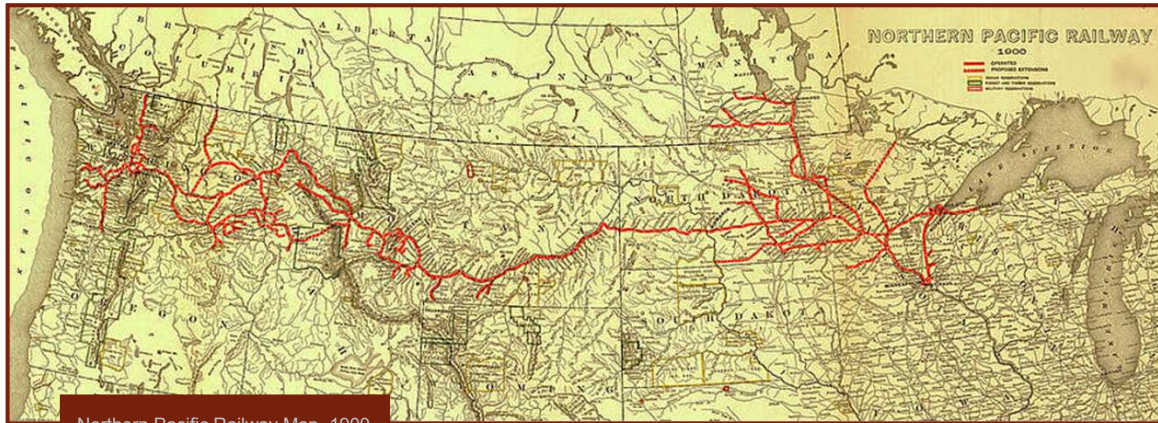


Transportation Innovation in Billings

Lauren Hunley, Community Historian





Northern Pacific Railway Map, 1900



1864 Transcontinental Railroad Act – Northern Pacific Railway 3rd (& last) line to be built

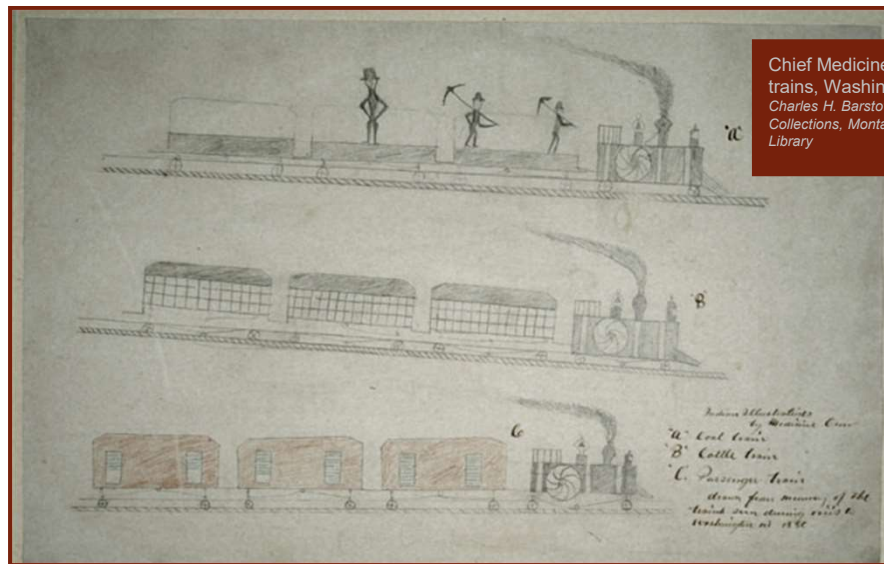


Drawn by New Bear, Crow, about 1880.
Charles H. Barstow Collection, Special
Collections
Montana State University Billings Library



Apsáalooke at the Billings Fair, 1892. The
Apsáalooke population was drastically
reduced during the 1890s due to starvation
and disease on the Crow Reservation.
Western Heritage Center

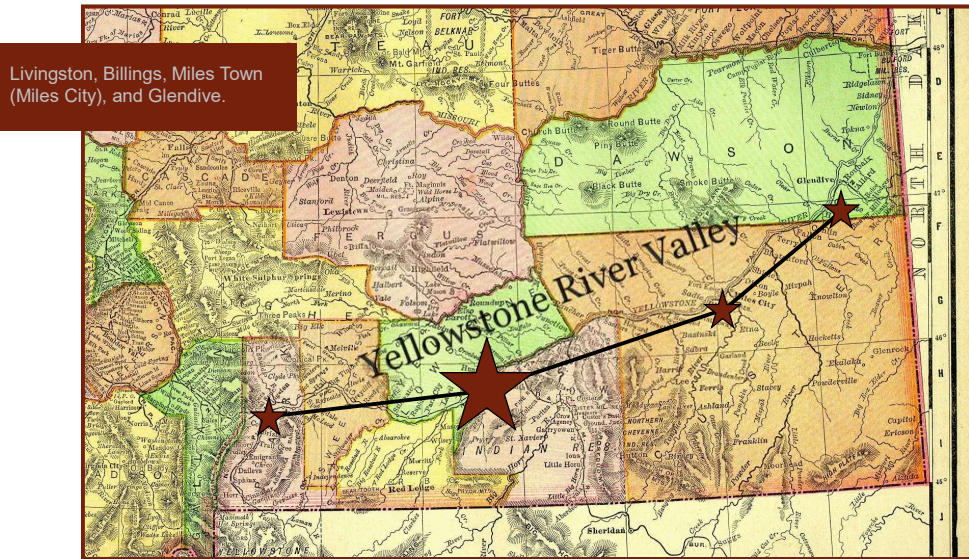




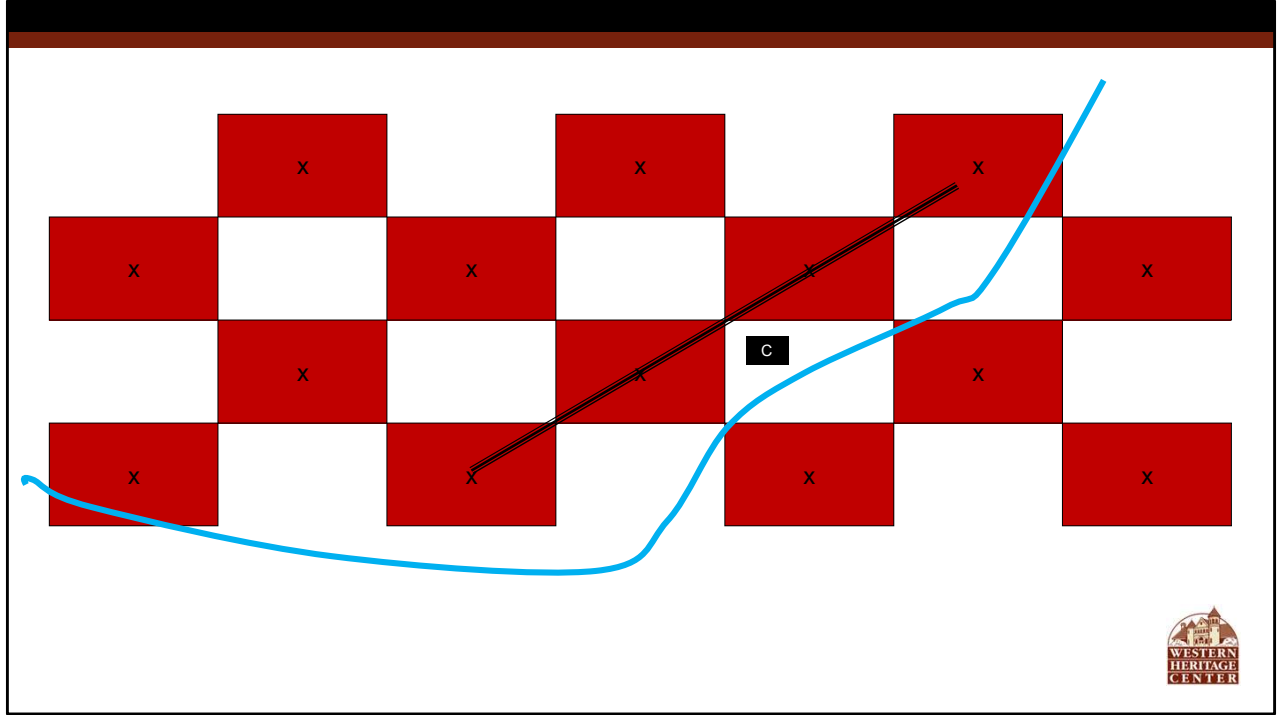
Chief Medicine Crow's drawing of trains, Washington D.C. trip, 1880. Charles H. Barstow Collection, Special Collections, Montana State University Billings Library



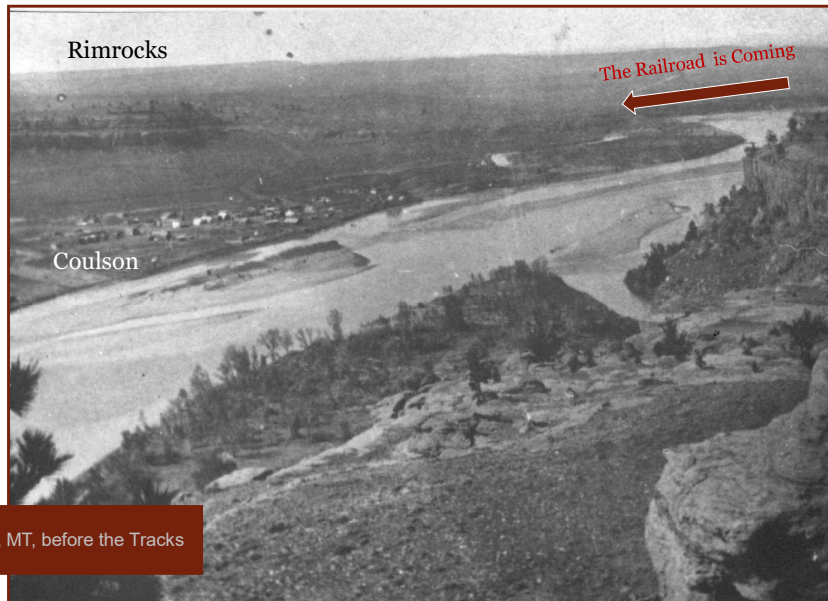
Coming of the train solidified the permanent colonialism of white movement West



115 miles to Livingston
146 miles to Miles City
76 miles between Miles City & Glendive

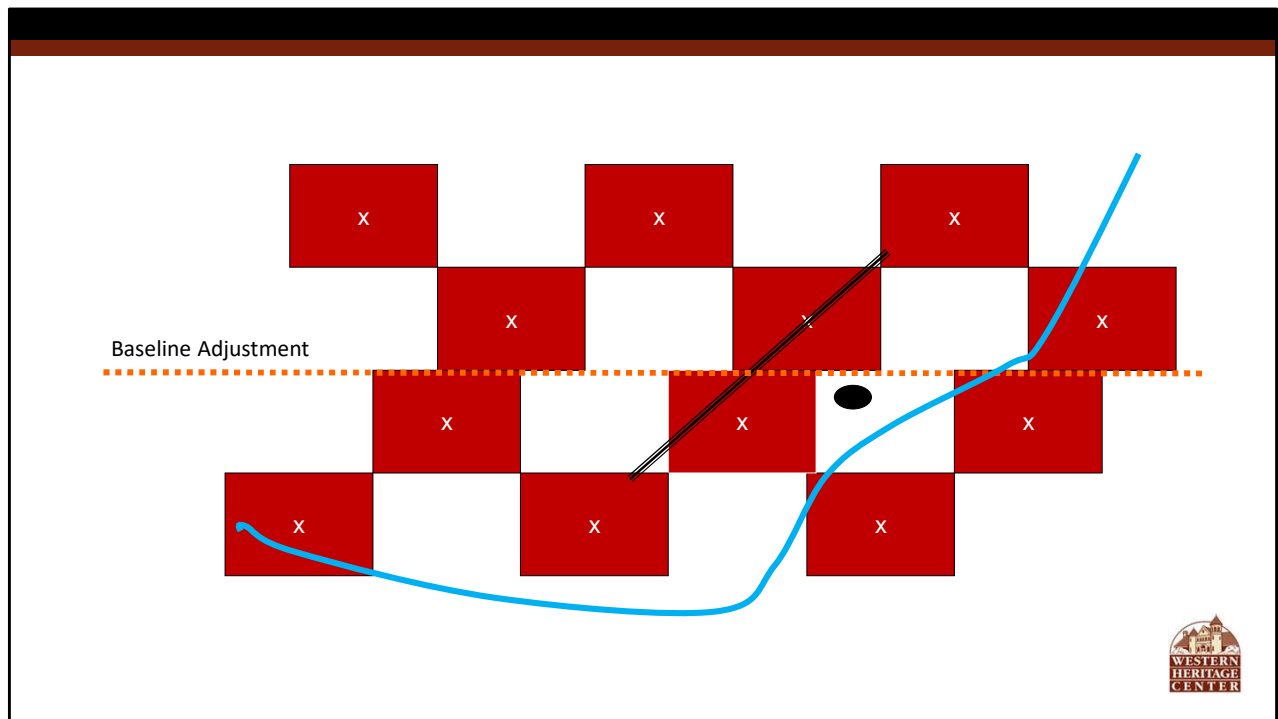


1877 Coulson Plan with the Checkerboard



Coulson, MT, before the Tracks



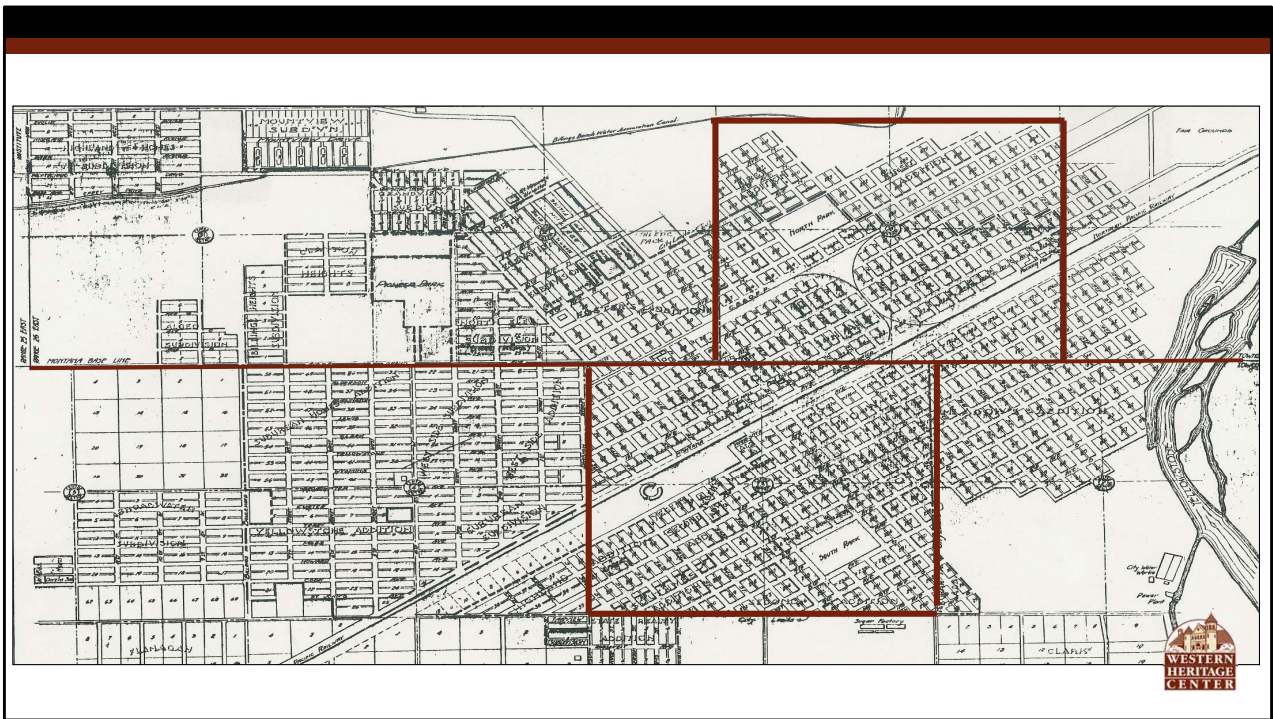


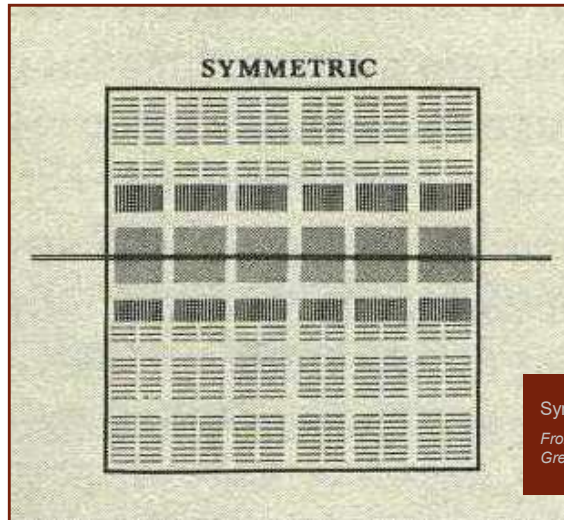


1882 – The railroad town is created.

1882 – The railroad town is created.



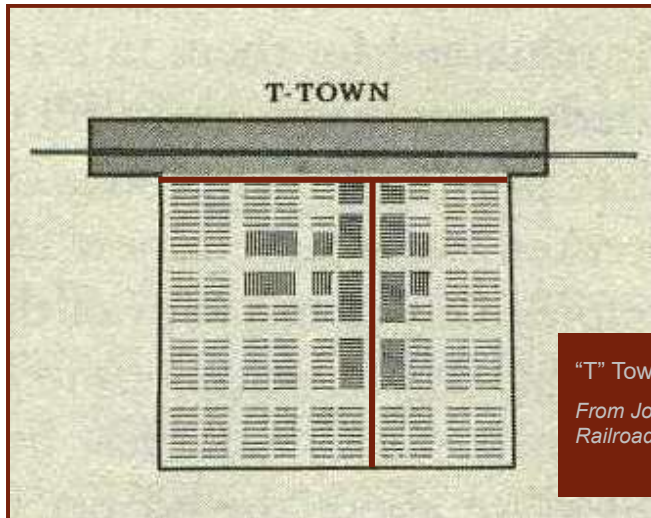




Symmetric Town Site Development

From John C. Hudson, "Towns of the Western Railroads,"
Great Plains Quarterly 2, 1982

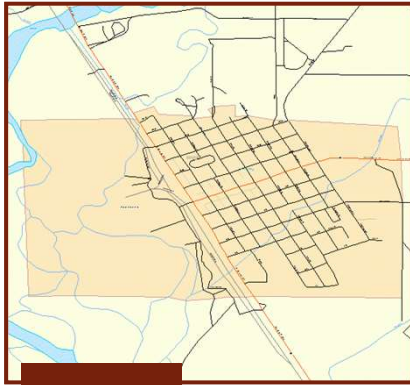




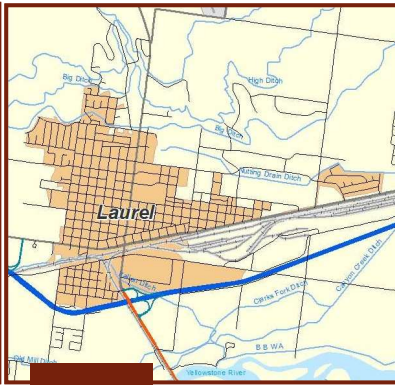
"T" Town Site Development

From John C. Hudson, "Towns of the Western Railroads," *Great Plains Quarterly* 2, 1982

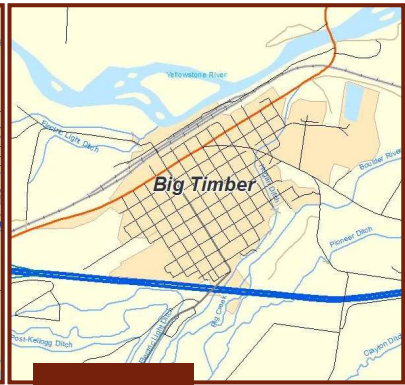




Townsend, MT



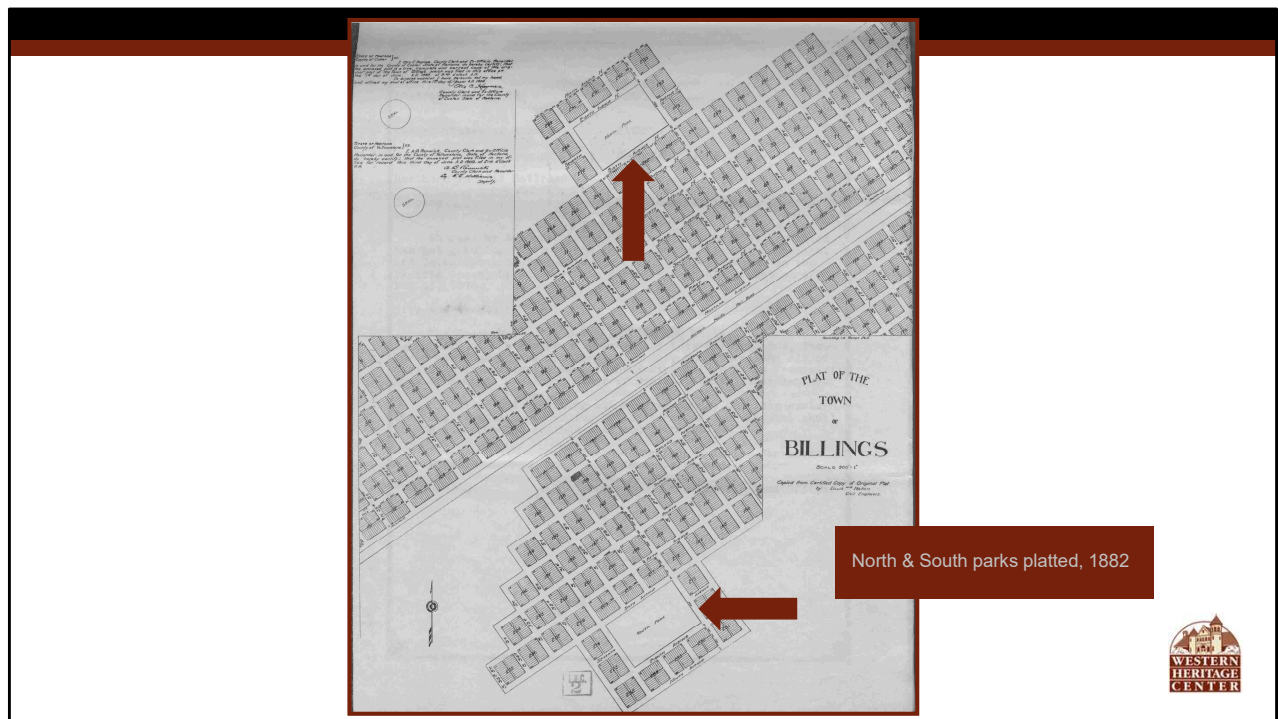
Laurel, MT



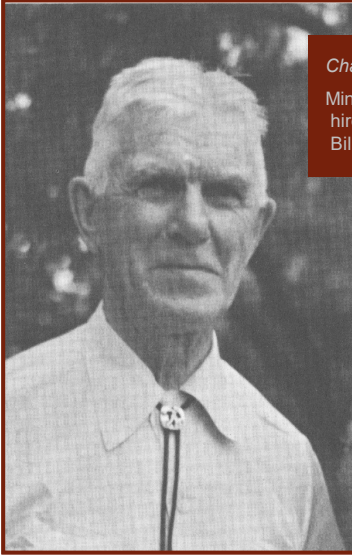
Big Timber, MT



T-Towns – Roundup, Harlem, Chinook



Parks Planning



Charles Ramsdale
Minnesota Landscape Architect,
hired 1911 to evaluate & plan
Billings City Parks



Dorothy Gray
Billings Landscape Architect,
hired 1921 to plan Pioneer Park



Billings grows – horses not logical, mini foray into public transit



Northern Hotel, Billings, circa 1912



Foray into public transit

Billings Traction Co invested \$100,000 (1912) in business - storage battery streetcars – tauted as only such transportation of its kind west of the Mississippi

Billings residents voted 183 to 15 to authorize the system in June 1910



Offered 30 minute scheduling from 7am-11pm

Rides were 5 cents with an 8mph speed in the business district & 12 mph everywhere else



Billings Traction Company
ran trolley system
1912-1916



Operation started March 1, 1912, tracks completed 1913

Only 1 battery charging station, & cold weather zapped the batteries quickly – not uncommon for the car to run out of juice & passengers had to get out to push

Between inconsistent power (battery) & rising use of car, the system folded by 1916



Wagon Cars,
Reed Point, MT



Cars in Billings by 1910



Above: Family with car, 1919



Above: Two women with International truck, Miles City, circa 1920



Right: Family with Packards, Livingston, MT, 1925



Growing ownership through 19-teens, early 1920s

Austin North gave a talk at the first annual meeting of the fledgling Billings Automobile club, perfectly in line with the promotion of his own North Elevation Subdivision, entitled, **“The Motor Car as a City and Country Builder.”**

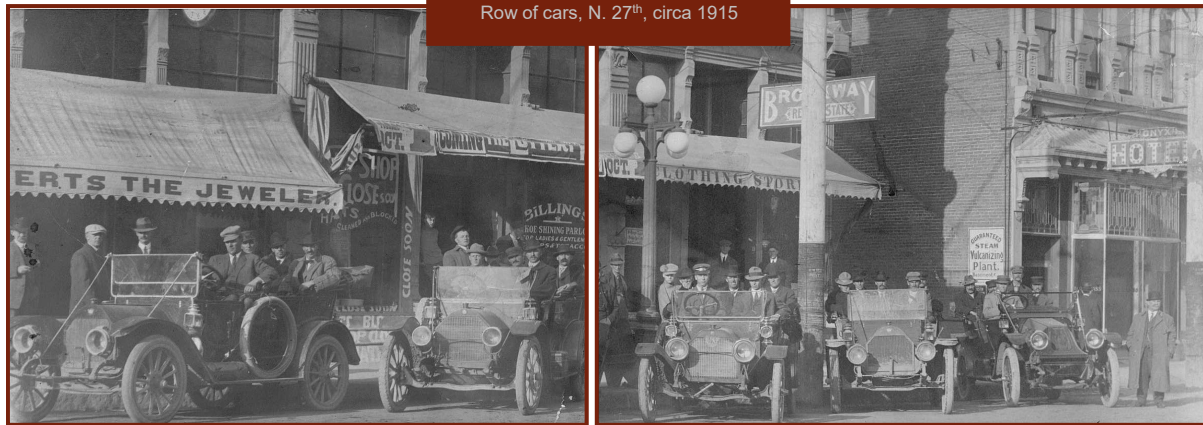


Austin North promoted access to the neighborhood and the improved roads into the North Elevation, noting the "scenery is unexcelled," and "one of the most pleasant automobile drives to be found in Billings from which a beautiful panoramic scene of the city and the upper valley can be seen is in the North Elevation addition to the city of Billings." - North specifically advertised the District for automobile owners - "Fine auto drives in the Elevation Addition" // "Mile after mile of smooth graded roads have been constructed there by private expenses"



N. 32nd St., 1912





City ordinances

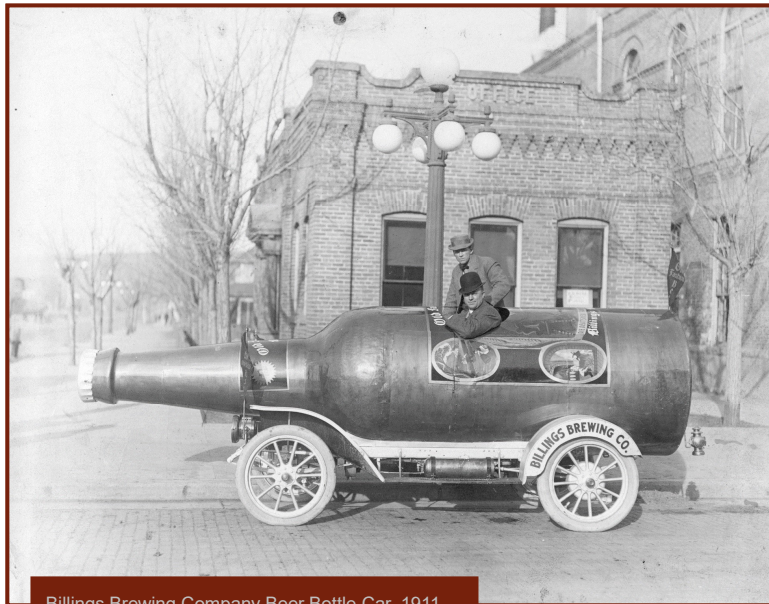
- 1908 – 8pmh downtown speedlimit, 12 mph on other streets, advised caution when approaching any horse- or mule-drawn vehicle
- Billings ordinances between 1910-1916 dealt with paving downtown streets, the building of plank sidewalks, the regulation for car mufflers, the driving of cars over sidewalks, and the removal of horse manure and trash from the alleys. Sturm and Drake requested, from the city, the paving of their alley and the removal of a gasoline tank from the alley to basement.

Strum & Drake Building, 1916 & 1937



City ordinances were established in 1914 that prohibited false, fraudulent, misleading, objectionable or pernicious advertising. A second ordinance, Ordinance 574, written on the same day, prohibited the construction any sign made of combustible painter's cloth, canvas, paper or any other flammable or combustible materials.

With the need for large scale street advertising and sign restrictions comes a renaissance of downtown hand painted signs.



Billings Brewing Company Beer Bottle Car, 1911

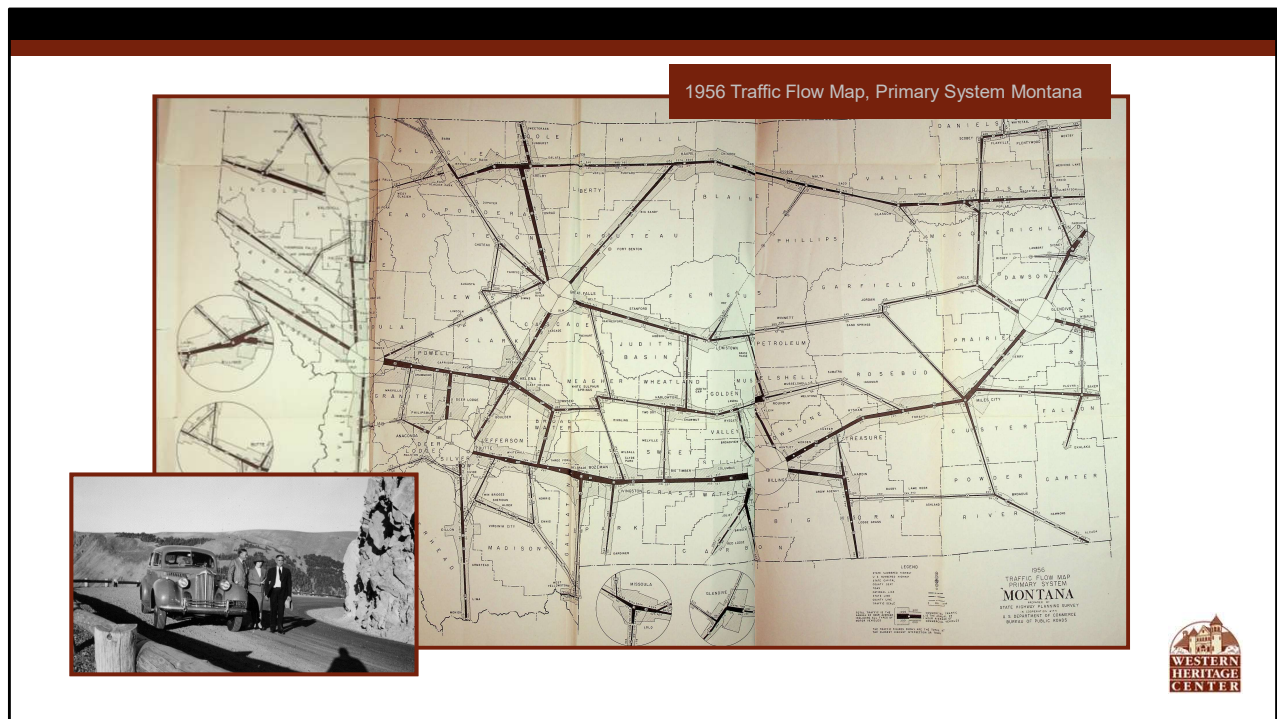




Use of Rt 3 through downtown – sparks modern road development / standardization of road, bridge, & tunnel construction

Billings becomes part of interstate road system

1912 – constructed Yellowstone Trail connecting Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound – large signs pointing toward Yellowstone National Park – “When you get as far west as Billings go slow. Take time for side trips”



- 1956 – Dwight Eisenhower signed Federal-Aide Highway Act, setting construction for a national interstate system – I-94 & I-90
- I-94 connecting Great Lakes to Northern Plains terminates at Billings
 - I-90 connects Boston to Seattle, the longest interstate road in the country

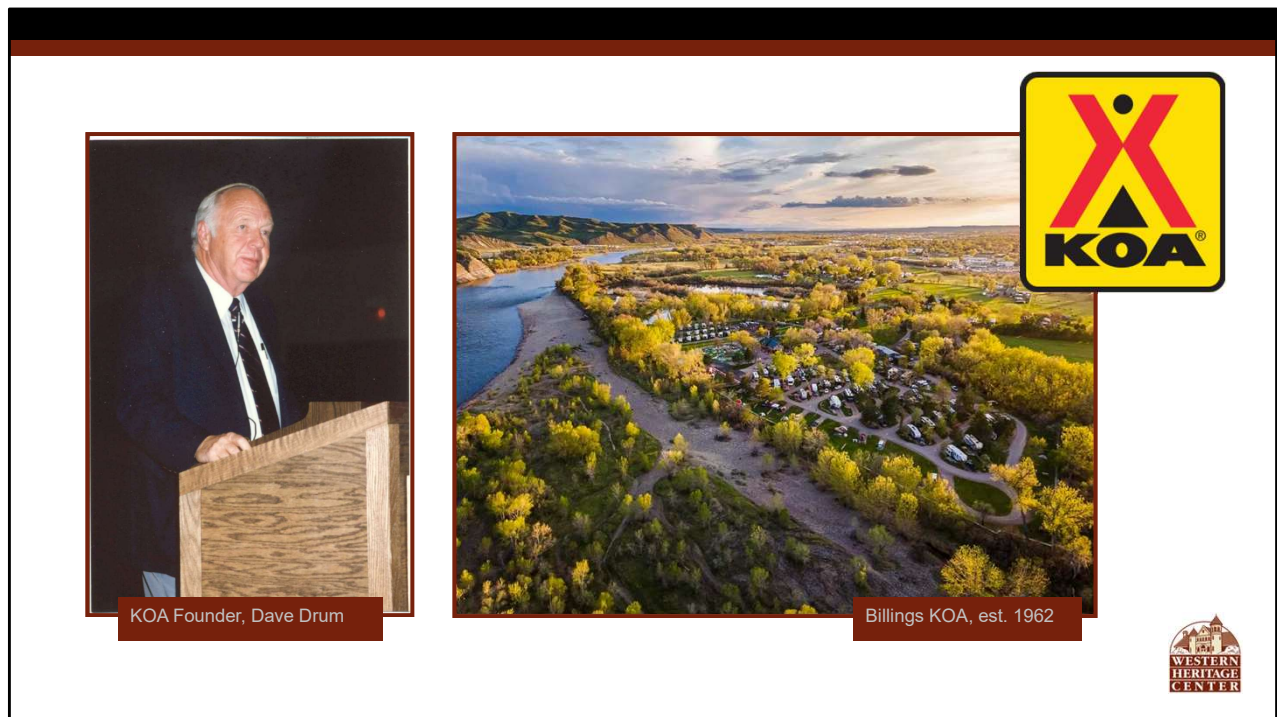


Billings Aerial, 2007
Photo by Larry Mayer



New interstates bypass town (outside edge)

Changes economic focal points – Moves away from railroad tracks



Kampgrounds of America – designed to “pamper” new American vacationing tourist – the camper

Largest privately owned, franchised camp ground in the world

In 1962, Billings, Montana businessman Dave Drum walked on his land along the Yellowstone River and watched baggage-laden cars and RVs zip down U.S. 10 on their way west to the Seattle World's Fair. Drum knew affordable places to stay were few and far between for those weary travelers. Drum and his partners, Bob Boorman and John Wallace, saw and seized an opportunity.

Drum constructed a campground on his land that offered hot showers, clean restrooms, a small store and a patch of grass -- all for \$1.75 a night. The campground was an instant hit. Travelers at Drum's campground told him that they wished they could stay in quality campgrounds throughout their travels. By the summer of 1963, Drum had two partners and a vision to create a system of campground throughout North America. The familiar logo was created by Karlo Fujiwara, a Billings graphic artist. Franchises began to sell quickly and **Kampgrounds of America** was up and running. By 1972, just 10 years after KOA's creation, the franchise had grown to 600

campgrounds.

Kampgrounds of America is keeping pace with changing times: They are installing Wi-Fi wireless Internet access at their campgrounds across North America. KOA will be the first system of family campgrounds to offer its customers wireless Internet from the comfort of their own campsites.



Billings Depot, 1979



Interstates Death knell for passenger trains

Last passenger train at Depot, 1979

Today, Billings Historic Depot is a community & events space

Transportation Innovation



- Failures & Successes

- Railroad
 - City Development & Parks
- Public Transit
- Automobiles
 - Rise in Popularity
 - Economic Driver
 - Neighborhood Planning
 - Advertising
- Highway System
 - Shifting Economic Base
 - Passenger Rail



Thank You!

Lauren Hunley, Community Historian



Questions