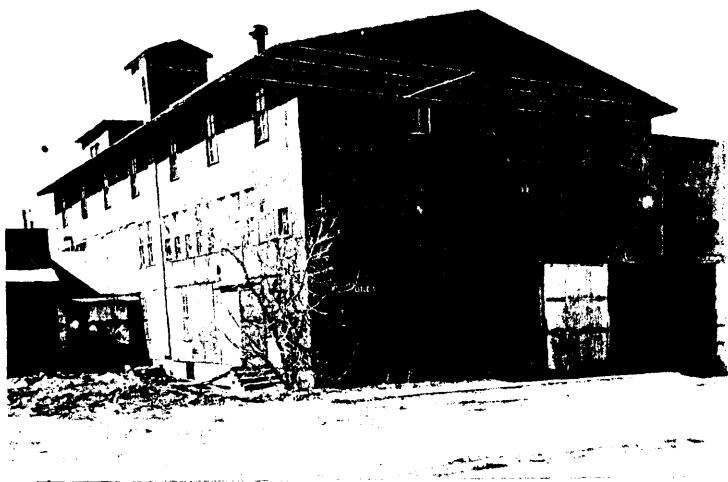


HISTORIC NAME: Gallatin Valley Seed Co.
 ADDRESS: 209 South Wallace, Bozeman
 LEGAL BOUNDARY: Rouse's 2nd Addition, Blk D,
 lots 11-20
 OWNER'S NAME: Albert Little
 OWNER ADDRESS: Box 926, Bozeman, MT
 SPECIFIC DATE: c.1917, c.1945
 ARCHITECT: Unknown
 BUILDER: Unknown
 ORIGINAL OWNER: Wm. A. Davis Seed Co.
 ORIGINAL USE: seed pea processing plant
 PRESENT USE: warehouse
 UTM REFERENCE: 12/497800/5057980
 ACREAGE: Less than one
 U.S.G.S. QUAD: Bozeman, 1953



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Applicable Criteria: A
 Areas of Significance: industry, agriculture
 Number of Contributing Properties: 2

The Gallatin Valley Seed Co. complex is historically significant due to its association with a very important industry in the Gallatin Valley from the late 1910's through the 1940's. The seed pea industry in the Gallatin Valley got its start in 1911 when William A. Davis, a representative of the Jerome G. Rice Seed Co. of Detroit, made a pitch to the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce to urge members to raise peas for seed. The cool summers and the semi-arid, irrigated fields of the Gallatin Valley provided excellent growing conditions. Various strains of bacterial blight that commonly attack pea plants, passing from one plant to the next in the fields once the disease becomes established, forced Eastern seed pea companies to depend upon opening up new areas to pea production. Davis encouraged farmers to put a total of 2500 acre in peas for his company, and 20 carloads of seed peas were shipped East after the first harvest. By 1913, three separate Eastern-based seed pea companies were in competition in Bozeman and the total pea acreage in the Gallatin Valley rose to about 10,000 acres.

In 1912, William Davis split from the Rice Seed Co. to open his own processing and shipping facility in Bozeman. He was successful in breeding a number of new pea varieties that were better suited to the Gallatin Valley growing conditions and climate and developed new markets in the mid-west, especially in Wisconsin. Davis had the seed processing plant and warehouse built at 209 South Wallace by 1917. Davis' business prospered, and, suddenly, during the early 1920's, he disappeared with the profits, leaving the William A. Davis Seed Company in financial disarray. The company was declared bankrupt in 1921 and was reorganized by Davis' former business partner Budge Parker, as the Gallatin Valley Seed Company on September 22, 1922. Also on the board of directors were John A. Lovelace, Hubert D. Bath, and Charles F. High.

The Gallatin Valley Seed Co. furnished the area farmers with the seed for planting, research results, field advice and service, and equipment for harvesting. Seed peas were left on the vine to mature and dry out, and harvest generally began in mid-September. Approximately 500 workers would be hired on at the processing plant from September to March.

to clean, sort, treat, and package a season's harvest.

By the late 1920's, the seed pea industry was at its peak in the Gallatin Valley, with at least six seed companies located in Bozeman, supplied by area farmers with peas from approximately 15,000 acres. In addition to the Gallatin Valley Seed Co., the following companies also had offices in Bozeman: Brotherton-Kirk Seed Co., Landreth Seed Co., and, in 1928, the N.B. Keeney & Son Seed Co., Everett B. Clark Seed Co., and Allen Seed Co. merged to form the Associated Seed Co.

Due to the successful production of peas in the valley, a group of businessmen organized the Bozeman Canning Co. in 1917, which processes potatoes in addition to peas. This cannery remained an important industry in the valley until its bankruptcy in 1962.

The blight that brought the seed pea industry to the Gallatin Valley during the early 1910's also drove it away to new fields further west. By the 1930's, Caterial Blight had been introduced into the fields. This seed borne disease lives in the soil and migrates into the plants through any lesions caused by blowing sand, high wind, beating rains or hail. The Associated Seed Co. left Bozeman in 1948. The Gallatin Valley Seed Co. absorbed the Brotherton-Kirk Seed Co. in 1932 and remained in operation in Bozeman until 1961 in its facilities at 209 South Wallace.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Gallatin Valley Seed Co. complex is composed of the seed plant, two warehouses, and a smaller, detached garage. The central portion of the Seed Company complex, built ca. 1917 is where the peas were cleaned and sorted. This large, rectangular, three-story, wood frame building is covered with galvanized metal. The building's architectural design relates directly to the building's function. The multiple machinery housings that project above the gently sloped gable roof cover the elevator equipment used in the gravity mill seed processing that occurred in the building.

Seed peas were brought into the plant at the first floor loading docks where they were weighed. Then, when ready to be sorted, the peas were hauled to the third floor in hoppers where fanning mills blew away the light peas and any left over vines from the field. Once the fanning was complete, the peas dropped through a chute to a conveyor belt on the second floor for hand-sorting and any cracked, off-color, and deformed seeds were removed. Once the sorting was complete, the seeds were chemically treated to ward off rot and wilt and then dyed red to prevent accidental human consumption. Then, the seed peas were dropped to the first floor where they were bagged and readied for shipment or storage in the adjacent warehouse. Seeds were shipped in burlap sacks or in 1200-1500 lb. boxes.

Evenly spaced four-over-one double hung windows light the fanning mill operations on the third floor. Considerably more light was required on the second floor where the seeds were sorted and treated. There, a continuous bank of four-over-four double hung windows extends along the length of the south elevation. Irregularly spaced four-over-four double hung windows are found on the first floor. Large concrete loading docks are located on the west, east, and south elevations. Large wooden sliding doors close off the loading platforms from the interior of the building. The building has a full concrete basement and a reinforced concrete floor on the first level. The only remaining interior feature that pertains to the Gallatin Valley Seed Co. operation is the elevator that serves all three stories, as well as the basement.

The large, one-story, brick veneered warehouse built ca. 1917 and located adjacent to the seed plant to the north also has a concrete basement and a reinforced concrete floor. The

windows of the warehouse are evenly spaced, fixed, six-light units. There is one five-panel door on the east facade. The roof is made of 2" x 4" lumber laid on end and supported by box trusses, which in turn are supported by 14" timber columns on brick piers. This warehouse is considered to be a contributing element of the complex.

The long, rectangular, wood frame garage built ca. 1930 has a shed roof and is oriented toward the alley at the rear of the complex (to the west). The building is clad with galvanized metal and the six garage doors are set on metal sliding tracks. The garage sets on a concrete foundation.

The long, one-story, wood frame warehouse to the south of the seed processing plant was built during the 1940's and is considered to be a non-contributing part of the Gallatin Valley Seed Co. complex. This warehouse is clad in galvanized metal, has a flat roof, concrete foundation, regularly spaced four-light fixed windows and a number of loading docks with sliding wooden doors. A number of new, single sheet glass windows have been cut into the south facade.

The two warehouses, both located only about 15' to the north and south of the processing plant are now connected to the plant by framed-in walkways. A small addition to the rear (west) of the seed plant is used as an office for a food wholesaler. Although most of the equipment has been removed from the seed pea plant, the building retains sufficient historic architectural integrity to accurately recall its historical function.

Another three-story warehouse that originally was used for seed pea processing by the Everett P. Clark Seed Co. is located across South Wallace Avenue from the nominated Gallatin Valley Seed Co. complex. The Clark processing plant is not included as part of this nomination due to extensive alteration. The building has been sided in galvanized metal that has been painted blue and most of the windows have been replaced with larger single sheets of glass.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Montgomery, Carmen, and Charles Stover, "The Seed Pea Industry in the Gallatin Valley," Seminar paper, Montana State University, 1983.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: 1927, 1957.

FORM PREPARED BY: Patricia Bick, 1987, State Historic Preservation Office, 225 No. Roberts, Helena, Montana 59620 (406) 444-7715