



717 Main Street History

Legal Description: Lot 17 and the north half of Lot 18, Block 5, Louisville

Year of Construction: circa 1878 (see discussion below)

Builder: George Giles

Previous addresses used to refer to this property: 222 Second St. (under Louisville's old address system that changed in 1939); 422 Main (this address number appears in the 1936 Louisville directory and is likely to have been a typo, with "222" intended). Main Street used to be called Second Street.

Summary: This is likely the oldest remaining structure in Louisville, dating from approximately the year in which Louisville was founded. It was the home of four generations of the Niehoff/Austin family for over 100 years. Bert Niehoff, who became a major league baseball player, was born in the house. The City of Louisville purchased the property eight years after the death of the last member of the family. (A family tree showing the family members who lived in the house is attached to this report.)

The members of the Niehoff/Austin family who lived in this house were strongly associated with such activities as:

- Coal mining, including the first coal mine in Louisville
- The development of the town from its founding
- Pro-union stances during the mining strike of 1910-1914
- Farming in the Louisville area
- Ownership of a general merchandise store in Louisville
- Management of a Main Street pool hall
- Involvement in Louisville community organizations such as the Odd Fellows, Rebeccas, and American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary
- Education, through one member's school board membership and through another member's career as a teacher in the Louisville area
- Holding positions of mayor, fire chief, city treasurer, and postmistress in Louisville
- Major League baseball in the US, and the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League of the 1940s
- Bank management in Louisville
- World War I service
- Multiple connections of family members to Los Angeles, California

The Niehoff Family and Louisville's Early Years

The building at 717 Main was first the home of the family of Charles and Amelia Niehoff. "Niehoff" is the correct spelling of their surname. However, it has been misspelled in various records as "Neihoff," "Neahoff," "Neuhoff," and probably in other ways as well. The plaque on the front of the building has the name misspelled as "Neihoff."

Charles Bernhardt Niehoff was born in August 1840 and is believed to have come from Berlin, Germany to the United States in about 1867 as a young man. (In records, he was sometimes referred to as the German "Carl.") He soon came to Hermann, Gasconade County, Missouri. Hermann was established in the 1800s by German immigrants and is part of the "Missouri Rhineland," an area of vineyards and wineries.

Records suggest that it was not long before he married Amelia Wright. She was born in Hermann to parents who had come from Germany. (In the 1880 and 1900 census records, her name is spelled as "Emilia" and "Emilie.") The 1900 census records have her birth year as 1847, while her gravestone gives 1844. Charles and Amelia's first children were said to be born in Hermann in the same house in which Amelia had been born. Their first children were Barnhardt or Bernhardt, later given as Ben, born in 1869; Jessie, born in 1870; Kate, born in 1872; and Annie, born in about 1874.

The Niehoff family came to Denver in 1876. The 1876 directory for Denver shows Charles Niehoff to have been a driver, which in later years their daughter Jessie recalled as involving the driving of a horse-drawn streetcar. He also worked in Denver as an engineer for the Zang Brewery. Philip Zang, its founder, was a native of Germany.

By all accounts, the family came to the community that would soon become Louisville in 1877. Coal had been discovered, and Charles C. Welch opened the Welch Mine that year. Records indicate that Welch hired Niehoff first as a fireman, then as engineer at the Welch Mine a few months later. Niehoff went on to work as an engineer at other mines in the Louisville area, including the Industrial Mine.

In 1878, Louis Nawatny established the town of Louisville and began to sell lots. Boulder County online records show that the deed transferring Lot 17 from Louis Nawatny to Amelia "Neihoff" was recorded in 1879. (It may have been effective earlier, as at that time deeds were sometimes not recorded immediately.) In 1885, a deed transferring part of Lot 18 to Charles "Neihoff" was recorded. By coming to Louisville at its beginning, the Niehoffs were joining with a community with other German families.

A newspaper person interviewed Jessie Niehoff Austin as a woman of age 86 about her early years in Louisville. The ensuing 1956 *Louisville Times* article refers to the family having lived temporarily in the area at the southeast corner of what would become Main and Spruce. This was while a dugout was built for them at what is now 717 Main. The article states:

In a short while the dugout, about 15 by 20 feet, was ready for the family to move in. Then later it was portioned off into four tiny rooms. The hardwood floor in the dugout was still good when Mrs. Austin's family dug down to it about 18 years ago while putting in a furnace.

The father then build [sic] a two-room house above the dugout and a cellar. Other two-room houses went up as more family came to work in the mine and had to have places

to live. Two were built in the block south of Niehoffs and five up the street to the west. .

..

The present alley back of Austin's and the town [hall] was the west edge of Louisville. Then the Jefferson addition to the west o[f] that was annexed. [This occurred in 1880.]

In the same interview, Jessie Niehoff Austin spoke of such childhood memories as day-long trips to Golden, gathering wild plums along Coal Creek just south of town, and how her father and other men would move trees from Coal Creek and plant them in the young town of Louisville.

The 1880 federal census records and 1885 state census records show the Niehoff family to have been residing in the vicinity of what is now 717 Main, based on who is listed as living near them. A map dated 1880-81 made by Samuel Freeze also indicates the "C. Neahoff" residence in the correct location for 717 Main.

The following photo shows the three sisters in 1879 or early 1880 (left to right are Kate, Jessie, and Anna):



In February 1880, Anna, or Annie, Niehoff died of diphtheria and pneumonia at the age of six. (Louisville suffered through diphtheria epidemics in its early years.)

In about 1880, the fifth Niehoff child, Eddie, was born. He is believed to have been born in 1880 or later because he is not listed with the family in the 1880 census records. The following photo shows Jessie Niehoff and Eddie Niehoff and was likely taken in circa 1883:



He was followed by John Albert “Bert” in 1884. This photo shows, from left, Eddie, Jessie, baby Bert, and Kate, and was likely taken in 1884:



Eddie is believed to have died in 1884 or early 1885.

Newspaper accounts from Boulder papers of the 1880s and 1890s suggest that the Niehoff family was already a respected family of Louisville, and that its standard of living was a notch above that of regular coal miners’ families. A *Boulder News & Courier* article from 1882 reported on Charles Niehoff’s purchase of an organ for his daughters. Also, family members appear to have regularly had photos taken at photography studios in Denver.

A *Daily Camera* article dated July 19, 1895 described the following amusing anecdote:

Charles Niehoff, the well known resident of Louisville, came over from his home on the morning train yesterday faithfully promising his wife to return on the afternoon train. After looking after matters of importance several old time mountain friends were met and the party rapidly grew social. Time passed too quickly and the first thing Charles knew the train was leaving the city. He returned on the morning train, but the scene which ensued when he got home and endeavored to explain matters to his wife can be better imagined than described.

The 1895 newspaper coverage of the subsidence due to coal mining that caused the Niehoff house and yard to sink several feet, and how Niehoff addressed the problem, is discussed in connection with the history of the house itself, below.

The following photo shows the family in circa 1900-1909. Behind the parents, Amelia and Charles, are (left to right) Bert, Jessie, Kate, and Ben:



The following undated photos show Amelia Niehoff, first as a young woman in Missouri and then later as an older woman:





Charles Niehoff died on February 27, 1909. His obituary on the front page of *The Louisville News* (March 5, 1909) stated that he “breathed his last in a comfortable home built on the same lots on which he prepared his first home in Louisville” where, the obit says, he had originally built a dugout. “The wife, now a widow, and all the children and grandchildren, were at his bedside during his last hours and everything possible was done for his comfort.”

He had been a charter member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellow (IOOF) lodge when it was organized in about 1889, and the funeral was conducted by the IOOF. “The members of the order to the number of about sixty marched in the procession from the house, where the services were held, to the railroad, then some took carriages and others walked to the Louisville cemetery where they completed the funeral ceremonies. A large concourse of friends and relatives were in the procession. . . . The deceased was widely known and had hundreds of friends . . . who mourn and sympathize with the family in this, the time of their sorrow.”

The obituary noted that only three men were living in Louisville who were there when Niehoff came to Louisville, and went on to say that “[t]he deceased was widely known and had hundreds of friends, among whom is the editor of the News, who mourn and sympathize with the [family] in this, the time of their sorrow.”

Amelia Niehoff lived about six more years and died on December 7, 1915. An obituary for her has not been located.

The following photo of the family is believed to have been taken between in 1913-1914, based on the apparent age of Bert Niehoff’s son (born in 1908) and based on the fact that Amelia is in the photo, but not Charles (who died in 1909). The photo was taken behind the family house; the Louisville Town Hall appears on the right of the photo. Besides Amelia, the photo includes all four of her children (Ben, Jessie, Kate, and Bert); Jessie’s husband, William Austin, and their son, Roy; Bert’s wife, Mabel, and their son, Lloyd; and three others.



Ben Niehoff Biography

The oldest child of the Niehoff family, Ben (originally stated as Barnhardt or Bernhardt), was born in Hermann, Missouri in 1869 and worked as a coal miner in Louisville. He also became the Chief of the fire department, which was located right next to the Niehoff home.

This photo shows Ben Niehoff as a young man:



In 1892, he married Louisville resident Mary Estelle Smith. They had four sons, but by the 1950s, only one son was living. Ben and Mary divorced, and Ben Niehoff died in 1931 at the age of about 62.

Ben Niehoff served as Fire Chief from 1918 to 1928. In 1920, he served as one of the vice presidents of the Colorado State Firemen's Association. The following photo shows Ben Niehoff standing on the far right with the 1920 Louisville hose team; his nephew who lived at 717 Main, Roy Austin, appears two in from him in the back row:



According to a 1976 newspaper interview with his nephew, Roy Austin, Ben Niehoff took a strongly pro-union position during the long mining strike of 1910-1914. From his front porch in downtown Louisville just a block away from 717 Main, he would shoot out the light at the Hecla Mine about a mile away. According to Roy Austin, the Hecla Mine owners never figured out who was doing it.

Jessie Niehoff and Her Husband, William Austin

Jessie Niehoff, who was born in Hermann, Missouri in 1870, was seven years old when she came to Louisville with her family. She had a very close association with this house, as she lived in it for almost her entire life. She also was closely associated with Louisville and its development. She was present at the start of Louisville in 1878 and had seen many changes by the time she died in 1959 at the age of 89. For example, she was among the first students in Louisville's first school, which was one room, and she experienced a time when wash water came in ditches from the Goodhue Ditch just west of Louisville to a water hole, where residents would get the water and store it in barrels.

In 1889, at the age of nineteen, Jessie Niehoff married William Austin. The following photo is their wedding picture:



During his lifetime, William Austin worked in farming and mining, had a store in downtown Louisville, and served as mayor.

William Austin was born in New York in 1864, then moved to Missouri before coming out to Colorado. According to the 1956 article for which Jessie was interviewed, he was initially a farmer who worked on the Miller farm in the Lafayette, Colorado area not far from Louisville. He then helped sink the shaft for the Simpson Mine, which was the first mine in Lafayette that was started in 1888. According to a 1976 interview with William's granddaughter, Lois Mall, he would walk to the Simpson Mine in Lafayette to work ten hours a day for \$1.50. He also helped sink the Acme Mine shaft in downtown Louisville; the Acme Mine is also believed to have been started in 1888.

Jessie and William's daughter, Mae, was born in 1891. Their son, Roy, was born in 1896. It is believed that both were born in the house at 717 Main, which was the home of Jessie's parents, Charles and Amelia Niehoff. The Austin family had a part of the house, then Jessie and her husband and two children moved to another home in Louisville. This home was at 500 Spruce St.

This photo shows the Austin family circa 1904-1905:



It is not known how long they lived at 500 Spruce, but following the death of Charles Niehoff in 1909 and Amelia Niehoff in 1915, Jessie and her husband and children then returned to 717 Main and it became their home for several more decades. Jessie became the legal owner by a deed recorded in 1925, her

siblings having signed to her over their ownership interests in the property as heirs of their parents. It is believed that William Austin was never an owner of the house.

The following photo shows Jessie and her sister, Kate:



William Austin was elected town trustee beginning not later than 1895, and was later elected mayor of Louisville and served from 1905 to 1909 and from 1910 to 1911. Newspapers stated that he ran on the Populist ticket for trustee, then on the Union Labor ticket for mayor. As mayor during the beginning of the 1910-1914 mining strike that took place in the northern coal fields of Colorado, Austin took a pro-union stand. This was evidenced by his protest, along with other area elected officials, to the governor of Colorado to ask the governor to revoke the license of the Baldwin-Felts detective agency, which supplied gunmen to the mine owners during the strike, according to a *Denver Post* article dated December 5, 1910.

According to the 1956 newspaper interview with Jessie Austin, the elections when William Austin ran were “just as hot as they are now.” Austin was determined to buy water for the town and finally did so, against opposition. Years later, when the water bonds were paid off, his son (Roy Austin) organized a ceremony in town whereby the bonds were burned in a celebration, according to an article in the 10/30-31/1976 *Longmont Daily Times-Call*.

Beginning in the 1890s, William Austin had a general merchandise store at the northeast corner of Spruce and Jefferson in Louisville. (The address is now 800 Jefferson, but the original building is gone.) He also sold school supplies and candy in this convenient location that was directly across the street from the location of the Louisville grade school located at the northwest corner of Spruce and Jefferson. The following photo shows the store when it was operated by Austin:



In 1910, it was reported in the *Denver Post* that the store of “William Austin, mayor of Louisville, was robbed of jewelry and merchandise valued at about \$500.” The robbers did not attempt to open the safe in the store, however. Following William Austin’s death in 1935, Jessie Austin is believed to have continued to operate the store until 1937, then it was rented out, and it was eventually sold by the Austin children in the 1950s.

Jessie Niehoff is believed to have been active in community organizations and, with her family, belonged to the Methodist Church at the southwest corner of Spruce and Jefferson (741 Jefferson). The *Daily Camera* newspaper reported in 1895 that she traveled to Montrose, Colorado with a male resident “to represent the Louisville lodge at the meeting of the grand lodge of Odd Fellows and Rebecca’s” there.

William Austin died in 1935. Jessie continued to live in the house at 717 Main with her daughter, Mae; her son, Roy; and Mae’s daughter, Lois. In 1951, she was reported as being in favor of approving a bond issue to fund Louisville’s first sewage system (Louisville residents still used outhouses at the time). According to the April 5, 1951 *Louisville Times*, she stated that “It may pinch some of us, but we have been pinched before and got through it.”

The 1956 newspaper article about Jessie Niehoff Austin observed: “During her lifetime, Mrs. Austin has seen Superior and Lafayette started and built, as well as the development of Louisville from its beginning as a coal camp into a commuter’s town as it is today. She saw the coal mines start and [the mining] industry close down here. She has seen at least four generations of changes in the business section of Louisville. She is Louisville’s real pioneer.”

Jessie Austin fell in her home in late 1958, went into the hospital, and died in February 1959 at the age of 89. Her only surviving sibling, Bert Niehoff, came back to Louisville for the funeral of his big sister.

Kate Niehoff Biography

Kate Niehoff was born in 1872 in Missouri and was about five years when the Niehoff family moved to Louisville. It is believed that she lived at 717 Main until her marriage. In 1896, at the age of about 24, she married Charles Hake of Superior. He was the son of the founder of Superior, William Hake. Charles

The marriage didn’t last. It is believed that they divorced in about 1913. They both remarried to other people.

Kate Niehoff Hake moved to Los Angeles, California and by 1930 was married to August “Joe” Boss. In 1930, Boss was working as a shipping clerk. Kate’s adopted daughter, Nina, was living with them along with her husband, Paul Goodhue.

A notation from the Niehoff/Austin family made reference to Kate Niehoff having had a third husband, but no records were found that would confirm this.

The following undated photo shows Jessie Niehoff Austin (on the left) and Kate Niehoff Hake Boss in middle age:



Many photos from this family document visits by other family members to visit Kate Niehoff in Los Angeles.

Kate Niehoff Boss died in Los Angeles in 1956.

Bert Niehoff Biography

John Albert “Bert” Niehoff, the youngest child of the Niehoff family, became one of Louisville’s most famous residents.

He was born in the house at 717 Main in 1884. As a youth, he was active in Louisville baseball teams and showed talent. Baseball was a popular pastime and Miners Field, which is still a baseball field, was in use as a baseball field early on, though not donated to the town until later.

This photo shows Bert as a boy with a bicycle:



This photo shows Bert Niehoff with his father, Charles Niehoff:



In the early 1900s, when Bert was about twenty years old, his father, Charles Niehoff, sent him to Denver to become an electrician. Denver directories from 1904 and 1905 show that he was working there. In 1905, he married Mabel Rule. (In 1911, they had a son, Lloyd.) A strike in Denver prevented him from working, which led him to find work in Trinidad, Colorado. There, he got on the town's baseball team and his baseball career started in earnest.

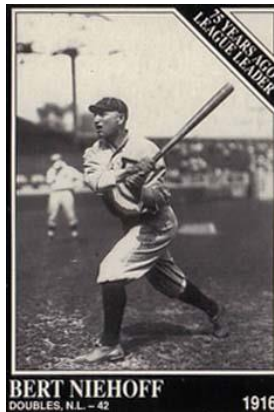
From a minor league team in Louisville, Kentucky, Bert Niehoff then played in the major leagues from 1913 to 1918. He played for the Cincinnati Reds (1913-1915), the Philadelphia Phillies (1915-1917), St. Louis Cardinals (1918) and the New York Giants (1918). He was a second baseman. Travelling as much as he did with the teams, he undoubtedly was the most well travelled person from Louisville at the time.

Niehoff played for the Phillies in the 1915 World Series, with one of the games attended by President Woodrow Wilson. It is said to have been the first time that a US President watched the World Series live. The Phillies lost to the Boston Red Sox that year.

The following image is from a Niehoff baseball card found online:



This baseball card was a 1991 reprint from 75 years earlier:



This photo from the Louisville Historical Museum shows Niehoff in a baseball pose:



When playing for the New York Giants in 1918, he broke his leg when he and another player collided on the field while both going for a fly ball off the bat of Cy Williams. This marked the end of his major

league career as a player. The following photo is believed to date from 1918, when Bert Niehoff was recovering from his broken leg, and appears to include his wife, Mabel, and son Lloyd:



Niehoff continued to have a career in baseball, however. He worked as a scout, coach, and manager. Over the years, he was based at different times in Atlanta, Oklahoma City, and Los Angeles, and he continued to travel extensively. According to Niehoff's Wikipedia entry, "he will be greatly remembered as one of the first managers selected by the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League." He managed and coached the inaugural season (1943-44) of the South Bend Blue Sox women's team, which is the league depicted in the 1992 movie "A League of Their Own." The South Bend Blue Sox team is shown here in 1944 with Niehoff at the left rear:



According to several sources, during an exhibition game in Chattanooga between the New York Yankees and the minor league team The Chattanooga Lookouts, it was the Lookouts manager, Bert Niehoff, who sent in a seventeen-year-old girl, Jackie Mitchell, as pitcher. (Mitchell was one of the first women ever to be signed to a minor league team.) She struck out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, and is said to have received a standing ovation from the crowd.

Bert Niehoff's last known visit to Louisville was for his sister Jessie's funeral in 1959, though it is possible that he returned later. He worked as a scout well into his eighties, during the 1960s. He died in California in 1974 at the age of 90.

Mae Austin Goodhue Biography

Mae Austin was born to Jessie Niehoff Austin and William Austin in the house at 717 Main in 1891. She was one of the first graduates of Louisville High School, graduating in 1910. According to records at the Louisville Historical Museum, her class consisted of eight students and "[t]he girls were known as the 'Dirty Half Dozen.' They delighted in pooling their money and going to Bert Ostrander's Bakery. They would buy six sugar doughnuts and return to school with sugar all over their faces." Mae Austin graduated at a time when many in Louisville were doing relatively well, before the strike of 1910-1914 that sent Louisville into financial circumstances that many would later liken to the Great Depression.

The following photo shows Mae Austin with her classmates in a 1909 basketball team photo (she is shown second from the right):



This is Mae Austin's senior class picture:



Here, she is shown on an outing in the mountains (on the far left) with another young woman and two young men:



With the Niehoff Austin house being situated right next to the Town Hall with the fire department and the fire bell, it has been remembered that when the large fire bell rang, Mae would rush to open the two front doors of the firehouse so the crew could get out quickly. The 1985 college paper “Louisville On Main Street” by Gina Liscum, for which she interviewed Roy Austin and Lois Mall, stated that “they were always the first ones in town to ring that bell on New Year’s Eve.”

Mae Austin attended school at the Colorado State College of Education in Greeley, Colorado from 1912 to 1914, then began to teach third grade in Lafayette in 1912. She stopped working when, in 1914, she married Hugh Goodhue. He was a member of the Goodhue pioneer family that had a farm southeast of Louisville. (The Goodhue farmhouse is now owned by Boulder County.) Hugh Goodhue was one of three sons of Abner and Clara Goodhue. Abner Goodhue built the Goodhue Ditch that brought water to early Louisville. When Abner died in 1907, Clara and her three sons continued to work the farm, but lost the farm to bankruptcy in the 1920s. (Hugh’s brother, Paul, was married to Nina Hake, the adopted daughter of Mae’s aunt Kate Niehoff Hake Boss.)

Mae and Hugh Goodhue had a daughter, Lois, in 1916. A Colorado Springs directory show that Hugh and Mae may have lived in Colorado Springs briefly in 1921. According to their daughter, Lois, it was at around this time that the couple split up. (Their divorce was finalized in 1925.) Mae Austin Goodhue moved to the house at 717 Main in Louisville with Lois by 1923. (Hugh Goodhue and his mother, brothers, and brothers’ wives moved to Los Angeles, California for the remainder of their lives.) It is believed that Hugh Goodhue did not live at 717 Main at any time.

Back in Louisville in 1923, Mae went to work as a teacher at the Monarch Mine camp school south of Louisville. This involved teaching grades one through four to children who lived at the mine camp; older students were bused to Louisville High School. According to Anne Dyni, author of *Back to Basics: The Frontier Schools of Boulder County, Colorado, 1860-1960*, the Monarch school was located in the center of the Monarch Mine camp, near the large mine dump. The following photo is said to show teacher Mae Austin Goodhue by the Monarch School in the 1920s:



According to her own handwritten records, Mae Austin Goodhue taught school at the Monarch Mine camp for twenty-one years from 1923 to 1944, then taught elementary school at the Westwood school

in Denver for thirteen more years. There is some indication that she may have lived in Denver for at least part of the time that she was teaching at Westwood. Mae taught for a total of about thirty-five years. She retired in 1957, but according to her obituary, she was then a substitute teacher for Louisville schools on occasion and tutored students in the summers until 1969.

Mae Austin Goodhue was President of the American Legion Auxiliary and a member of the Methodist Church. She lived at 717 Main for the rest of her life following her divorce. After the death of her father, William, in 1935 and her mother, Jessie in 1959, Mae continued to reside at 717 Main with her brother, Roy, and her daughter, Lois.

Roy Austin Biography

Roy Austin was born in the house at 717 Main in 1896. He graduated from Louisville High School. Later in his life, Roy Austin stated that due to the strike and difficult financial times of 1910-1914, there was not money for him to attend college.

Roy Austin served in World War II and received training at La Grange, Oregon. The following photo of Roy is believed to have been taken there. It is not known whether he served overseas in the war.



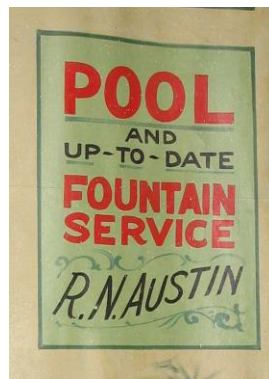
Roy was an active member of the Louisville Fire Department's hose team that would compete against hose teams of other towns. The following photo shows Roy Austin at the lead, on the left, in front of the fire hall and with his home at 717 Main just behind:



From the period of 1923-26 to 1933-35, Roy Austin rented a pool hall at 728 Main from Lawrence Mossoni. This building is located roughly across the street from 717 Main, with the current view (as of August 2012) from the porch of the house towards the pool hall building looking like this:



Roy Austin's pool hall, with its fountain service, was one of twenty-two Louisville businesses to be advertised on the Rex Theater movie curtain that has been donated to the Louisville Historical Museum:



Roy's primary career, after he stopped managing the pool hall, was with banks. He worked for the First Stated Bank of Louisville as cashier and as executive vice president. He was also the city treasurer for twenty years, according to his obituary, and worked in the Boulder County treasurer's office as well. He was a member of the fire department, was a retired life member of the Colorado State Firemen's Association, and was an American Legion Post member. He never married and had no children.

Roy Austin was the last member of the family to live in the house. He died at the age of 89 in December 1985, a month after the death of his niece, Lois, who had also lived in the house. He is remembered as having been gregarious, and was well liked. Current residents who were living in Louisville in the 1970s and 1980s remember an elderly man who sat on the porch of 717 Main and watched people go by on Main Street.

Lois Goodhue Mall Biography

Lois Goodhue was born in 1916 to Mae Austin Goodhue and Hugh Goodhue. It is believed that she was born in the Goodhue farmhouse, now owned by Boulder County. She was born after the death of her pioneer grandfather, Abner Goodhue, and consequently never knew him, but she was the only grandchild of Abner and Clara Goodhue. She was also the only grandchild of Jessie Niehoff Austin and William Austin. She herself had no children.

Due to her spending time on the Goodhue farm with her grandmother when she was a few years old in around 1918 or 1919, photos of her on the farm have survived and have been donated to the Louisville Historical Museum with other family photos. These are the only known historical photos showing the Goodhue farm buildings.

In a 1976 newspaper article for which she was interviewed, Lois said that “I was a very happy child and was fortunate to have everything I needed. My mother was a teacher and my grandfather ran a local store where we always got what we needed.” She acknowledged that she was “a spoiled brat” due to being an only child on both sides of the family. Photos of her as a child playing at the house at 717 Main with her dog, Razzle, seem to indicate a happy childhood surrounded by family, despite the fact that her parents had divorced and her father moved to California.

This photo shows Lois as a high school senior (she graduated in 1934):



Following her high school graduation, Lois attended college at the Colorado State College of Education in Greeley, Colorado.

Lois Goodhue next worked as a bookkeeper and cashier at the First State Bank of Louisville, where her uncle Roy Austin also worked.

Lois Goodhue became acquainted with her great aunt Kate Niehoff's next door neighbor, a widower. Edward Mall lost his wife in 1950. They married in February 1951 and it is believed that Lois then moved into his home in Los Angeles next to her great aunt's house. She was at the time 34 years old, and he was 49. He died in 1957. Lois then returned to Louisville and 717 Main, following the pattern set by her mother, Mae, after Mae and Hugh divorced.

This photo shows Mae Austin Goodhue and Jessie Niehoff, with Lois Goodhue Mall and Roy Austin behind, and is believed to have been taken in Los Angeles in 1955; it could have been taken at either the home of Lois Goodhue Mall or that of her great aunt, Kate Niehoff:



In 1964, Lois Mall was appointed to be postmistress for the Louisville Post Office. At that time, the office was a political appointment made by the US President. The Post Office was located directly across the street from 717 Main at 722 Main. It was an echo of when Roy Austin worked roughly across the street as well, managing a pool hall at 728 Main and of when William Austin, while mayor, was associated with the Town Hall next door.

Lois Goodhue Mall was postmistress for fourteen years, until 1978. As postmistress in the 1960s and 1970s, and having grown up right on Main Street, she was in a unique position to observe Louisville's population growth, which started to increase in the 1960s as more work opportunities began to become available and Louisville added subdivisions with new housing developments. The town became a city of the second class under Colorado law in 1962.

A newspaper article in the *Longmont Daily Times-Call* in 1976 stated: "The once ultra-poor coal mining town, which for a while looked like it would go down the shaft when the coal mines all worked out, has experienced recent popularity as a very desirable place to live." Lois Mall told the writer that there were three or four new families moving into the area every day, and she said that she "thinks it's because it is rural and clean with an extremely friendly populace."

Until 1974, Lois Mall lived at 717 Main with her mother, Mae, and her uncle, Roy. Upon Mae's death in 1974, Lois and Roy resided in the home together for another eleven years. In November 1985, Lois Goodhue Mall passed away at the age of 69. Her uncle, Roy Austin, died a month later.

The Niehoff Austin Family – Summary

This family, which was one of the first families in Louisville and whose members made their home at 717 Main Street for over one hundred years, watched Louisville develop from their front porch. They were involved in many aspects of civic, educational, and business life as well as being associated with coal mining in the area. In particular, Jessie Niehoff Austin witnessed Louisville change dramatically from its establishment in 1878 until her death in 1959.

History of the Building

Discussion of Construction Date; Subsidence Issues

The information about the construction of the house that appears above is repeated here: A newspaper reporter interviewed Jessie Niehoff Austin when she was age 86 about her early years in Louisville. The ensuing 1956 *Louisville Times* article refers to the family having lived temporarily in the area at the southeast corner of what would become Main and Spruce. This was while a dugout was built for them at what is now 717 Main. The article states:

In a short while the dugout, about 15 by 20 feet, was ready for the family to move in. Then later it was portioned off into four tiny rooms. The hardwood floor in the dugout was still good when Mrs. Austin's family dug down to it about 18 years ago while putting in a furnace.

The father then build [sic] a two-room house above the dugout and a cellar.

Similarly, Jessie Niehoff Austin's 1959 obituary states: "The family first lived in a one-room house until a dugout could be built on the lot where the Austin home now stands. Later a two-room house was built above the dugout."

Multiple sources indicate that the construction of the house occurred in 1878. These sources include the 1956 article for which Jessie Niehoff Austin was interviewed and the 1976 newspaper article for which Lois Goodhue Mall was interviewed; and it was implied, though not stated directly, by Carolyn Conarroe in her book *The Louisville Story*. Also, the 1880 census places the Niehoff family in the correct location, and a map from 1880-81 identifies this section of this block, where 717 Main is located, as the residence of the Niehoff family. However, it must be acknowledged that other dates of construction have been given in various sources. The County Assessor card for this property, which was completed in 1948, gave the estimated date of 55 years in 1948, which would suggest a date of 1893, but the card also states "no one home" and says that the information was estimated. The County website currently gives the date of 1887 with no further explanation, but it should be noted that the County has been found to be in error in its dates of construction for many historic buildings in Louisville. The 1982 survey record gave the date of 1878-79. The 2000 survey record gave the construction date of 1878, but said that the County gave the date of 1872 (this has not been found in County records). A history of Main Street entitled "Louisville On Main Street" written in 1985 by Gina Liscum as a college paper, for which she interviewed Roy Austin and Lois Mall, gave the date of construction as 1872.

The plaque on the house, shown here, gives the date of construction as having been "1898." However, the house is believed to have been placed on a local register based on information in the 1982 survey record, and the survey record estimated the time of construction as having been 1878-79. To add to the confusion, the 2000 survey record referenced the plaque on the house and stated that it says "1878." However, it clearly states 1898. No evidence has been found that would suggest that this date is correct, and much evidence has been found that would suggest that the house was constructed earlier. It is possible that an error occurred when the plaque was made.



(The plaque is problematic in another respect as well. The family name, instead of being spelled correctly as “Niehoff,” is misspelled as “Neihoff.” However, on the positive side, the Niehoff name is given before the Austin name, which is probably a more appropriate name than the current name of “Austin Niehoff” as it more accurately reflects the chronological order in which the two generations of the family owned the house.)

According to numerous accounts, the builder of the house at 717 Main was George Giles, who is said to have constructed other early buildings in Louisville. An article about Giles (1847-1914) appeared in the March 3, 1993 issue of *The Louisville Times*. The following photo shows George Giles and his family:



It is strongly believed that the construction of the house in 1878 would make it the oldest structure still standing in Louisville. The 1976 Longmont Times article for which Lois Mall was interviewed stated:

Lois still lives in the comfortable white frame house at 717 Main St., which her great grandparents built in 1878. Her uncle, Roy Austin, a retired banker also resides there in the same house where he was born 80 years ago. It is now the oldest house in town, though it has been remodeled in recent years. Most of the older homes in the downtown area, though remodeled and sporting fresh paint, still are recognizable as the tinsmiths’ shacks they once were where poor immigrant families struggled through years of hand-to-mouth existence, despite a thriving mining industry.

This house was affected by coal mining subsidence in the 1890s. According to the July 17, 1895 *Boulder Daily Camera*, "Within 100 feet north of the large brick building occupied by the Lockwood Trading company [at 701 Main] ... the ground has caved in about three feet during the past few days, due to the coal mining below. The residence of Charles Niehoff has gone down with the ground and fears were entertained lest the family should have to move and the house would topple over. However, the building has been braced and piles placed underneath so that now it is in comparative safety."

The way that the Niehoffs addressed the problem is described in this November 25, 1895 *Daily Camera* item: "The ground sank some six feet at the home of Charles Niehoff. He has had several hundred loads of dirt placed in his yard, making a big improvement in appearance."

The September 6, 1895 *Daily Camera* reported that "There were filed with the clerk of the district court this morning complaints and affidavits in two cases for damages for large amounts. One is the case of the city of Louisville vs. Charles C. Welch and others and the other is Amelia Niehoff vs. the Louisville Coal Mining company. Hon. H. M. Minor is attorney for both plaintiffs and the lengthy complaints recite that the plaintiffs have been greatly damaged by reason of the sinking of the land of Louisville because of underground work in mining. The plaintiffs demand damages in the sum of \$50,000 and the cases promise to be bitterly contested ones when brought up before the October term of the district court in this city."

The April 22, 1896 issue of the *Daily Camera* then reported that the case by Niehoff against the Louisville Coal Mining Company was settled out of court. (The brick building just two buildings south of the Niehoff home, then called the Lockwood Trading Company, had to be condemned, then demolished, and Louisville town leaders became cautious about allowing further construction of brick buildings.)

The 1956 newspaper article for which Jessie Niehoff Austin was interviewed refers to this subsidence occurrence in the 1890s and states that at that time, the back yard at 717 Main settled until it was about seven steps up into the house, and the house settled until the doors couldn't be opened and closed.

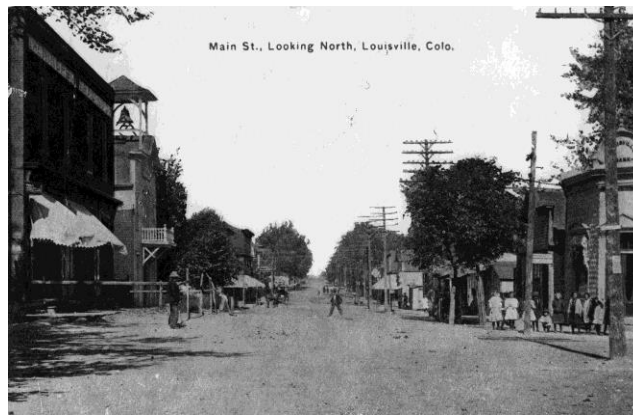
Street Context Photos

The following historic photos show the house in the context of the buildings around it and are shown in chronological order (as much as can be determined).

This photo dates from before 1908. The large brick Miners Trading Co. building stood on the northwest corner of Main and Pine. It was later demolished due to damage caused by mining subsidence. Just to the north of it, the Town Hall and Fire Station with its bell came all the way to Main Street. (It would later be moved back on the lot, probably in the 1920s, and was demolished in 1953.) Next came the Niehoff Austin house.



The following photo, taken in 1908 or later, shows a similar scene.



The photo below from circa 1915 does not include the Niehoff Austin house specifically, but shows its fence (with a woman standing by it) and the drug store just to the north of it. For most of its existence, this was called Bungalow Drug. It was followed, going north, by a two story wood frame residence and some wood frame stores, including Ostrander Bakery. This area is now taken up by the Louisville City Hall and a parking lot. The first building on the left with the awning (now 728 Main) is the pool hall that was run from the 1920s to the 1930s by Roy Austin.



The photo below shows the Town Hall and Fire Station being moved back on the lot. The house at 717 Main can be seen on the left. Carolyn Conarroe, in her book *The Louisville Story*, estimated that this occurred in the 1920s.



In this photo from 1930, Lois Goodhue is posed in front of the Town Hall that has been moved back on the lot. A large building at the northwest corner of Main and Pine has replaced the brick Miners Trading Co.



This photo from the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History shows the Niehoff Austin house in the 1940s. The Town Hall has been moved back on the lot.



In this photo believed to date from the World War II period or after, both war memorials in front of the Town Hall can be seen behind Lois Goodhue. The stone monument listing World War I servicemen is on the right. This monument is now located at the Louisville Cemetery. The wooden sign listing World War II servicemen can be seen on the left. This sign is believed to no longer exist. The gas station at 701 Main is also visible, as is the doctor's office and residence at 641 Main (on the far left of the photo).



The following is the best available photo of the front of the Town Hall and Fire Station located next to 717 Main. It is from the family photo collection and was taken in circa 1951. The building was demolished in 1953.



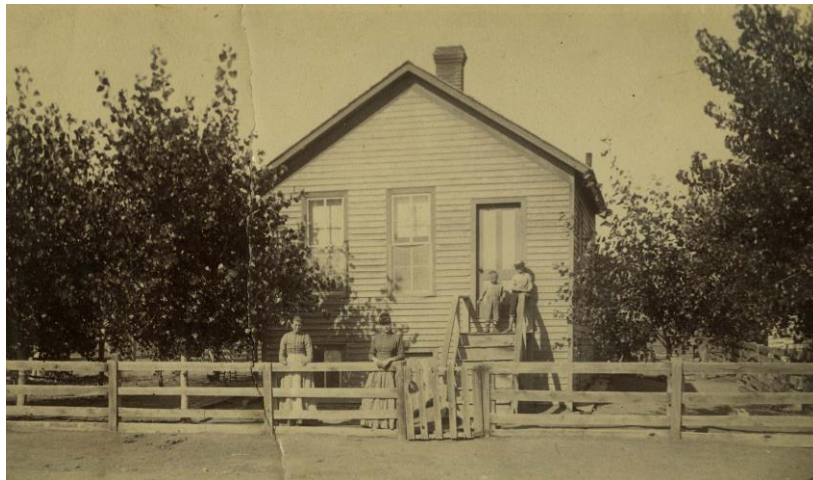
House Alteration Photos

The family added to the house over the years, and it was remodeled at some point, with siding added. The following photos show the house with these changes in what is believed to be chronological order.

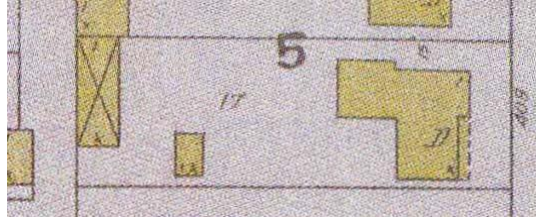
This photo of the Niehoff children (also included earlier in this report) was likely taken by the house and dates to 1884:



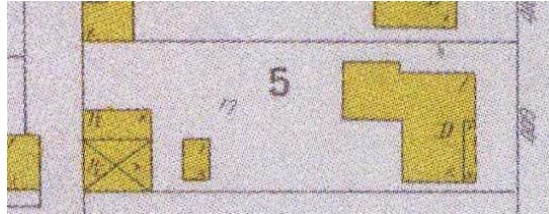
The following photo was part of the Niehoff-Austin family photo collection that was donated to the Museum after the deaths of the last members of the family. Although the house is shown as higher than how the house appears later, it is believed to be the same house, particularly since the photo is labeled “Charles Niehoff Home built over Dugout.” The drop of the house and yard by several feet in 1895 due to subsidence and the salvaging of the house by bringing in several hundred of loads of dirt (as reported in *Daily Camera* articles of the time) may have changed the house’s appearance. From left to right, the people identified on the reverse of the photo are Amelia Niehoff, Jessie Niehoff, Bert Niehoff, and Warren Giles. Given that Bert Niehoff was born in 1884 and looks around four years old, and Warren Giles was born in 1878 and looks about ten years old, this photo could have been taken in 1888.



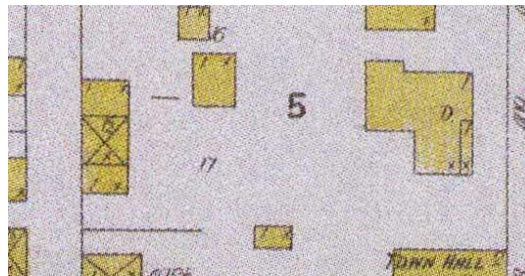
This is the image of the house and lots from the 1893 Sanborn fire insurance map:



Here is the image of the house and lots from the 1900 Sanborn fire insurance map:



The following image shows the house and lots from the 1908 Sanborn fire insurance map. (Note that the lot demarcations look different from the 1893 and 1900 Sanborn maps, and this appears to be an error in the 1908 Sanborn map that has also been observed with respect to other parcels. The 1909 Drumm's Wall Map of this area, shown below, shows the lots in a manner that is consistent with the 1893 and 1900 Sanborn maps.)



The 1909 Drumm's Wall Map shows the house in this way. The addition onto the back of the house, shown on the three Sanborn maps and shown in photos taken after 1909, is not reflected on this map. However, by way of explanation for this apparent omission, the outlines of buildings on the 1909 map were not precise and appear to have been intended to give a rough impression, as opposed to the intent behind the mapping of the Sanborn maps.



In this undated photo of the house, likely from the 1890s or early 1900s, the area above the windows and door on the right side of the house reveal cuts in the boards and alterations that should be

compared with the earlier photo that may be of the house, above, that show when the windows and door were higher and before the addition to the south. This photo also shows trees having been pollarded in accordance with techniques brought to Louisville from Europe and historically seen with many trees in town.



By the time of the 1913-1914 family reunion, another addition had been put on the house, shown here with the men of the family:



The back of the house at the time of the 1913-1914 family reunion is also shown here (showing Amelia Niehoff with her four children):



In this photo from the 1920s, Lois Goodhue (who was born in 1916) is shown with her mother, Mae, and grandparents, Jessie and William.



This photo of Lois with her dog, Razzle, on the porch appears to have been taken on the same day in the 1920s.



Again, Lois by the porch in the 1920s.



This photo showing part of the house is believed to have been taken in the 1920s during a visit by Kate Niehoff, shown on the right. Roy Austin is behind Lois. The woman on the left of Lois is unidentified.



Lois by the porch, now a little older, in the year 1930.



On the same day in 1930, Lois and her uncle Roy were photographed on what is believed is the south side of the house.



Here, Lois is shown by a side yard fence, looking towards Main Street, probably in the early 1930s.



This photo of William and Jessie Austin by the house would have been taken before 1935, as William died that year.



An aerial photo was taken of downtown Louisville in the 1930s, and this closeup shows the rear of the house at 717 Main:



This photo of the family dog, Razzle, by the pump is from 1934 and shows part of the back of the house.



Here, Lois (on the right) is with a friend by the front of the house.



This photo of Mae Goodhue, Lois Goodhue, Lloyd Niehoff (believed), and Roy Austin likely is from the late 1930s.



This photo shows the house and Main Street in circa late 1930s.

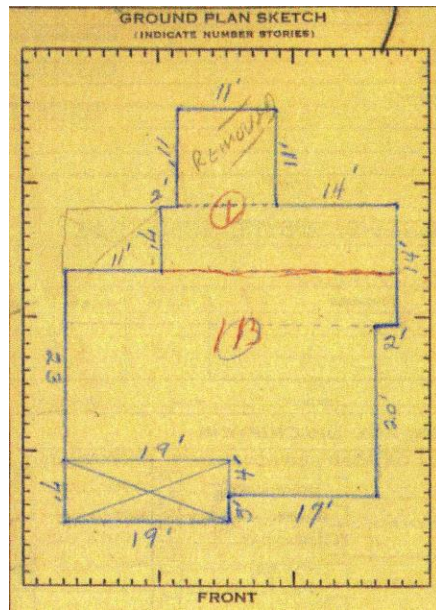


This photo is believed to date from the 1940s:



The following two images are from the 1948 Boulder County Assessor card and show the house from that time along with a sketch of the layout. The photo dates from 1948. Notations on the card indicate that the blue markings on the ground layout sketch were originally made in 1948. The full card is an attachment to this report and contains additional information.





The following photo is dated 1951 and shows that an addition has been added to the southwest part of the house.



This photo of Mae Goodhue at the rear of the house, by the pump, is misleading. It is believed to date from the late 1940s or early 1950s, but she is wearing clothes from another era, possibly for an event for an organization in which she was involved. Handwriting on the reverse says "Past Presidents on Parade."



Jessie Austin by the front house in the early 1950s:



Jessie Austin by the rear of the house on what appears to be the same day in the early 1950s:



Jessie Austin by the front of the house in June 1955:



The following photo shows the house in 1962. The bougainvillea growing on the front is still remembered by people who lived in Louisville at the time.



The following two views (side and front, with the photos then attached together) of the house were taken in 1978.



The next photo shows the house in 2000:



Yard Photos

The following historic photos show the back yard of the house, where it appears that there was a chicken coop, garden, and outhouse. In some of the photos shown above, a pump by the back of the house can also be seen.

This photo of Lois Goodhue, likely from 1929, shows the fenced vegetable garden believed to have been located in the back yard along the north side of the parcel.



Roy Austin is shown in this photo in what may have been his back yard in 1951.



It is believed that this photo from 1973 shows a chicken coop that was just west of the vegetable garden along the north side of the property.



As can be seen from the photos in this report, the fences on this property changed over the years. According to some residents, a wrought iron fence was relocated from 717 Main in the 1980s or 1990s to a new location in front of the Tomeo House, which is part of the Louisville Historical Museum. However, the wrought iron fence does not appear to be visible in old photos of 717 Main, and it is not known on what part of the property the fence may have been situated.

Interior photos

The following photos are believed to show the interior of the house at 717 Main.



The house at 717 Main is referred to informally as “the White House” by some City staff members, which is an easy, descriptive nickname relating to the white color of the house, but doesn’t convey the home’s association with the Niehoff/Austin family.

Due to Roy Austin and his niece, Lois Mall, not having any offspring, the heirs were determined to be two of Roy's cousins once removed and two cousins twice removed. These were the descendants of Ben Niehoff's son, Virgil M. Niehoff, who were from another state.

Jinco Leasing Corp. purchased this property from the estate of Roy Austin in 1986. It was then used as the offices of the Louisville Chamber of Commerce. The City of Louisville purchased the property in 1993 and began to use the building to house the offices of the Louisville Parks and Recreation Department.

1982 Inventory Record for 717 Main

In 1982, this property was surveyed as one of a group of historic properties in Louisville.

This house has been locally landmarked twice. Following the 1982 survey, in the 1980s, the Louisville Historical Commission had the house locally landmarked. The plaque on the building now was placed there to commemorate this first landmarking. (Before the creation of the Louisville Historic Preservation Commission, the mission of the Historical Commission included preservation-related matters.) In 2005, Louisville adopted a historic preservation ordinance that provided for a landmarking program. Also in 2005, the City of Louisville placed the "Austin Niehoff House" on the Louisville Register of Historic Places under the new landmarking program.

As noted above, the plaque on the house correctly listed the Niehoff name before the Austin name (calling it the Niehoff Austin House), which reflects the correct chronology of the residents, but unfortunately misspelled "Niehoff" as "Neihoff." Also, the plaque incorrectly gives "1898" as the year of construction, a date that does not appear elsewhere and contradicts the available evidence and even the 1982 survey. It is possible that "1878" was misread as "1898" when the plaque was being created. The plaque is still on the house.

The 1982 Inventory Record for 717 Main recommended "designation as a local landmark as the oldest structure in town; (occupied by descendants of the original family)." It noted that the "building has experience subsidence in 1890's but appears to be stable at present." It also noted the special features of: "little detailing; high gabled roof (north section); flared lower porch section; modern aluminum window casings; southern section incorporates a salt-box roof with the broadest slope to the west." The 1982 Inventory Record for 717 Main also stated the following:

This house was built for the family of Charles Neihoff [sic], a German immigrant who came to Louisville in 1877 and worked as a mine engineer. His daughter and son-in-law, William Austin (mayor from 1905-1909, & 1910-1911), lived in the house afterwards. Their descendants, Roy Austin and Lois Mall still reside at the residence.

The house, although remodeled, still retains the outline of the basic original structure which provides a valuable clue as to the nature of the first vernacular dwellings, as well as perhaps the only remaining example of the work of George Giles, one of the earliest builders. The basic L-shaped floor plan was used which was also so common on LaFarge for dwellings constructed in the Jefferson Place addition.

Although not a commercial structure, this building is also significant for the historical continuity of residential and commercial mixing in the Original Town.

2000 Inventory Record for 717 Main

In 2000, this property was surveyed as one of a group of historic properties in Louisville.

(More information has been found with respect to 717 Main since the 2000 survey was written. For example, the 2000 survey stated that Charles Niehoff worked as an engineer at the Centennial Mine at Superior, but the only mine in Superior was the Industrial Mine; the survey stated that Jessie Niehoff Austin was born in 1868 and died in the early 1960s, but she was born in 1870 and died in 1959; the surveyor did not access historic photos of the house; and the survey did not mention some of the longtime residents of the house, including baseball player Bert Niehoff and Lois Goodhue Mall.)

The 2000 survey stated the following with respect to the house's construction history:

Built in the 1870s, this house is Louisville's oldest known remaining residence. According to Carolyn Conarroe, author of *The Louisville Story*, the house was constructed by George Giles, an early builder and one of Louisville's first residents. Boulder County Assessor records list 1872 as the date of construction. A plaque on the building's façade indicates that the house was built in 1878. The 1878 date is probably accurate, as the house was reportedly built for the Niehoff family which came to Louisville in 1877. The building does appear on Louisville's first available Sanborn map, printed in 1893. Boulder County Assessor records indicate that additions to the building's west (rear) elevation predate the 1960s.

The 2000 survey also included the following statements with respect to the house's architecture and the statement of significance:

General Architectural Description: The Niehoff/Austin is a wood-frame building which is located on the west side of Main Street in downtown Louisville. Traditionally used as a residence, the building has been converted to use as the City of Louisville's Parks and Recreation office. The building has a low concrete foundation (possibly over stone), and its exterior walls are clad with pale yellow undulated asbestos shingle siding. The intersecting gables roof has red asphalt shingles, and boxed eaves. There are no chimneys. A stained natural brown solid wood door, with one diamond-shaped window, and with an aluminum storm door, opens onto a wood porch which covers the south half of the façade (east elevation). Wood frame knee walls, and squared post piers, support a shed porch roof. A rear entrance is located on the west elevation, where a painted brown wood-paneled door, with an aluminum storm door, opens onto a concrete sidewalk. Windows on the façade include two 4/1 double-hung sash (ribbon style), which flank the front entry, and a single-light fixed-pane window, flanked by a single 1/1 double-hung sash window. Windows on the secondary elevations include 1/1 double-hung sash, 1x1 horizontal sliders, 1/1 double-hung sash, and 2/2 double-hung sash. These windows have painted brown or yellow wood frames and surrounds, and several are not historic.

Statement of Significance: As Louisville's oldest known remaining residence, this building is historically significant, relative to National Register Criterion A, for its association with the city's earliest development period, beginning in the 1870s. The building is also significant, under National Register Criterion B, for its associations with Charles Niehoff, William Austin, and Roy Austin (and their families), all of whom made particularly significant contributions to Louisville's socioeconomic development. Finally, the house is

architecturally significant, under National Register Criterion C, as Louisville's oldest remaining example of a wood-frame cross gabled dwelling.

Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance: This building's historic integrity has been compromised by additions, to the rear (west) elevation, by the application of asbestos shingle siding, and by the alteration of some window openings. This loss of integrity, though, is surpassed by the building's singular historic significance. The property is still able to convey a sense of its historic past, and it is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C.

The Boulder County Assessor card, front and back, follows this report. It was originally dated 1948, with additional information added later.

The preceding research is based on a review of relevant and available online County property records, census records, oral history interviews, Louisville directories, and Louisville Historical Museum maps, files, obituary records, and historical photographs from the collection of the Louisville Historical Museum. The donation of hundreds of historical photos of this family to the Louisville Historical Museum by Louisville resident Barbara Hesson is greatly appreciated.