

Montana Block/Royal Bowling Alleys

222-224 South Railway St. S.E.

Lot 20 Block 13 Plan 1491

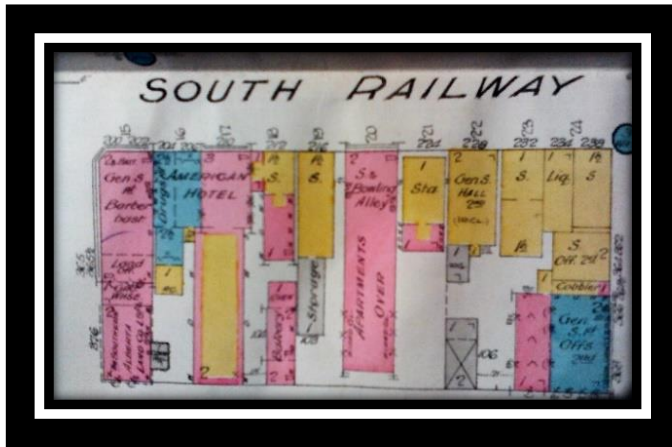
Date of Construction: 1908

Historical Address: 218-220 South Railway

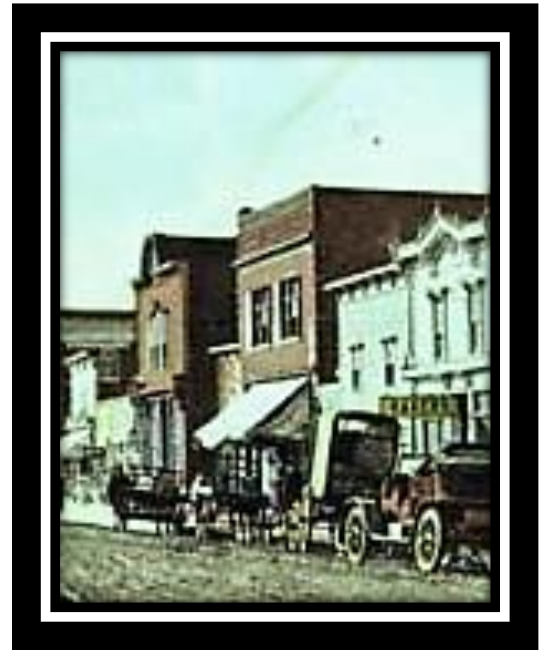
Owner: James Mitchell Builder: Oakes & Everard

M.H News (weekly): May 7, 1908: "Messrs. Oakes & Everard have been awarded the contract for the erection of a brick store for Mr. James Mitchell on the South Railway street on which the **Idle Hour Theatre** formerly stood." Masonry by George Worthy. *The address then was 218-220 South Railway.*

Nov. 13, 1911: Robert Boyd and partner Charles Cooper bought a bowling business from T. Victor Ready. Ready had established the Royal Bowling Alleys in 1905 which by 1908 was relocated to 218 S. Railway St., a new building owned by James Mitchell. In the same year, Ready and partner locate to the newly built Monarch Theatre. *Ready leaves the Monarch Theatre in 1923 and establishes the long running Regent Pool Hall at 660-2 St. SE.*



Left: 1910 Fire Insurance Map: Centre, Lot 20
"bowling alley", (Royal Bowling Alleys)
"apartments over" (the Montana Block)



Right: Royal Bowling Alleys, 1910 (with awning) 0525.0294*



Left: Jan. 4, 1911 Advertisement M.H. News

1913: The Medicine Hat News publishes a story on Boyd and Cooper, as follows

Medicine Hat Daily News, February 15, 1913: Boyd and Cooper
“Tobacconists Have Large Trade in That Line and Run Bowling Alley Successfully”

Pleasant and attractive surroundings have much to do with the healthfulness and also the morality of a place. The clean and wholesome atmosphere of the bowling alley and tobacco rooms of Boyd & Cooper on South Railway Street have every inducement to gentlemanly conduct and clean sportsmanship. It is patronized by a class of men who not only conduct themselves properly, but will have no tolerance for any who will not do the same. Consequently, as a place of amusement for clean and manly sport and for healthful exercise, there is no place in Medicine Hat that may be more genuinely recommended than the Bowling Alley of Boyd & Cooper.

Four alleys are installed here and they are of regulation size; swift and smooth and kept polished to a most desirable degree. Balls and pins are kept in good condition, boys and other attendants are courteous and efficient and the business in its entirety (sic) is conducted with a thoroughness and ability that leaves little to be desired. Some sharp single matches have been played here and the bowling league, that causes excitement many nights in the winter. Runs off its tournaments here.

This establishment is also headquarters for cigars. Tobaccos and pipes and has one of the finest and largest stocks that is displayed in this part of the province. Six large glass cases, the modern and attractive kind that are known as silent salesmen, are filled with smokers' supplies and the cases that are installed against the walls are well built and handsome so that a very large stock may be handled and shown to the best advantage.

Pipes, pouches, cigar and cigarette holders, humidors and all the different article that are used by tobacco users are dealt in. The best brands of cigars and tobacco are shown and all kinds of imported as well as domestic cigarettes are carried.

In fact, this company does a wholesale as well as a retail business and a number of stores in town, and in the surrounding towns, get the larger part of their tobacco supplies from this headquarters.

Though Boyd & Cooper have been the proprietors of the business only since November, 1911, the premises have been used for tobacco transactions and bowling for five years and Boyd & Cooper bought out their predecessor. Both of these partners, R.S. Boyd and Charles Cooper, have been in and out of Medicine Hat for the past 10-12 years and as railroad men, connected with the Canadian Pacific, formed many friendships, both with travellers and residents here.

Their wide acquaintance was an asset when they entered their present business, but their ability and general accommodating dispositions have brought them new friends and patrons almost every day. In addition to that, the public generally commends the manner in which their enterprise is conducted.

Shortly after this 1913 newspaper article was printed, Charles Cooper sold his interest to D.S. Reid. The business is now known as “Boyd & Reid”, but still listed by AGT as the Royal Bowling Alley. The second storey apartments are known as the **Montana Block**.

1914: The street names are changed in Medicine Hat. South Railway keeps the historical name but the addresses change. Previous address of 218-220 becomes 222-224 South Railway St.

1917: By 1917, the bowling alley has been replaced by billiards. AGT now lists the business as Boyd & Reid.

1921: Boyd and Reid purchase the building from Robert Mitchell.

1932: The second storey apartments are now called the **Hazel Block**.

1936: Boyd buys out D.S. Reid. The business is now known as Boyd Wholesale.

1941: The Hazel Block is renamed the **Boyd Block**.

1948: The business, Boyd Wholesale, is incorporated with Boyd as President.

By 1953, Boyd has retired and is exceeded as President of Boyd Wholesale by J.C. Miller. Although the business has been relocated to North Railway St., Boyd maintains ownership of the building on South Railway St. until around 1960.

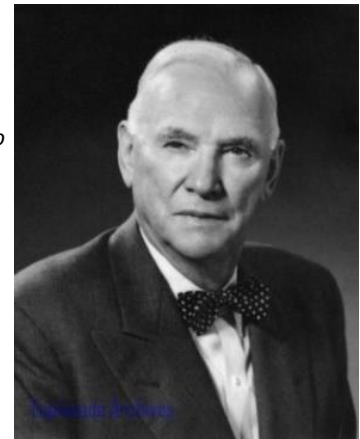
1953-1977: The business on first floor is renamed to reflect its original name and early purpose, the lower floor housing a pool parlour, known as "Royal Billiards." *



Boyd Block (signage on building) in 1953, as Royal Billiards 0055.0936*

About Robert S. Boyd:

Born in Brandon, MB in 1885. Came to Medicine Hat in March, 1903 as CPR employee. Married Bernice Brown who had come to Medicine Hat from the Maritimes as a teacher. Served as alderman in 1927 and from 1931-1944. Died in Vancouver in 1969.



0055.0017* Alderman R.S. Boyd



Right: The building, as Being Human Services, Dec. 25, 2016.

*Prepared by: Sally Sehn
Heritage Resources Committee
Jan. 28, 2017
Sources: Esplanade Archives
Asst. Archivist: Kim Unrau*

***Additional information and digital copies of photos may be available by contacting or visiting the Esplanade Archives**