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YELLOWSTONE PARK
HISTORIC TOURISM

VIRGINIA CITY'S
150TH ANNIVERSARY



\$6.95 U.S.

The History of CTA Group

by Lesley M. Gilmore



Wright Residence



CTA Offices, Missoula



Lake Store, Yellowstone National Park



Cohen Residence

On August 1, 1938, two Billings men signed an agreement that has affected the lives of many: "A co-partnership has this day been formed between Ralph H. Cushing and Everett O. Terrell for the purpose of conducting an office for the practice of architecture." While Cushing and Terrell are no longer living, their legacy has flourished into Montana's largest architecture and engineering firm—CTA Architects Engineers—employing over 1,350 people since that auspicious day.



Cushing (standing) and Terrell (seated)

CTA often reflects back on their beginnings, yet the observations at their 75th anniversary seem more poignant than ever. Many values of the original firm remain, such as integrity, high-quality design, integration

of disciplines, and client service. Other aspects have changed dramatically, particularly in terms of growth

geographically, expertise, and numbers. CTA now has fifteen offices: eight in Montana, and others scattered across Idaho, Washington, Wyoming, Colorado, Texas, and Louisiana. Through these offices, CTA employs 380 staff members, 250 of whom are in Montana. The road to this pinnacle winds its way through residential, commercial, educational, hospital, industrial, retail, and governmental neighborhoods throughout Montana, the United States, and across the globe.

Cushing and Terrell understood early on that client relationships are the backbone of a successful business, so they focused on fulfilling—and exceeding—their clients' needs. This prompted CTA to expand their services, which now include structural, civil, mechanical, electrical, fire protection, and refrigeration engineering; landscape architecture and land planning; audio visual design and installation; industrial hygiene and environmental design; interior design; graphic design; and historic preservation.

Cushing and Terrell's first large client was the Billings School District.

Like many of CTA's clients, this alliance is strong today and remains a prime example of a larger part of CTA's work. CTA designed several subsequent additions to the high school, each reflecting the stylistic trends of the time, each embracing rich brick detailing. More buildings for Billings School District #2 soon followed, as did residential, hospital, and airport commissions. For the last twenty years, CTA's work has been spread over the United States, with work for the National Park Service, the United States Geological Survey, General Services Administration, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Dell Computers, Whole Foods Market, and dozens of other clients. The resulting project diversity has been a large part of CTA's professional growth.

CTA's interest in their own history extends to a passion for the history of Montana, and being part of it. Two of CTA's buildings have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places: the Ruth Residence and the Dude Rancher Hotel in Billings. Several more are deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: Reid Hall at MSU-Bozeman; the Physical Education Building and the Academic Support Center at MSU-Billings; Highland and Washington Schools in Billings; and the Midland Implement Company building in Billings. A number of CTA's offices are in historic buildings that CTA has renovated—in Billings, Bozeman, Helena, Great Falls, and Missoula.

CTA's enjoyment in working on historic buildings and in historic districts

CTA Milestones

- 1938: Firm founded
- 1939: Cushing and Terrell supervise construction of Billings Senior High School
- 1950: Firm intensifies structural engineering capability
- 1953: CTA strengthens medical facility design
- 1958: Firm endorses design and planning excellence
- 1960: CTA owners take 6-month pay freeze
- 1966: Idaho office established
- 1969: Interior design department opened
- 1977: CTA starts providing energy conservation services
- 1994: CTA designs a building for the Atlanta Olympics
- 1995: Missoula office established
- 2000: Helena office established
- 2001: Kalispell office established
- 2002: Bozeman and Jackson offices established
- 2002: CTA promotes LEED and sustainability
- 2003: CTA's Billings headquarters moves into the renovated Marshall-Wells Building
- 2013: Celebrate 75th Anniversary

is evident. Their work for the new Old Faithful Visitor Education Center rose to the challenge of locating a building in one of the most iconic historic districts in the National Park system—and in an active geothermal region. Most visitors are unaware that the building is located above a crawlspace configured and treated to match the surrounding air; it was imperative that it affect the subsurface as little as possible. CTA has employed the same system at the much smaller Old Faithful Haynes Photo Shop, a 1927 frame structure that was moved onto a shallow foundation several hundred yards east of the Visitor Education Center. The Haynes Photo Shop has been restored for use by the Yellowstone

Park Foundation, the Park's official fundraising partner, and will be opening in July 2013.

As demonstrated by the images on these pages, CTA's building designs do not have one signature style; the designs respond to the clients' needs, the geography and topology, materials available, and the budget. The designs also demonstrate CTA's thoughtful and creative approach to working with clients and expressing their visions in built form.

CTA has been extremely fortunate to call Montana home and to provide employment for so many Montanans. Each of the firm's offices is engaged in its community and enjoys supporting various activities across the state. The commitment and strength of the staff—marked by their long-term employment (personal 25-year anniversaries are common)—has been embraced by the younger staff. The future leaders of the firm have benefited from the continuity of message, leadership, mentoring, and support provided by the current leaders. Their entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, and professionalism will define pioneering environments for another 75 years. **WJH**

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CTA Founders:
Ralph H. Cushing and Everett O. Terrell

Celebrating 75 years

Ralph Cushing and Everett Terrell formed a partnership over a campfire on the Boulder River in 1938. Their vision was to forge one of the first integrated architecture and engineering firms, built on innovation, integrity and client service. 75 years later, CTA's culture still embodies their vision of entrepreneurial spirit, high performance and providing the best client experience possible.



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