recessed window panel with a continuous sill of fine, white concrete. The first-story plate glass window treatment with a prism glass transom zone was also to be repeated in most of Rivenes' buildings.

A rival to Rivenes was Charles S. Haire, official architect for the State of Montana during the early 20th century, whose Helena-based firm opened one of its many Montana offices in Miles City. After receiving the commission for the Post Office--later renamed the Palace Hotel--in 1908 (14 North 7th), Haire moved his office to the building. This Renaissance Revival design, with its polychromatic brick bands and corner pier "quoins" and projecting copper cornice, may have influenced Rivenes' later use of polychromatic elements. For the Foster Block (701 Main), built only two years later and next door to the Palace Hotel, Rivenes utilized glazed tile for accent in the pedimented parapet and the facade, and eliminated the classical cornice.

Another of Rivenes' sophisticated Renaissance Revival designs is exemplified in his 1910 Y. M. C. A. (24 North 8th), a direct result of the population pressures occasioned by the Milwaukee Railroad-inspired growth. Demanded by railroad workers and financed by George Miles, the building impressed contemporary observers who noted that "no finer building [was] to be found anywhere."⁵ In the Y. M. C. A. Rivenes employed three orders marked by a dark, "rusticated" Hebron brick base, buff-colored Hebron brick upper levels with first-story segmental arched windows composed of voussoirs and keystone, and second-story paired windows above continuous sills. The entrance displays a feature found in only three buildings in Miles City, columns-in-antis. Although there is a classical projecting cornice, the entablature is blank, a feature common in

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Rivenes buildings.

The "Y" also inspired numerous other buildings, including Rivenes' own Miles and Ulmer Implement building of 1910 (413-419 Main) and Masonic Temple of 1912 (909 Main). Grover Pruett's 1914 City Hall (19 South 8th) closely resembles the Y. M. C. A. with its classical orders and columns-in-antis.

Another 1910 building radically altered the look of Main Street. Charles S. Haire's First National Bank building (519 Main) brought the grand-scale architecture of the 1893 Chicago Exposition to Miles City. Although other architects did not adopt the full Beaux Arts style, elements began to appear on later facades by Rivenes and Pruett: Rivenes' 1912 Masonic Temple (907 Main) and 1912 H. C. Smith Block, now Ben Franklin (811-813 Main), and Pruett's 1915 Smith Building, now the State Liquor Store (510 Main).

In addition to these "grand" buildings, Rivenes designed some in a more vernacular style, such as the three buildings on North 8th Street south of the Y. M. C. A.: the 1914 Romanesque Revival Auditorium and the 1911 Cole and Schlichting buildings in two different interpretations of the Renaissance Revival styles. These three differing styles in the same block may have been a response to the taste of the developer, Jules Arnold, a typical Miles City entrepreneur who capitalized on the need for increased business space.

By 1914 Miles City's population had climbed to 8500, an increase of almost 25% in less than four years.⁶ The economy was stimulated by above-average rainfall that boosted livestock and crop production, an influx of homesteaders and the business support groups to serve them, and the opening the Fort Keogh Remount Station about 1910. The Remount Station, the largest in the U. S., employed over 100 people and bought thousands of horses from the local sale yard. Located on South 4th Street near the Northern Pacific tracks in Miles City, the Horse Sales Company held the largest horse auctions in the world, by 1915 grossing over \$225,000 per sale.⁷ Most horses went to the Allied war effort in Europe. By 1917 the Army Quartermaster Corp disbursed about 20 million dollars in Miles City, buying horses for the U. S. Army in France.⁸ As a major shipment and transshipment point for two railroads, Miles City handled thousands of head of cattle and sheep and was the largest primary wool market of the northwest, with over ten million pounds a year.⁹ Among others who profited from the booming economy were the architects who had already begun to transform Miles City.

Miles City had long been famous for its many bars (there were 40 in the early 1880's), and the expanding working-class, professional and rural population socialized in Miles City's saloons and restaurants. Rivenes designed many "modern" Renaissance Revival saloons on Main Street, including the 1914 Kentucky Block (718 Main) and the Kenney Block (612-614 Main), which is still named the Montana Bar today, as it was in 1913. Rivenes' commercial 1909 Jackson Block (808-812 Main) and the 1914 Arnold Block (814-818 Main), built to harmonize with

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it, are among Rivenes' most geometrically severe buildings, with almost no decorative trim and emphasis on glazing at the expense of typical Renaissance Revival buildings in Miles City, columns-in-antis. Although there is a classical projecting cornice, the entablature is blank, a feature common in Rivenes buildings.

Among other utilitarian Rivenes buildings is the 1914 Yellowstone Garage, now Whalen Tire (1400 Main), at the eastern entry to the Main Street Historic District. Built to accommodate automobile travelers along the Twin Cities-Aberdeen-Yellowstone Trail, the garage was at a strategic location to serve an increasingly mobile America. Miles City was a part of the trail because of boosters like Albin "Buck" Buchanan, whose Seeing Miles City of 1911 and 1915, promoted the city's growth and economic opportunities.

Across Main Street from the garage was another sign of prosperous times, the new First Presbyterian Church that replaced the 1883 wood frame church. A religious property (Exception A), the church was completed in 1916. Rivenes' modern Neo-Gothic Revival design in Hebron brick gave the impression of stability and respectability Miles City wished to convey in the midst of a period of growth and optimism. The building provides a visual termination for the Main Street Historic District and makes an unmistakable statement about Miles City's future. It was the most expensive building of the era, meant to convey a sense of permanence and spiritual values.

By the early 1920's, Miles City could no longer count on economic growth, as years of scarce rainfall and falling commodity prices after World War I depressed the economy. The nation-wide depression only worsened Miles City's economy, causing the failure of numerous banks and lessening the monies available for construction. The few significant buildings of the 1930's were in futuristic Art Deco or Moderne styles. The ca. 1936 Montana Theater catered to an escapist mood with the visual experience of its architecture and the movies it projected for audiences.

Although the Custer County Courthouse is of later construction (1949), the site has housed this seat of government in Miles City since 1884. The new, Moderne-style building was designed by John G. Link, who inherited C. S. Haire's statewide architectural practice. By 1949, after World War II, the Miles City economy was again flourishing, and taxpayers could afford a statement about the community's renewed prosperity. Less than 50 years of age (Exception G), the courthouse is considered to be a contributing element of the district because of its exceptional architectural significance as the finest example of the Art Moderne Style in Miles City. The new Custer County Courthouse is still located on the site of the earlier public building, a focus for any citizens who need to conduct county business.

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The Main Street Historic District is distinguished from surrounding potential historic districts by its physical appearance, especially the density of two-story commercial buildings. Its historic use as a focus of trade, social and civic activities, and hotel accommodations for business travelers, separate it from the primarily residential areas to the north, and the service and light industrial areas to the south. The Main Street Historic District is still able to convey associations with the major periods of Miles City's growth. The district evokes a sense of Miles City in its heyday when the city was the predominant trade and cultural center in eastern Montana.

END NOTES

- 1 Colonel Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections of General Nelson A. Miles (Chicago: Werner Co. 1896), pp. 64, 68.
- 2 Yellowstone Journal, July 23, 1887, p. 3.
- 3 Montana State Gazetteers, 1884-1893, 1896-1899, 1902, 1904, 1910.
- 4 Gazetteers, 1904, 1910.
- 5 Independent, April 9, 1910, p. 1.
- 6 Montana State Gazetteers, 1910-1921.
- 7 Albin "Buck" Buchanan, Seeing Miles City, (Chicago: Blakely Printing, 1915), pp. 9-10.
- 8 Gerald Anglum, et. al., Centennial Roundup, (Miles City: Star Printing Co., 1987), p. 70.
- 9 Montana State Gazetteers, 1914-1918.

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National Park Service

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Boundary description

The northwest corner of Riverside Park at its intersection with Main Street forms the point of beginning for the District; from there the boundary extends south along Scanlan Lake to Park Street; then east to South 5th; then north two blocks to Bridge Street; then east along Bridge Street to 6th Street; then north on 6th Street to the alley between Bridge and Main Streets; then east along the alley to the eastern edge of lot 5, Block 44; then south along the lot line to Bridge Street; then east along Bridge Street to 7th Street; then north on 7th Street to the alley between Main and Bridge Streets; then east along the alley to the eastern edge of lot 6, Block 49; then south along the lot line to Bridge Street; then east along Bridge Street to the eastern edge of lot 4, Block 64; then, north along the lot line to the alley; then east along the alley to 10th Street, then south to Bridge Street; then diagonally northeast, paralleling the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks and right-of-way, to Main Street; then diagonally northeast along the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks and right-of-way to Main Street; then north one half block on Prairie Avenue; then west along the alley one block to Montana Avenue; then southwest along the alley north of Main Street to the middle of the alley between 8th and 9th Streets; then north one half block to Pleasant Street; then west one half block to 8th Street; then south two lots; then west crossing 8th Street to the alley between 8th and 7th Streets; then south two lots; then west to 7th Street; then south two lots; then west crossing 7th Street along the alley to 6th Street; then north two lots; then west to 5th Street; then south to the alley; then west crossing 5th Street to 4th Street; then south to Main Street; then west along Main Street to the point of beginning.

Boundary justification

The boundary for the Main Street Historic District is drawn to include the highest concentration of historically significant resources on Main Street and, where possible, to include buildings on cross streets which historically belong to the commercial district.

Some two-story, non-residential buildings bordering the District boundary are not included, because they historically belong to the residential or service/industry areas surrounding the District. Bridge Street forms the southern boundary of the District, separating the commercial area from a concentrated zone of automobile service/light industry buildings. Detached modern buildings located along Bridge Street have been excluded from the nominated historic district, thus creating a sort of "saw-tooth" appearance to the southern boundary. The northern boundary with a primarily residential district is formed by the alley north of Main Street, with the exception of some sections between 9th and 5th Streets bordered by Pleasant Street.

9. Major Bibliographical 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

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 _____

UTM References

A

1	3
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4	3	5	3	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	3	9	6	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

1	3
---	---

4	3	4	7	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	3	8	9	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	3
---	---

4	3	5	2	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	3	9	4	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

D

1	3
---	---

4	3	4	4	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	3	9	2	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

T 8N; R 47E NW $\frac{1}{2}$ section 33

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan R. McDaniel, Principal Investigator/Dena L. Sanford, Assistant Investigator
 organization Custer County Society for Preservation date January 30, 1989
 street & number 501 Main Street telephone 406-232-2450
 city or town Miles City state Montana zip code 59301

Main Street Historic District

(P= Primary contributing; C=Contributing; NC=Non-contributing.)

Address	Date	Name	Status
401-403 Main	1910-1911	Hyde Flats	C
409 Main	1882, c.1950 1907, c.1950	Leighton & Jordan Store and Annex	C
413-419 Main	1908	Miles & Ulmer Implement Bldg.	P
500 Main	1882/ 1885	Leighton & Jordan Block	P
501 Main	1898, c.1908 1908 1912	Olive Hotel garage Garage	P C C
508 Main	1882,1911,c.1980	[first] First National Bank	NC
509-515 Main	1885	The Commercial Block	P
510 Main	1883-4,1915	Dr. Redd's /Smith Bldg.	P
517-519 Main	1910	[second] First National Bank	P
600 Main	1886, 1890, c. 1915	Schmalsie Block	C
601-603 Main	1898, 1908,1912	Bullard Block	P
602 Main	1886, 1977	Butler Block	C
605 Main	1887,1907,1943	[first] Lakin, Westfall- & Co.	C
607-609 Main	1885,1914	[second] Lakin, Westfall Miles Block	C
611-619 Main	1961-1962,1972, 1975,1976,1980, 1982	[third] First (Nat.) Bank	NC
612-614 Main	1893,1913	Kenney Block (Montana Bar)	P
616 Main	c.1893,1946	J.M. Sipes Barber Shop & Lunch	NC
618 Main	c.1878,1883, 1885, c.1916, c.1960	Gallagher's (Bison) Bar	NC
700-706 Main	1965-1966,1979	First Security Bank	NC
701-703 Main	1885,1910,1914	Maxwell's/G.K.Foster Block	P
705 Main	c.1930, c.1980	"Stockhill Jewelers"	NC
707 Main	1914	Shore's	P
709-715 Main	1905	Miles' Concrete Block	C
710 Main	1885, c.1930	Goettlich/Kelly's (Log Cabin)	C
712-714 Main	1907	Strong-Western Block	C
716 Main	Bet. 1903-1907 1930-1940	Montana Meat Market	C
717-719 Main	1886, 1908	Gilman & Huffman Blocks	P
718 Main	1914	Kentucky Block	C
800 Main	c.1900	Sorenson Block	C
801-803 Main	c. 1910,1937, 1947,1976	Miles & Ulmer Hardware	NC
802-804 Main	c.1960	Liberty Theater site (Maurice's)	NC
807 Main	1910,1919,1981	Ladner Bros. (Rigg's)	NC
808-812 Main	1909	Jackson Block	C
805 Main	c.1903,1919, 1922,1981	Epstein's (Rigg's)	NC

809 Main	c. 1903,1910, c. 1918,1981	Lindeberg Bakery	NC
811-813 Main	1912, c.1960	H.C. Smith Block (Franklin)	C
815 Main	1912	Arnold Bros. Building	C
814-818 Main	1914	Arnold's Glass Block (Coast)	C
11 South 9th	1945-1950	Regan Plumbing & Heating	NC
817-819 Main	1909, c.1930	"J.C. Penney's"	C
900-904 Main	1919, c.1948	Midland Lumber Company	C
901 Main	bet.1903-1910, 1977	Star/Iris Theater (Chamber)	NC
905 Main	c.1936	Montana Theater	F
906 Main	c.1940	Berg's Decorating (MC Sanit)	NC
908 Main	1914,1919,1931 c.1930	Telephone Building Garage	F C
907-911 Main	1912-1913	Masonic Temple	F
918 Main	1902,1965	Carnegie Library	NC
919 Main	1950,1976	"Super America" filling sta.	NC
1000 Main	1949	Custer County Courthouse	C
1001-1007 Main	1947	Shipley's Serv. Sta. #2 (M&M)	NC
1009 Main	1940	Custer Abstract (Clarke Ins.)	C
1011 Main	c. 1950	Greenhouse/Barbershop	NC
1013 Main	1914	Clifford Concrete Block	C
1019 Main	1940,1980	"Miller & Holmes"	C
1100 Main	1937,1963	"Custer Motors"	C
1101 Main	1974	First Federal Savings & Loan	NC
1108 Main	1882, c.1910, 1980	[Kircher/Brasen] "E Cargo"	C
1112-18 Main	c.1925,1975	Cottage Station/ Hardesty R.E.	NC
1111-19 Main	1982	First Interstate Bank	NC
1400-1406 Main	1914,ca.1920	Yellowstone Garage (Whalen)	F
1401 Main	1912-1916	First Presbyterian Church	F
1413-1415 Main	c.1970	Wacker Agency	NC
8 South 5th	1883,1913, c. 1950	Bach's Saloon	NC
10 South 5th	1883,1913, c. 1950	Hehli's Saloon and Barbershop	NC
18 South 5th	bet.1911-1916	(Coggshall's) M.C. Saddlery	C
20 South 5th	1885, c.1930	First M.C. Opera House	NC
11 South 6th	1908	Porter/Schmalsle Block	C
13-15 South 6th	c.1907, 1948 ca.1980	Wonder Store	NC
17-19 South 6th	bet.1904-1910	(Coggshall's) M.C. Saddlery	C
11 South 7th	1928,1968,1984	Montgomery Ward (Executive)	C
19 South 7th	1948	Moose Lodge	NC
8-10 South 8th	1907	Rohde's Blacksmith Shop	C
19 South 8th	1914	City Hall & Fire Station	F
Rear 11 S. 9th	1907	Anneberg's Concrete Blk. Bldg.	C
21 S. 9th	1949,1950	Puley's Flower Shop (H&R Block)	NC
901-905 Bridge	1948	Midland Lumber sheds	NC
16 South 10th	1905, c.1952	Custer County Jail buildings	C

17 S. 11th	c.1940	WPA Worker's shed (Harmony Hse)	NC
10 South 11th	c.1893,1965	Malcolm G. & Ed Maples Res.	C
9 South Montana	1940-45	Griffith Radiator Works	C
14 North 7th	1908,	Post Office/Palace Hotel	P
14 North 8th	1910-11,1977	Schlichting Studio (Big Al's)	C
18 North 8th	1911,1950	Cole's Plumbing (Clothes Clos)	C
20 North 8th	1914	Auditorium (Park Theatre)	C
24 North 8th	1910	Y.M.C.A. (Eagles)	P
13 North 6th	c.1910, 1912 pre-1928, 1955	Star Printing Office	C
20 North 5th	1908	First Olive Hotel garage	C
16 North 5th	bet.1910-1915	Second Olive Hotel garage	C
15 North 8th	c. 1940,1977	"MeLody Shop"	C
13 North Prairie	1882-1883	[first] First Presbyt.Church	P
 RIVERSIDE PARK - Primary			
	c.1900	* Miles's tree plantings	
	1910	* Fruett's paths & flower beds	
	c.1913	* Water tower	
	c.1920s	* Horseshoe area, tennis & basketball courts	
	c.1970s	* Service sheds/Lions' Shelter	
19 South 9th	1936,1945	Puly's Shoe Shop	NC

PHOTOGRAPH INDEX

Miles City Main Street Historic District
Miles City, Custer County, Montana

Photographers: Susan McDaniel and Dena Sanford, Miles City, Montana

Date of Photographs: January, 1989

Negatives in Possession of: SHPO, 104 Broadway, Helena, Montana 59601

1. Riverside Park, northeast corner, looking south from Main and 5th Streets.
2. Riverside Park and the Leighton & Jordan Block, 500-506 Main Street, looking southeast from Main and 4th Streets.
3. Leighton & Jordan Block, 500-506 Main Street. North and partial east elevations
4. Dr. Redd's/Smith Block, 510 Main Street. North elevation
5. 500 Block of Main Street, looking north east at the Olive Hotel, 501 Main Street; the Commercial Block, 509-515 Main Street; the First National Bank, 519 Main Street; and the Bullard Block, 601 Main Street.
6. Commercial Block, 509-515 Main Street. South elevation
7. Looking north to Main Street from South 5th Street: Porter-Schmallsle Blocks, 11 and 13-15 South 5th Street; the Commercial Block, 509-515 Main Street; and the First National Bank, 519 Main Street.
8. 600 Block of Main Street, looking east from Main and 6th Streets.
9. Bullard Block, 601 Main Street. West and east elevations
10. 700 Block of Main Street, looking northeast at the Foster Block, 701 Main Street; Stockhill's, 705 Main Street; Shore's, 707 Main Street; and the Miles' Concrete Block, 709-715 Main Street.
11. Looking northeast on North 7th Street from Main Street at the Foster Block, 701 Main Street; the Post Office/Palace Hotel, 14 North 7th Street; and view north across Pleasant Street outside of district to 1915 Federal Post Office [listed in the National Register on 3/14/86]
12. 700 Block of Main Street, looking northwest Gilman-Huffman/Arnold Block, 717-719 Main Street; Miles' Concrete Block, 709-715 Main Street; and Shore's, 707 Main Street.
13. Kentucky Block, 818 Main Street. North and east elevations, and view south on 8th Street of east elevation of City Hall, 19 South 8th Street.
14. Looking northeast on North 8th Street from Main Street at Schlichting's Studio, 14 North 8th Street; Cole's building, 18 North 8th Street; the Auditorium, 20 North 8th Street; and the Y.M.C.A., 24 North 8th Street.
15. 800 and 900 Blocks of Main Street, looking northeast at Smith Block, 813 Main Street; Kenney Block, 819 Main Street; Montana Theater, 905 Main Street; Masonic Temple, 907-911 Main Street; and the First Presbyterian Church at the intersection of Montana Avenue and Main Street.
16. 800 and 900 Blocks of Main Street, looking southeast at the Jackson Block, 806-810 Main Street; Arnold's Glass Block, 818 Main Street; and the Telephone Building, 908 Main Street.
17. 900 Block Main Street, looking northeast at the Montana Theater, 905 Main Street, and the Masonic Temple, 907-911 Main Street.
18. Masonic Temple, 907-911 Main Street. South elevation
19. 900 Block of Main Street, looking southeast at Midland Lumber, 900-904 Main Street; Miles City Sanitation, 906 Main Street; the Telephone Building, 908 Main Street; and Miles City Public Library (Carnegie Library) 1 South 10th Street.
20. Looking southeast at the Telephone Building and the Miles City Carnegie Library.
21. 1000 Block of Main Street, looking southeast to Custer County Courthouse, 1000 Main Street.
22. 1100 and 1200 Blocks of Main Street, looking east at E Cargo, 1108 Main Street, and the First Presbyterian Church, 1401 Main Street.

