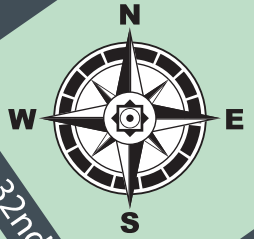




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South Side Stories Walking Route



Start Here!

History & Institutions

Route is 1 mile

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Grain Craft Mill | 6 South Side Churches |
| 2 King's Hat/Food | 7 Mary's Grocery Store |
| 3 The Railroad Tracks | 8 Yegen Houses |
| 4 Little Flower Church & Daycare | 9 Community Diversity |
| 5 Garfield School | 10 Highland Park |

1 Grain Craft Mill

As you start the route, you will notice the large round metal structures to the north. Opened in 1910, the Russell Miller Milling Co. manufactured 500 barrels of flour a day. Today, Grain Craft continues to mill flour in Billings. Many people on the South Side came for the agricultural opportunities surrounding the area.

"Some districts are well adapted to producing milling varieties of wheat... individual farmers can assemble their crops into large shipments."

- I.D. O'Donnell, former resident



2 King's Hat/Food

From this corner, you can see the King's Hat sign. Formerly called "Big Boy Drive-Inn", this local fast food favorite has been in operation since 1951. They are famous for their flying burgers and bee-bop drinks. Food was an integral part of the South Side's history, and continues to shape its culture.

3 The Railroad Tracks

Without the railroad, there would be no Billings. The tracks provided work, goods, and even entertainment for South Side communities.

"The trains [came] through and they would throw ice off. My mother would send us over... We'd take a bucket or a tub and go get the ice, bring it home, and she would put it in the freezer and make ice cream. Word would go round the neighborhood - Bertha's making ice cream. We'd have more company than you knew for a while, because she was really good."

- Nellie Foster, resident



4 Little Flower Church & Daycare

In 1948, Little Flower Catholic Church established a parish school. Built by J.G. Link, a prominent Montana architect, the building then served South Side children as a daycare for a number of years.

5 Garfield School

In 1901, Garfield School, across the way, became the 4th school built in Billings. After serving students for 100 years, it was closed in 2001. Today, it houses several community organizations.

"The teachers were very nice. I was kind of young when I went there, not quite eighteen, and so I think that some of those teachers kind of raised me a little bit. We had wonderful teachers."

- Ruth Pfaff, former Garfield School employee

6 South Side Churches

As you walk back down 3rd Ave S., you will see many of the churches which once served mostly German immigrants from Russia. Mexican immigrants and the African-American community had their own congregations on the South Side.

"To carry on our [German] heritage, on Christmas Eve since the beginning of this church, we have a candlelight service. At that candlelight service, we end it with singing Silent Night in German. I know my dialect can't [be understood] but I think I'm doing it right. (laughs)"

- Leatha Rush, Pilgrim Church member



7 Mary's Grocery Store

Local grocery stores were vital to early community development, as residents had to walk to purchase their food. At one time, there was a grocery store every five blocks on the South Side. One store was here on the corner of S. 34th and 3rd Ave S.

"We always called it Mary's... They carried the usual grocery store items... and they had penny candy for kids... that was always one of the places that you could spend an hour of their time picking out something. [They had] malted milk balls two for a penny."

- Tim Ennis, former resident

8 Yegen Houses

Look north to see the historic Yegen houses. Facing each other, the large homes of brothers Peter and Christian Yegen, prominent Billings businessmen, are the only two residences on the National Register of Historic Places on the South Side.

"You have a really incredible mix of industrial buildings, some really interesting multi-family housing units, and some really beautiful old homes. I love the color that people paint their houses and their doors on the South Side..."

- Sidney Ausen, resident

9 Community Diversity

Historically, cultural groups settled together, such as German immigrants from Russia and immigrants from China and Mexico, creating cultural centers within the South Side. These tight-knit communities fostered neighborhood relations that continue today.

"[There is] a lot of culture, a lot of diversity, and a lot of different incomes. I don't think that it's just lower income. It's a range of diversity and culture."

- Solana Pine, resident

10 Highland Park

You are almost back to the starting point at Highland Park! Parks serve a vital function to the South Side community. Families and neighbors often gather to play and strengthen neighborhood relationships.

"We go to [Highland Park] a lot... People are picnicking and then there are kids are all around."

- Cecelia Gavinsky, resident

The South Side Stories Walking Routes are part of the Healthy Neighborhood Project, in partnership with Western Heritage Center.

To find out more, visit the project website:

www.healthybydesignyellowstone.org/healthy-neighborhood-project



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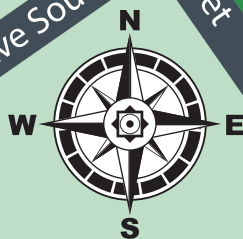
South Side Stories Walking Route



Start Here!

Community & Recreation

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Community Events | 6 Sugar Beet Factory |
| 2 Gazebo | 7 Gardening |
| 3 Friendly Neighbors | 8 Churches |
| 4 South Park Pool | 9 South Park |
| 5 Recreation | <i>Route is 1.2 miles</i> |



1 Community Events

Beloved events at South Park, founded in 1882, include the annual Easter Egg Hunt and the Mexican Fiesta. South Park is one of the largest parks in Billings.

"My oldest son's birthday... always came around [the Mexican Fiesta]... I don't know what the eggs are called, but they hollow them out and put confetti inside, then you'd break them over people's heads... that was always a part of my son's birthday."

- Linda Deavila, resident



2 Gazebo

Included in the 1913 park re-development plans, the gazebo (or bandstand) has served as a focal point for picnics, concerts, and events. The original structure was replaced in 2012.

"People don't realize the first task force started in Billings was on the South Side... They were the ones that rallied to get a brand new gazebo in South Park."

- Mike Yakawich, resident & community leader

3 Friendly Neighbors

Multiple generations of South Side residents are proud of their community's diversity and friendliness. They enjoy the proximity to downtown.

"I love being able to sit out on my front porch and hear the music from downtown."

- Selinda Todd, resident

"People are frequently out on the sidewalk and out on their porches and chatting with neighbors and passerbys."

- Sidney Ausen, resident

4 South Park Pool

First opened in July 1914, South Park pool was called the "largest city owned pool in the West." Sadly, for several decades, people of color could only swim on Sundays.

"As a minority... we could only swim on Sundays. They wouldn't let African-American or Mexican or minorities swim there because they let the white people swim Monday through Saturday. Then they would let us in Sunday, and then Sunday night, they would drain it and put new water in."

- Jim Ronquillo, resident



5 Recreation

Baseball has always been popular in Billings. In the winter, the city would flood the baseball fields and create an outdoor skating rink.

"In the winters... they used to flood the lower section of the park [with a firehose]... they had a huge ice skating rink and a warming shed. That was always fun in the winter to go down there and ice skate."

- Tim Ennis, former resident



6 Sugar Beet Factory

The Great Western Sugar Company dominated the industry for decades in Billings. Processing sugar beets into fine white sugar, the factory depended largely on immigrant labor. The stacks of this working factory can be seen to the south.

"The Mexican families always had their kids [in the beet fields]. So I topped beets when I was a kid... it was so hot and your back was breaking... saying, 'I'll be glad when I grow up. I'm going to get a good job.'"

- Chan Romero, former resident

7 Gardening

From private family gardens to larger plots tended by Chinese residents, homegrown vegetables were vital to the South Side community. Gardens may even include an abundance of flowers.

"There are an incredible amount of gardens on the South Side. It just never ceases to surprise me."

- Sidney Ausen, resident

8 Churches

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church hosted both Catholic mass and community events. The congregation even sponsored concerts that included local musicians, like Chan Romero who later wrote *The Hippy Hippy Shake*.

"The band I had, the Beltones, we played music for the first fiesta... it used to be right behind Guadalupe... that was the very first Mexican dance time."

- Chan Romero, former resident

9 South Park

As you walk back towards South Park, take a moment to appreciate the sense of connection and community the park continues to contribute to the South Side.

"South Park was a magical place. It had everything... ice skating in the winter, swimming in the summer. They had a large play area for kids with giant swing sets that would go 20 feet up in the air... Probably my favorite area."

- Tim Ennis, former resident

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