BILLINGS MEMORIAL LIBRARY SOON TO BE DEDICATED

Special Dispatch to the Standard.

Billings, Aug. 24.—In a few weeks the city of Billings will possess a free public library, as the handsome edifice to be given to the city by Frederick Billings, Jr., of New York, is completed, and only awaits the installment of the furniture to be dedicated to the city.

The city was named for the late Hon. Frederick Billings, at one time president of the Northern Pacific railway, and the members of the Billings family have always taken a warm interest in the town. President Billings in the early days of the town gave the Congregational society their handsome church edifice, and also donated liberally to the building of the first public school building. His son now gives to the city the elegant building for a free public library as a memorial to his deceased brother, the late Parney Billings.

Parney Billings was one of the pioneer citizens of Billings, and one of the founders of the Yellowstone National Bank of this city. He was also engaged, in partnership with E. G. Bailey and J. D. O'Donnell, in cattle and horse raising, and this enterprise was the foundation of the extensive business now carried on by the latter gentleman under the name of Hesper Farm. The late Parney Billings was an enterprising and active business man, but was never so happy as when he could shed his New York clothes and don the habiliments of a cowboy. A promising career was cut short by his untimely death in 1881, but the energy and engaging young man is fondly remembered by old-timers in the Yellowstone country, who rejoice to see such a noble monument reared to his memory.

The style of the building is Romanesque, and it is simple yet elegant in architecture. The main material used in its construction is local sandstone taken from the bluffs north of the city, where it is found in such unlimited quantities as would suffice to duplicate every building in Montana and still leave plenty for the next generation. The roof is of Spanish tile and the cornice of copper, giving a permanent and durable character to the exterior, which is expressive of the use to which the building is to be devoted.

The dimensions of the building are 40 feet front by 44 in depth. The basement is 12 feet in height, and is almost entirely above ground, giving abundant light. The heating plant and fuel room are in the rear of the basement, of which the main part will be used for library models and clubs until it shall be needed in future enlargement of the library. The first principal floor will be for the library proper. The ceiling is 14 1/2 feet, with an arched center. This floor has been arranged in accordance with the most modern ideas of public library administration. It is well lighted in every part. There are also rooms for librarian, janitor and trustees. The interior is handsomely frescoed and finished in oak, with maple flooring. It is admirably suited for the purpose of a public library.

The citizens promptly felt in with the ideas of the generous donor, and voted a tax of $1 on the dollar of the assessable property of the city for the maintenance of the library, and a liberal amount will be donated from private sources to purchase books. The site is in the very center of the city, and the building stands in one of the pretty little parks on the Northern Pacific right of way, which cuts the town in two. The site was donated by the railway company, which also offered to defray a portion of the expense, but Mr. Billings declined any assistance, and has expended about $3,000 on the building.

The supervising of the building has been intrusted to a local committee appointed by Mr. Billings, consisting of A. L. Babcock, L. D. O'Donnell, J. H. Goss, E. L. Boordman and J. D. Matheson. S. E. Kilmer of New York, trustee of the Billings estate, has also taken a lively interest in the work.

It is expected that the building will be formally dedicated some time next month, when Mr. Billings and a party of his relatives and friends are expected from New York to take part in the function. The work of cataloguing the books is progressing under the direction of Miss Mabel Collins, the librarian.