

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Mining the Internet for Metadata

Mansfield Library

---

6-3-2018

### C. Road Trip by Virtual Car

Robert W. Lankston

University of Montana, Missoula, [rlankston@geogrations.com](mailto:rlankston@geogrations.com)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mmp\\_metadata\\_research](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mmp_metadata_research)

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Lankston, Robert W., "C. Road Trip by Virtual Car" (2018). *Mining the Internet for Metadata*. 3.  
[https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mmp\\_metadata\\_research/3](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mmp_metadata_research/3)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Mansfield Library at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mining the Internet for Metadata by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).



**Montana Memory Project Photo umt014175**

Initial Metadata Title: Brick Church in Missoula. Initial Metadata Date: Circa 1956.

### Road Trip by Virtual Car

For about 10 years from 2006 to 2016, my wife, Marian, worked at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at the University of Montana. One of her tasks was to catalog images of photos in the Montana Memory Project ([MMP](#)) collection. Starting in 2014, Marian would occasionally send a request to me asking for information on a photo. In this case from June 2014, i.e., early in my photo researching days, the request was “any idea which Missoula church this is?” The Title metadata field for [umt014175](#) was simply “Brick Church in Missoula”, and the Date field was Circa 1956. The Description field stated, “A large brick church in Missoula Montana.” Since submitting my research to the library, the Title and Description fields have been updated.

The metadata also included the photographer’s name, i.e., Stan Healy. Healy spent many years as a photographer for the Missoulian newspaper.

The church in the photograph was (is) of a Neo-Gothic or Gothic Revival style that was popular for churches built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Typical characteristics of this architectural style are a square bell tower, pointed-arch windows, and a steep gabled roof. The brick church shared many characteristics with the First Presbyterian Church in Missoula, but the church in the MMP photo was not the First Presbyterian Church.

With the help of Google Street Views, I drove my Virtual Car up and down the streets of Missoula looking for the church. I concentrated on the older parts of the city because churches

that were built later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century tended to be of simpler styles. My first attempts to locate the church were unsuccessful, but I felt confident that the church was not in Missoula, at least not today. I made note of the MMP serial number and set the note aside.

The note reminding me of the brick church sat on my desk for almost two years. I would look at the photo from time to time and identify features that I thought might help to locate the building or research threads like “church fires in Missoula”. A notable feature was that the original photo was taken on a sunny day, and clear shadows were cast on the sides of the church. My interpretation was that the view was to the northeast if the photo had been taken in the morning. That would suggest, then, that the street in the foreground ran in a generally north-south direction.

In May of 2016 during one of my occasional views of the lead photo, almost two years after the original request was made, a shadow in the lower right corner of the photo caught my attention. The cause of the shadow was out of the frame of the picture. However, the shadow looked like it could have been caused by some sort of highway signage. I thought that the lower part of that shadow could have been caused by the curved bottom of a shield-shaped US highway number sign (Figure 1).

In the 1950s, the shield shape was the actual shape of the metal sign. The shield shape is still used to indicate US highway numbers. However, today, the white shield with black lettering/numerals is rendered on a metal square with a black background.



**Figure 1. Style of US Highway Number Sign in the 1950's.** ([Hawkins](#), 2016)

Given my interpretation that the street ran more or less north-south, a guess that the church was on a US highway, a conviction that the church was not in Missoula, and a guess that Healy did not travel too far from Missoula to take his pictures, I focused on US 93, which runs more or less north-south through western Montana. If I was not already convinced that the church was not in Missoula, allowing that the church was on a north-south extent of US 93 ruled out Missoula. US 93 had no significant north-south extent through the town in those days.

That left Hamilton, Polson, and Kalispell as possible locations along US 93. Driving the Virtual Car in Hamilton along US 93 identified no churches similar to the photo. Polson was not a serious candidate because US 93 runs more or less east-west through that town. I placed the Virtual Car on US 93 on the south edge of Kalispell and started driving north.

I had not driven the Virtual Car very far when I had the view in Figure 2. This is clearly the church in the lead photo. Driving just a few feet farther north on South Main Street, I could



**Figure 2. Bethlehem Lutheran Church.** The church is at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and South Main Street in Kalispell, MT. *Photo © Google. Street View image captured September 2017.*

clearly read the name of the church in the lintel over the front door, i.e., Bethlehem. After that, determining that the church was (is) the Bethlehem Lutheran Church was trivial.

Since the MMP/Healy photo was taken, the parish has added to the south side of the church building (right in Figure 2 and the MMP photo). Otherwise, all of the Gothic Revival features are the same in Figure 2 and in the MMP photo, i.e., the pointed-arch windows, the steep gable roof, and the square bell tower with the finial on one corner.

Fortuitously, the Google Street View image was captured at approximately the same hour of the day as when Healy snapped his photo, presumably, in the 1950's. The shadows in both umt014175 and Figure 2 are very similar.

Though not particularly significant in the case of the brick church (umt014175), sometimes a feature other than the central subject of the photo aids in defining the location. In the MMP photo, just at the left edge of the frame, one can see a portion of another brick building. The shade of gray on that building is similar to that on the sunlit side of the church, and one might interpret that the brick styles were similar in the two buildings. In Figure 2, the building in the

background is obscured by trees. However, driving my Virtual Car to the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Main Street and turning east on to 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, I could get a better view of that building. That building was a mortuary in the 1950's according to Sanborn Fire Maps of Kalispell. It is still used for that purpose.

While I was on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, I swung around to take a look at the back of the church. The MMP photo, of course, does not show the back of the building. However, the MMP photo shows a cross on the crest of the back wall and a chimney near the back wall. Both of these features are obvious in the Google Street View of the back of the church.

The metadata for umt014175 have been updated on the MMP page in the time since this research was completed. The Title now reads "Brick church in Kalispell". Metadata issues like this mislocation are most often related to information that is included with the original photograph and is not usually related to data entry errors at the time the photo is scanned.

## **References**

Hawkins, H. G., Jr., 2016, Manual on uniform traffic control devices for streets and highways, 1948 edition, Part 1b, Warning and guide signs. Accessed 6/1/2018. URL: <https://ceprofs.civil.tamu.edu/ghawkins/MUTCD-history.htm>

6/3/2018