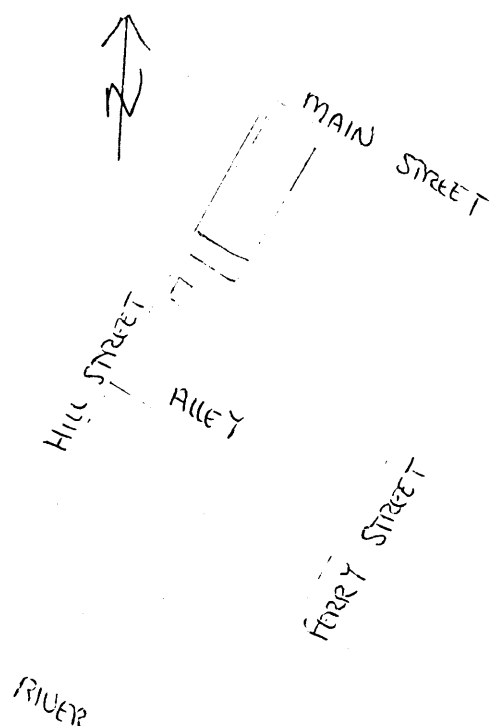


MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Site # 2



Legal Description: Block 6, lots 5 & 6
 Address: 510 Main Street, Thompson Falls, MT
 Ownership: Name: Everett McKenzie and Leonard Lovhaug
 private address: Box 732, Thompson Falls, MT 59873
 public



Location map or building plan with arrow north.

Historic Name: Weber's Store
 Common Name: T. Falls Laundry
 Date of Construction: Between 1900-1903 estimated documented
 Architect: Unknown
 Builder: Unknown
 Original Owner: Charles W. Weber
 Original Use: General Store/Post Office
 Present Use: rentals/Laundrymat
RESEARCH SOURCES: Note all records consulted to determine dates of construction, original owners, builders, uses, etc.
 Abstract of Title: Deedbook 4, p. 313; 8, p. 97
 Plat Records: Thompson Falls Original Townsite
 Tax Records: Assessment Book 1909, p. 441; Journal,
 Building Permits: not applicable
 Sewer/Water Permits: not applicable
 City Directories: Polk, Missoula County 1903, p. 509
 Sanborn Maps: 1910 & 1914 & 1927
 Newspapers: Sanders County Ledger 3/3/05; 6/22/06; 4/24/08; 8/4/0
 Other: early photos, Thompson Falls

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

This rectangular two story brick, stone and mortar foundation, flat composition roof building is now painted tan. The front (north) has four modern display windows split by a recessed entranceway of glass. The second story on that side has three original doublehung sash windows. Four more doublehung sash windows grace the second story east side, with two modern fixed windows below. The south end has a one story addition on a concrete foundation. Its exterior is siding, and it has a gabled composition roof. This replaced an original one-story brick backroom sometime between the years 1978-1982. This addition has a loading dock. Above the addition, there are three doublehung sash windows. Alterations mark the west side. Five modern doublehung sash windows have been built into the original sashes and the left over areas bricked up. Below, a concrete walkway borders the first floor leading to two entrances, one to the second floor, the other boarded up. One fixed window and several heat vents are nearby. Cement beams are visible on the first floor north side at the base of the building and to separate stories. There is a decorative band of inlaid fleur-de-lys in fretwork just below the roof on all sides. A brick stack is located on the east side.

A brick cold air well built in 1906 is now used for a storage shed. The hip roof now sports a metal covering.

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

Charles Weber came to Thompson Falls before 1890 as a laborer. Between that time and 1903, he became the town's second postmaster (a post he held till 1917) and a prosperous Main street merchant. He may for a time lived on the second floor, but ultimately rented out his rooms above his first floor store. The store operated into the 1940s and his death. For a time it remained vacant. Since then several businesses have rented the downstairs including Falls Electric and the current laundrymat. The upstairs for a time became apartments, but it appears no one lives there today.

Wright & Woodward Directory of 1890, p. 165.

Footnote Sources: Polk City Register, Missoula County 1903, p. 309; 1917-1918, p. 551.

Sanders County Ledger: 3/3/03; 6/22/06; 4/24/08; 8/4/11; 9/22/16.

Interview with Ernest "Fat" Brauer by John Lazuk

Interview with Richard Wollaston by John Lazuk

Interview with Raymond Wakefield by John Lazuk

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

This building has been changed on its north, south, and west sides by additions or remodeling. The awnings and rooftop sign seen in a 1911 newspaper picture are long gone.

HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: Justify how the persons, important events, or historical patterns associated with structure/site lend the property significance and/or describe the ways in which the structure embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular period, building type, or style.

Weber's Store is significant under Criterion A for its contribution to the historical development of Thompson Falls at the turn of the century, and because it is the only remaining business which has an original cold air well, a natural feature unique to the community. Built between 1900-1903, Weber's Store is one of the earliest surviving masonry commercial buildings on Main Street. The building housed the town post office until 1917, lending it particular significance as a place where most of the town's people visited daily. Built as a general mercantile and operating as such until 1940 when Charles Weber died, the building played a key role in the economic life of the community. Rental apartments were located on the second story. The original owner and merchant, Charles Weber, came to Thompson Falls in ca.1890 to work as a laborer. By 1903 he had become the town's second postmaster, a post he held until 1917.

FORM PREPARED BY:

Name: John Lazuk

Address: 350 Strand, Missoula, MT

Date: October 5, 1984

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Acreage: Less than one acre.

USGS Quad: Thomson Falls, MT

UTM's: 11/624600/5272250

Significance (cont.)

A unique feature of the geology around Thompson Falls is a strata of cold air which was tapped by early settlers when they attempted to dig wells for water. A layer of gravel ranging from three to thirty feet below the ground was porous enough to allow a current of cold air to reach the surface when tapped. Widespread accounts approximated the air temperature at 50-55 degrees.

Cold air wells could be dug on the lower reaches of Capitol Hill, the south-facing hillside on which most of Thompson Falls is built, as far north as Haley Avenue. Ruins of ice houses in the residential area are located at 109 Jefferson Street and at 109 Ferry Street. Merchants in the business district along Lower Railroad Avenue dug cold air wells to use as ice houses and for cold storage of goods. The cold air well at Weber's Store is the only remaining one of its kind in the commercial district of Thompson Falls.

The original storefront and upper floor windows of the Weber Store have recently been infilled with modern materials. Nevertheless, the simple detailing of this rectangular block masonry structure is still in place. The building is free standing, as are the other three two story masonry commercial blocks included as part of the Thompson Falls MRA submission. The side walls of the building and the rear cold air well are fully exposed, thus a great deal of the building's historic fabric is visible from Main Street.