

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Missoula Downtown Historic District  
 other name/site number: n/a

**2. Location**

street & number: The district is roughly bounded by the Northern Pacific railroad tracks to the north, the Clark Fork River to the south, Little McCormick Park to the west and Madison Street to the east.  
 city/town: Missoula not for publication: n/a  
 vicinity: n/a  
 state: Montana code: MT county: Missoula code: 063 zip code: 59801, 59802

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide X locally.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
 State or Federal agency or bureau (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of commenting or other official Date  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u>  </u> entered in the National Register	_____	_____
<u>  </u> <u>  </u> see continuation sheet		
<u>  </u> determined eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u>  </u> <u>  </u> see continuation sheet		
<u>  </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u>  </u> <u>  </u> see continuation sheet		
<u>  </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u>  </u> <u>  </u> see continuation sheet		
<u>  </u> other (explain): _____		

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private, public, local, State, Federal

Category of Property: District

Number of contributing resources previously

listed in the National Register: 114

[44 individually listed properties & one district (East Pine Street Historic District) with 70 contributing resources and 26 noncontributing resources]

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>401</u>	<u>86</u> buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>—</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>404</u>	<u>87</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Missoula Multiple Properties Listing

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

COMMERCE/ business, professional, financial institution, department store, hotel, restaurant, warehouse, theatre  
 DOMESTIC/ single family, multiple dwelling  
 SOCIAL/ lodge, meeting hall, museum  
 GOVERNMENT/ Government office, courthouse, post office, library  
 INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/ communications facility; Industrial storage  
 TRANSPORTATION/ rail-related  
 PARK

Current Functions:

COMMERCE/ business, professional, financial institution, specialty store, restaurant, warehouse, theatre  
 DOMESTIC/single family, multiple dwelling  
 GOVERNMENT/government office, post office, city hall, courthouse  
 SOCIAL/ lodge, meeting hall, museum  
 INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION Communications facility; Industrial storage  
 TRANSPORTATION/ rail-related, public transit  
 PARK

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Western Commercial  
 Late Victorian  
 Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals  
 Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements  
 Modern Movement

Materials:

foundation: brick, stone, concrete  
 walls: brick, clay tile, stone, metal, stucco, ceramic tile, wood  
 roof: tile, composition, metal, terra cotta  
 other:

Narrative Description

(See continuation sheet)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

- X-- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.  
--X-- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.  
--X- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.  
--- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):** n/a

**Cultural Affiliation:** n/a

**Areas of Significance:**

Commerce, Architecture  
Industry, Transportation  
Politics/Government

**Period of Significance**

1864-1955

**Significant Dates:**

1865, 1883

**Significant Person(s):**

Higgins, Christopher P.  
Worden, Francis L.  
Hammond, Andrew (A.B.)  
Dixon, Joseph M.

**Architect/Builder**

Gibson, Albert J. (A.J.)  
Bakke, Ole  
Kirkemo, H.E. "Kirk"  
Link, Charles S. & Haire, John  
Paulsen, John.C.  
Reed & Stem  
Shanley, George H.  
Hugenin, Roscoe C. (R.C.)  
Pehrson, George A.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(See Continuation Sheet)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: 203.0 Acres

REF	UTM12 EASTING	UTM12 NORTHING	UTM11 EASTING	UTM11 NORTHING
A	271560	5195664		
B	271307	5195777	728500	5195770
C	271596	5195769		
D	271762	5195685		
E	271780	5195692		
F	272098	5195432		
G	272216	5195350		
H	272425	5195155		
I	272483	5195088		
J	272588	5195014		
K	272615	5195001		
L	272611	5194992		
M	272587	5195005		
N	272555	5194937		
O	272580	5194925		
P	272578	5194911		
Q	272605	5194895		
R	272601	5194883		
S	272487	5194940		
T	272384	5194718		
U	272351	5194526		
V	271883	5194548		
W	271721	5194689		
X	271498	5194997		
Y	271547	5195041		
Z	271540	5195056		
AA	271585	5195098		
BB	271532	5195159		
CC	271638	5195368		

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): T 13N, R 19W, Section 22 and portions of Section 21 and 26

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(See continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification**

(See continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Allan Mathews & Dagny Krigbaum  
organization: Historical Discoveries                      date: June 2006  
street & number: 713 S. 5<sup>th</sup> W.                                      telephone: 406/549-8972  
city or town: Missoula                      state: MT                                      zip code: 59801

**Property Owners**

Multiple Property Owners (See property owner list on continuation sheet in Section 7).

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Missoula Downtown Historic District, Missoula County, MT

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The city of Missoula is located in the west-central part of Montana and is the hub of five valleys. It has the Clark Fork River running through its center and forming the southern boundary of the older historic core, with the Northern Pacific Railroad (BNSF/Rail-Link) tracks forming the northern boundary. Missoula is county seat for Missoula County and is the largest urban center of western Montana.

The Downtown Missoula Historic District encompasses 52 full and 4 partial blocks, and includes the East Pine Street Historic District, which is encompassed by the downtown district. The downtown district contains a total of 492 buildings that include primary buildings and structures and ancillary buildings, most of which are sheds and garages associated with the primary properties. This number of buildings excludes those that are listed in the East Pine Street Historic District.

Eighty percent of the district's main buildings are considered contributing elements (i.e., resources that date to the district's period of significance and retain integrity) and seventy-two percent of associated auxiliary buildings (to include sheds and garages) are contributing elements. Thirteen percent of the district's contributing properties have already been individually listed in the National Register. The East Pine Street Historic District has an additional seventy contributing buildings. Many of the contributing buildings in the Downtown are considered individually eligible for National Register listing because they retain a high level of integrity and possess exceptional historical and/or architectural values. The buildings that merely contribute to the district in general, have sustained more extensive alterations than the individually eligible/contributing properties. These include, for the most part, buildings that have remodeled storefronts, but retain largely intact upper story facades. Single-story buildings that have lost their historic windows or doors but retain original openings and additional important façade elements are considered to have sufficient integrity to contribute to the district.

The remaining twenty percent of buildings in the district are considered non-contributing elements. These include properties constructed after the period of significance and historic buildings that have been extensively altered in recent years that display very little, if any, of their original qualities of design, materials and workmanship.

The Missoula Downtown Historic District is an eclectic assemblage of historic architectural resources covering a broad continuum of the city and Montana's past. At the heart of the district are several block-long areas that are primarily lined by relatively intact historic commercial and residential buildings that include: the 100 and 200 blocks on the west side of North Higgins; the 100 and 200 blocks on the south side of West Front Street; the 200 block on the north side of West Front Street; the 200 through 500 block on the south side of East Front Street; the 400 and 500 blocks of East Front Street on the north side; the commercial 300 through 500 blocks on both sides of Higgins; the 100 and 200 blocks on the south side of West Main Street; the 200 and 300 blocks on the north side of West Main Street; the 100 and 200 block on the south side of East Main Street; and the 400 block on both sides of East Main Street. The entire 300 block of East Main Street on the south side and the 300 block of East Front Street is taken up by the Missoula Public Library constructed in 1970 and its associated parking area, making it a non-contributing block. The north side of the 200 block of East Main Street is high in integrity with one previously listed National Register-listed building, the Labor Hall, and three contributing buildings. The north side of the 300 block of East Main Street located across from the public library contains an historic church and three commercial/residential mix contributing properties.

Broadway, the downtown's major east-west arterial, contains mostly historic buildings that contribute to the historic district. The arterial has 5 landmark buildings that include: the U.S. Post Office; The Missoula County Courthouse; The Masonic Lodge; the Palace Hotel; and the Lenox Flats, all listed in the National Register. In addition, Broadway contains 12 contributing properties not listed in the register and 6 contributing properties that are part of the southern edge of the East Pine Street Historic District. Intrusive, non-contributing elements along Broadway within the district include a modern Federal Courthouse and several commercial buildings constructed after the historic period.

Within the East Pine Street Historic District, which is made up of 9 full and partial blocks, all but 5 of the 54 major or primary buildings were constructed before 1955 and despite some changes in design and materials, all 54 contribute to the historic character of the district. The East Pine Street Historic District has become increasingly commercial since its listing in 1989, with lawyers, realtors, and other entrepreneurs occupying properties that were previously residential in function. Other residences have been converted to apartment units, primarily for university students. The spreading commercial presence, the close proximity to the main commercial

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streets and avenues of the downtown, and the establishment of new commercial areas to the east of the East Pine Street Historic District now binds that district to the historic core of the downtown.

Looking to the west of Higgins, the south side of the 300 block of West Pine Street has seen a remarkable transformation in the past decade with the restoration of 5 historic residential properties, all of which are now commercial, but retain their original residential appearance. This block was looked upon by the county as a possible parking lot in the 1990s. Such was the fate of 99% of the block to the west, which was composed of large multi-family houses that saw demolition for parking by St. Patrick's Hospital in that same decade. The block to the north of that parking lot is the site of what is historically known as "The Catholic Block." It contains the National Register-listed St. Francis Xavier Church and three other historic buildings that are contributing elements in the district. This block has been determined eligible for listing by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.

The north side of the 200-400 block of West Spruce, located to the north of the Catholic Block, contains a strong representation of 1890's and early 1900's residences that have been mostly converted to commercial use. Of these fourteen (14) properties, thirteen (13) are contributing and one, the Marsh and Powell Funeral Home, is listed in the National Register. Continuing west, the 500 block of West Spruce Street on both sides is made up of a modern medical building and parking lots. The historic fabric of the district picks up again with the south side of the 600 block of West Spruce Street, which is a strong line of historic commercial and residential mix containing four contributing properties that lead up to the western boundary of the district at the old Bitterroot Spur railroad tracks.

The 100-600 blocks of East Spruce Street from Higgins to Madison (the eastern boundary of the historic district) contain 41 properties with only 6 of those being non-contributing. The buildings are a mix of commercial and residential with the commercial presence being strongest at the west and east ends of that area.

Alder Street, the block to the north of Spruce Street, is also a mix of commercial and residential buildings with a majority contributing to the district. To the east of Higgins Avenue there are 14 properties, all of which are contributing and represent the northern edge of the historic district. West of Higgins Avenue, Alder Street contains mostly commercial properties for the first three blocks, all but two of which (both modern civic buildings) are contributing elements. The 400 and 500 blocks of West Alder Street contain 26 primary properties, and all but one are contributing elements in the district. Most are residences or apartment houses with some commercial establishments located in the 400 block. There are two properties listed in the National Register within this two-block area, which include the John S. Johnson House at 412 West Alder Street, and Mrs. Lydia McCaffery's Furnished Rooms (The St. Patrick's House) at 501 West Alder Street.

Railroad Street runs from Higgins Avenue four blocks west to Owen Street, at which point it turns into Toole Avenue. The 100 block contains the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot, which caps the north end of Higgins Avenue and is an historic landmark visible from Interstate 90. The 200 block contains the Brunswick Hotel, a National Register-listed railroad hotel now used for apartments. The south side of the 300 block of Railroad Street contains a two-story brick building constructed in the early 1900s and the high profile three-story Montana Hotel, now an antique mall. Both buildings are contributing. The 200 Block and 300 Block of Railroad Street is also a contributing site. The street is paved with vitreous clay brick pavers and has been repaired and restored by the City of Missoula. The heart of Missoula's downtown was paved with these vitreous clay pavers from 1912-1921. Only three blocks of Railroad Street remain paved with brick in the entire downtown. The 200 and 300 blocks of Railroad Street itself would be a contributing site.

The 400 block of Railroad Street contains only one building; the early Twentieth-Century-constructed Creamery Building, a contributing element in the district. The Rail-Link yards run on the north side of the street with the Northside Bike-Pedestrian Bridge occupying a spot at the west end of the block. At Owen Street, Railroad Street becomes the 500 block of Toole Avenue, a block made up of 7 contributing properties, 6 of which were built prior to 1913 and one of which was constructed during the 1930s. Toole Avenue then parallels Little McCormick Park, across from which to the north is a block of historic era houses that are outside of this historic district.

Of the north-south running streets other than Higgins Avenue, the 300 and 600 blocks of Woody Street contain the highest concentration of contributing historic buildings. Two civic buildings across from the Courthouse at 311 and 317 Woody Street are impressive with their classical revival styling including towering columns. The 600 block of Woody Street contains three contributing commercial buildings.

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The Downtown Missoula Historic District is anchored on the south by the Wilma Building and on the north by the Northern Pacific Depot. The most prominent architectural landmarks within the district include those buildings, the Higgins Block, the Missoula Mercantile, the Florence Building, the Missoula County Courthouse, the U. S. Post Office, the Carnegie Library, St Francis Xavier Church, the Masonic and Elks lodges and a number of former railroad hotels. These hotels include: the Atlantic; the Brunswick; the Belmont; the Grand Pacific (the Park); the Montana; the Norden (Northern); and the Palace. Within the East Pine Street Historic District, the Neo-classical Revival style palatial home built for Senator Joseph Dixon at 312 East Pine Street and the Folk Gothic influenced residence of Frank Worden at 328 East Pine Street would be classified as architectural landmarks.

Of the four hundred and twelve commercial, residential, civic, fraternal and religious properties in the Downtown Missoula Historic District, ninety one are previously listed in the National Register as part of the East Pine Street Historic District (1989) and a multiple properties nomination (1990), or as individual efforts throughout the years preceding this nomination. They include the following properties:

*Properties Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Missoula, and listing dates*

118 West Alder Street	Grand Pacific Hotel (Park Place Apartments) – 9-29-1983
131 West Alder Street	Model Laundry and Apartments (Dorothy Apartments) – 4-30-1990
412 West Alder Street	John S. Johnson House – 8-02-1984
501 West Alder Street	Mrs. Lydia McCaffery's Furnished Rooms – 4-6-2000
120-136 East Broadway Street	Masonic Lodge – 4-30-1990
200 East Broadway Street	U.S. Post Office – 11-30-1979
147 West Broadway Street	Palace Hotel – 10-25-1982
220 West Broadway Street	Missoula County Courthouse – 9-1-1976
300-306 West Broadway Street	Lenox Flats – 8-8-2000
221 East Front Street	Missoula Mercantile Warehouse – 4-6-2004
526 East Front Street	Reid House – 12-18-2003
113-119 West Front Street	Headquarters Building and Daily Company Annex – 5-17-1996
255-257 West Front Street	Gleim Building II – 3-9-1995
265 West Front Street	Gleim Building – 4-30-1990
111 North Higgins Avenue	Florence Hotel – 6-18-1992
114 North Higgins Avenue,	Missoula Mercantile (Bon, Macy's) – 4-30-1990
118 North Higgins Avenue	Garden City Drug (The Bon) – 04-30-1990
201 North Higgins Avenue	Montgomery Ward – 4-30-1990
202 North Higgins Avenue	Higgins Block (C.P. Higgins' Western Bank) – 10-1-1979
220-224 North Higgins Avenue	Bluebird Building – 8-8-1996
232-240 North Higgins Avenue	Dixon-Duncan Block – 10-17-1997
314 North Higgins Avenue,	Simons Block – 2-18-2000
330 North Higgins Avenue	Lucy Building – 4-30-1990
430 North Higgins Avenue	Belmont Hotel – 4-20-1983
519 North Higgins Avenue	Atlantic Hotel – 4-30-1990
101 South Higgins Avenue	Hammond Arcade – 4-30-1990
104 South Higgins Avenue	Wilma Theatre (Smead Simons Building) – 12-31-1979
207 East Main Street	Independent Telephone Company – 4-30-1990
208 East Main Street	Labor Temple – 4-30-1990
216 West Main Street	Studebaker Building – 4-17-1997
251 West Main Street,	Zip Auto – 4-30-1990

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120 North Pattee Street	Hellgate Lodge 383 BPOE – 4-30-1990
335 North Pattee Street	Carnegie Library (Art Museum of Missoula) – 4-30-1982
Roughly bounded by East Pine Street, Madison Street, East Broadway and Pattee Streets	East Pine Street Historic District – 7-13- 1989
234 East Pine Street,	Forkenbrock Funeral Home – 12-27-1984
420 West Pine Street	St. Francis Xavier Church – 4-28-1982
(100) Railroad St and Higgins	Northern Pacific Railroad Depot – 3-28-1985
223 Railroad Street	Brunswick Hotel – 4-30-1990
111 East Spruce Street	Missoula Laundry (Missoula Textiles) – 4-30-1990
116 West Spruce Street	Apartment Building at 116 West Spruce – 4-30-1990
224 West Spruce Street	Marsh and Powell Funeral Home – 4-30-1990

Of the properties listed before 1991, all have retained their historic integrity and have had historic architectural details repaired or restored. There have been no drastic remodels or additions that would make the present listing questionable. Of the buildings listed after 1990 all have seen some sort of restoration of the exterior facades to various degrees during the time period of 1991 to the present. And, again, none have had drastic alterations or additions that would make their listing questionable. For the post 1990 listed buildings, with the exception of the Dixon-Duncan Block at 332 North Higgins Avenue, all have involved major façade restoration and all of those projects have won recognition of excellence in the form of historic preservation awards from the Missoula Historic Preservation Commission.

### ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

#### *1865-1900*

The development of Missoula Mills or Missoula, as it was later called, occurred in a haphazard manner around the site of the original gristmill constructed in 1865. Physiographic features such as rivers and mountains played a role in how the town developed. The Clark Fork River to the immediate south of the mill restrained building in that direction, so most of the early buildings were positioned along the Mullan Road, now Front Street, in an east-west direction on either side of the mill. The buildings along Front Street were not constructed with any idea of permanency or regard to the direction of future streets and the irregular course of the Clark Fork determined the subsequent uneven placement of structures along Front Street. Most of the original residences were of log construction and the business establishments of rough cut lumber. When established, Higgins Avenue became the principle north-south axis for development away from the mill site, which was located near the southeast corner of Front Street and Higgins Avenue.

Though an original plat map from 1866 was said to exist, the earliest known evidence of the Original Town site is a map approved by D.D. Bogart in 1871. Property records from that time indicate that there were only two houses north of Main Street, an east-west running street one block north of Front Street. C.P. Higgins obtained a patent to 160 acres to the north of the original town site, and W.J. McCormick, an attorney, secured a patent for a similar parcel to the west of the Higgins property. Cyrus and William McWhirk owned lands to the east of the Higgins holdings and A.J. Urlin held the patent to land north of the Higgins acreage. The Urlin property ran up into the hills on the northern edge of the Missoula Valley.

The first commercial buildings along Front Street were similar to those of other 1860s towns in the West, hastily built and with little regard for detail. Most of the buildings had false fronts, often with the store's name and commercial category (i.e. Bank, Saddlery, and Hotel) painted on the building's front cladding. Log residential buildings were interspersed between the commercial establishments. All of the early era buildings were subsequently either torn down or destroyed by fires. The success of the mill and the relocating of Worden and Company's store to the early town site in 1865 convinced others at Hell Gate Village that the future commercial growth would most likely be around the mill. As a result, most of Hell Gate Village moved to Missoula Mills and that village was pretty much abandoned by 1870. A two story wood frame building was constructed in 1865 one block west of Higgins Avenue on Front and

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Ryman (Stevens at that time) streets for multiple usages as a courthouse, Masonic Hall and an entertainment establishment. David Pattee built a hotel and carpenter shop in that same area and Robert Pelkey also constructed a hotel. The following year, the county commissioners moved the county seat from Hellgate to Missoula. Records show tax collections from 14 property owners in 1866.

Bridges were built over the Clark Fork River in 1869 and 1873, with the latter being the first bridge located at Higgins Avenue next to the mill site. Even with the bridges, little development occurred south of the river until the 1890s. The only residence that remains from the earliest period of Missoula's development on the north side of the river is the Francis Worden house located at 328 East Pine Street. The area north of Front Street was still so undeveloped that at the time of its construction, the Worden house appeared to be "out in the country," even though it was located only six blocks from the mill. Worden designed the house with a folk gothic feel to its styling, a design he and his wife, Lucretia Miller Worden, had become accustomed to in his native state of Vermont.

Worden and Higgins were committed to the success of Missoula. In 1872 they began diverting water from upper Rattlesnake Creek through a covered flume to a reservoir on Indian Hill, later known as Waterworks Hill. This became the town's first water system, with water distributed to town via hollowed-out pine logs with iron pipes inside the logs.

For the most part, Missoula remained a raw frontier town for its first twenty years of existence. Basic log and processed timber buildings were erected, which were not architecturally complex statements. The exception to this was the Worden & Company store at the northwest corner of Main and Higgins. That one story stone and brick front building was constructed in 1871 and 1872. The Brick Block, as it was called, with its three front entrances topped by brick arches containing elliptical fan shaped windows, was quite an impressive structure for the fledgling town. That graceful arched pattern was continued over five windows of divided four-pane glass that made up the remainder of the building's front fenestration. One third of the Worden Block contained Worden and Company's store and The Missoula National Bank, which was in the back section of the store. The remainder of the building housed Jacob Reinhard's Groceries & Liquors and J.P. Reinhard's Hardware and Saddlery business. The Brick Block represented a strong commitment to the business future of Missoula. The Brick Block was destroyed in the fire of 1884 and was replaced by the Daily Block in the late 1880s. It was the home of the D. J. Hennessy Store and later the Donohue Store. That building was torn down and replaced by the Montgomery Ward Store in the fall of 1935. That building now houses the First National Bank and has recently undergone an exterior restoration.

The early 1870s also saw the building of a two-story wood frame hospital and school near the present site of St. Patrick's Hospital. Other early buildings included a one story building with a high false front used by the Missoulian Newspaper, and the post office, which was a clapboard covered two-story wood frame structure in the first block east of Higgins Avenue on Front Street. That building, which was unique due to its intricate scalloped bric-a-brac decorating the front gable and long narrow window openings, also served as a variety and photography store for William H.H. Dickenson, who served as postmaster. Perhaps the largest building of that time other than the mill was the courthouse. In 1871, the county commissioners contracted with J.J. Tasker, who was referred to as "architect and contractor," to build a courthouse which ended up being a two-story gable and wing clapboard structure 60 feet long by 38 feet wide with balconies on the front and back second story. This building served as the courthouse until it was moved to make room for the present courthouse in 1910. The old building still stands at 431-435 North Third Street West in Missoula's Northside Historic Railroad District.

In 1877 Eddy Hammond and Company built their mercantile store on the northeast corner of Front Street and Higgins Avenue, and that structure became the nucleus of the present day Macy's (Missoula Mercantile, the Bon) Building. Stonemasons Murphy and Myers of Helena directed the initial backbreaking work of erecting the stone walls. The earliest known photographs show a large attached extended open porch covering the boardwalk on the Higgins and Front Street sides of the building and a false front rose from the Front Street side above the roof. By 1880 Eddy, Hammond and Company had displaced Worden and Company as the dominant mercantile concern in Missoula, and was doing a business of \$15,000 a month, which included sales from branch stores in the Bitterroot. Such sales prompted the company to build a one-story addition to the east end of the building that year.

The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883 and the awarding of the contract for ties and other timbers as well as clothing and other necessities for the work crews to Eddy, Hammond and Company necessitated that their merchandizing headquarters on Higgins Avenue continue to expand. In the 1890s architect Edward Selander directed additions and improvements. A second story of brick was added to the main section of the original building, which was now known as the Missoula Mercantile. An advertisement plate on the building's southwest corner gives the information that the ornate metal was patented by "Metzgers Bros. of St. Louis in 1886."

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During the period of the late 1880s and early 1890s, the simple architecture of the prior years with detailing, if any (usually consisting of simple bracketed projecting cornices), began to be replaced by larger and more ornate buildings reflecting the wealth that had flowed into the city as a result of the railroad. Between 1888 and 1892 A.B. Hammond directed construction of three major buildings at the intersection of Front Street and Higgins Avenue, which was fast becoming one of the liveliest commercial centers in the state. Those structures were the First National Bank Building, the Hammond Building and the Florence Hotel, named after Hammond's wife. Each of these towering edifices represented exuberance of massing and design surpassing anything Missoula had seen up to that point. Tons of granite and brick was transformed into statements rivaling the commercial buildings of Helena and other bastions of wealth. The conical turret of the First National Bank Building competed with the castellated battlements of the Hammond Building, which in turn, towered above the metal cornice of the Florence, like some medieval castle. These buildings announced to the world that Missoula had transformed from a western town to a prosperous modern city not immune to architectural sophistication.

The triad at Higgins Avenue and Front Street, represented by the Hammond Building, the Florence and The First National Bank Building, would all disappear from Missoula's scene. The first two were victims of fire and the last was a victim of "modernization through demolition" in the 1960s. However, the Missoula Mercantile Building remains today.

A building known as the Headquarters, located just to the west of the former Hammond Building, still displays the bold Victorian elements that defined much of the architecture of that era. When constructed as "an ornament to the street" in 1888, the two story brick clad Headquarters catered to businessmen interested in drink and gambling. This men's social club, owned by Bennett and Mitchell, offered "the finest whiskey and cigars," and no doubt aspired to take its place in a similar lofty realm as that enjoyed by the prestigious Montana Club at Helena and the Silverbow Club at Butte. Highly embellished with stained glass panels crowning the large double hung second story windows and a pre-eminent cornice displaying the date "1888," the Headquarters Building represented the last "respectable" establishment east of the bawdy Red Light District that flowed west along Front Street for the next two blocks. The Headquarters Building was expertly restored during the 1990s, revealing among other details sculpted metal pilasters embossed with the name of the prominent Helena iron craftsman, Jonathan Steadman, whose work can also be seen on the storefront of the Iron Front Building in Last Chance Gulch, in downtown Helena. The restoration effort resulted in historic preservation awards on both a city and state level.

The buildings housing "cribs," saloons, and Chinese run laundries and cafes in the Red Light District along West Front Street were of wood frame construction when the fire of August 1892 occurred. That conflagration swept through the first and second blocks west of Higgins Avenue along Front Street, destroying twenty-one buildings in just a few hours. After the smoke and haze had cleared, some business owners like the notorious Madame, Mary Gleim, rebuilt their establishments with brick or at least for some, brick facades. Mary's part ownership in one of Missoula's three brickyards no doubt influenced her decision. Two of the buildings utilized by Gleim for her businesses still stand and both have been restored since the 1980s. They are the Gleim Building, the Madame's main headquarters located at 265 West Front Street, and the Gleim II building, two doors to the east at 255-257 East Front Street. While both of these buildings display less ornamentation than the Headquarters Building, they do feature an interesting mix of late Victorian styling, combining Italianate and Romanesque revival elements. They certainly offered a higher degree of architectural sophistication than that of the earlier era structures that they replaced. These two-story, rectangular shaped brick buildings display the elaborate corbelled cornices that gained popularity during the early 1900s era in Missoula. The main Gleim Building is the more classical of the two buildings with one street level and two upper level windows highlighted by round arched brick window openings and gray rusticated granite sills, both style elements made popular in the 1870s by Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson.

The Gleim and Gleim II buildings and most existing pre-1900 buildings in Missoula's commercial center fall into a category that is often referred to as "Western Commercial." These buildings are an amalgamation of styles rather than any particular pure architectural style. Most are from one to three stories high and generally long and narrow in shape due to the configuration of the lots upon which they had to fit. There are two masonry circa 1891 buildings somewhat similar in style to the Gleim buildings at 211-215 West Front and 221-223 West Front, just east on the same block as the Madame's establishments. There are noticeable concentrations of these buildings north along Higgins Avenue between Main and Broadway streets on the east side of the street. They include The Dixon-Duncan Building (1897; 232-240 North Higgins), the Bluebird Building (1891; 224 North Higgins) and in the block to the north, the Simons Building (1895; 312-314 North Higgins).

The "Western Commercial" buildings are typically constructed upon stone foundations with wood floor joists imbedded in stone or masonry walls, often eighteen inches thick on the first floor. That thickness was used to compensate for poor quality, relatively soft,

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locally manufactured brick. Most of the roofs of these buildings slope to the rear of the lot. The top front of these buildings usually featured a metal cornice or a parapet wall with battlements above and dentils underneath. Most second and third floor windows are double-hung with either flattened or Romanesque arches of brick or gray granite and sills of the same materials. These buildings usually had a central recessed street level entryway with large display windows on each side and a boxed area underneath the windows. Many had transom glass block above the street level windows to allow natural light into the main commercial area and roll down cloth awnings that extended out to protect customers from the elements. Typically, the upper floors would be rented out as apartments or a mixed use of apartments and meeting rooms. The buildings were not architect-designed and many were wood frame with brick veneer, sometimes sharing common walls with neighboring buildings. Built in a line along the edge of the sidewalk without setback, these buildings typified the pattern of commercial blocks of the 1890s as evidenced throughout the larger cities of Montana. There is a good representation of these buildings on the south side of the 100 block of West Main Street and they include 119 West Main, 133-135 West Main and 137-139 West Main.

The majority of the cornices of these buildings were simple in design. Many of the more ornate have been removed or covered from this era of buildings. The best remaining example of the more ornate cornice is atop the J. M. McHaffie Building (Oxford Bar) (1888; 337 North Higgins), which proudly displays the owner's name in gold lettering. Pressed metal storefronts, such as those on the Bluebird Building (1891; 224 North Higgins) and the Missoula Mercantile (1877; 110 North Higgins) featured classical pilasters and copper decorative elements that made those buildings stand out from the usual more plain facades of that era.

An outstanding example of a nineteenth century building that has undergone a complete restoration is located at 301 North Higgins Avenue. This is a two-story masonry flat-roofed commercial building featuring brick walls, a recessed, cut-away corner front entrance supported by a metal column, second-story 1/1 double-hung windows with ornate crowned metal molding, and a detailed brick and metal cornice. There is a canvas, roll-down awning on the front street level. The brick is high fired on the street façade and low fired on the back. This building underwent a restoration project in the 1990s and as a result of the excellence of its outcome, received a preservation award from the Missoula Historic Preservation Commission. Located at one of Missoula's busiest intersections (Broadway & Higgins), it is a first class example of one of the city's 1890s commercial buildings. The building was originally owned by T.J. Tietjen, an early cigar manufacturer who had his home at 329 East Pine Street. The building served as Smith Drug Store during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and it remained Smith Drug until the 1990s, when the business moved across the street. The only thing that was changed on the Smith Drug Building were the second-story windows, which were double-hung and were replaced by vertically divided slider windows. Overall, however, the building displays excellent architectural integrity of design and materials.

There were notable exceptions to the "Western Commercial" style that still exist from the 1890s in downtown Missoula. They reflect the wealth of the building's owner and are a statement as to the confidence of investors that the future promised healthy economic times. The massive, three-story Tudor Revival style Missoula Hotel (1890-1891; 147 West Main Street) that represents the only remaining example of that style of architecture in the downtown, was owned by Samuel Mitchell and William Kennedy, Missoula's mayor at the time it was constructed in 1891. Designed by local architects Irwin Fuller and Van den Stein, the building sits atop a rusticated granite base and stretches from the corner to the alley at the half block mark. It features common elements of Tudor style including a large intersecting gable with half timbering and steep roof pitch. The Missoula Hotel served as the center of operations for the Northern Pacific Railroad's expansion line to the Coeur d' Alene Mining District, and in general owed its existence to the prosperity brought on by the Northern Pacific's arrival in 1883. The building housed commercial enterprises on the street level and hotel rooms on the upper floors. It remained a hotel into the 1950s when the upper floor rooms were converted to apartments.

As previously discussed, two other landmark high style buildings that remain from the 1888-1900 period include the Missoula Mercantile (110 North Higgins) and the commercial Queen Anne style Higgins Block (232-240 North Higgins). The latter featured ornamentation such as terra cotta banding, elaborate brick corbelling, polished mahogany columns, gray granite window arches and sills and a copper clad dome, all details referencing the exuberance of the Victorian era. The Missoula Mercantile's most noticeable ornamentation consisted of a metal storefront that included a round copper clad and glass canopy that welcomed customers to the Higgins Avenue entrance. This canopy has recently undergone a complete restoration. The Mercantile continued to expand its inventory, necessitating the construction of a warehouse at 231 East Front Street, in the block east of the main store.

Missoula's emergence as a railway center after the arrival of the Northern Pacific created a demand for hotels. The quality of construction ranged from hastily built frame structures that have since disappeared, to solid brick buildings that remain to this day. Most of these hotels were located to the south of the railroad tracks and accommodated railroad workers as well as passengers. Many

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rented rooms by the week and month. The street level space usually contained a restaurant and sometimes a bar or retail store. The earliest examples of these hotels that are still standing are the Montana Hotel (1887; 331 West Railroad Street) and the Brunswick Building (1891; 223 West Railroad Street). Both have brick veneers made somewhat more sophisticated by corbelling, especially in the case of the Brunswick. The Montana Hotel is the oldest commercial building along the historic Railroad Street corridor. These two buildings were located within a half block of the original Northern Pacific Depot that sat in the middle of the rail yards just north of the intersection of Harris (Orange Street) and Railroad Street. With the construction of a new depot in 1900, which was located several blocks to the east, many more hotels filled the properties between the old and new depots.

A number of churches were constructed in or near what would become the central business district during the 1880s and 1890s. St. Francis Xavier Church (1891-1892; 420 West Pine), the most impressive of the early churches, is the only one that remains today. A dominant feature of Missoula's skyline when built, it remains a landmark that is clearly visible from the Interstate and the surrounding hillsides. Combining an eclectic display of architectural elements with the massing and scale of New England, Neo-Colonial influences, the building features Romanesque Revival rounded arched windows, leaded glass and lavish mural wall and ceiling paintings. Corner angle buttressing and the elongated verticality of the bays lend a sense of Gothic architecture to much of the exterior.

The majority of the pre-1900 commercial buildings in Missoula were constructed between the time that the railroad arrived in 1883 and the economic Panic of 1893. The effects of that business depression dissipated by the beginning of the Twentieth Century, ushered in a new boom period of construction.

### *A New Century and the Building Boom – 1900-1920*

As Missoula and the rest of the nation pulled itself out of the economic doldrums brought about by the Panic of 1893, the opportunities for construction within the downtown business district seemed limited only by space and imagination. The new buildings that appeared were for the most part two-story, one-to-two-lot buildings, and often displayed high-fired and polychrome brick, especially on the front facade. Most had flattened lintels and arches. A number of multi-lot two and three-story neoclassical buildings utilizing polychrome high fired brick were also constructed during this period. Many featured high style facades topped with elaborate cornices, two-story-high bays, pilaster columns and sometimes two-story high windows. Some had terra cotta decorated cornices, window surrounds, columns and entryways. New civic buildings expressed the city's forward vision while holding on to classical presentations. These included the County Courthouse (1908-1910; 200 West Broadway), the Carnegie Library (1902 – 1903; 335 North Pattee), and the Federal Building – U.S. Post Office (1912 – 200 East Broadway).

Two new revival style churches, which stand today, were constructed within the commercial area after the turn-of-the-century. They were the First Baptist Church (1902; 300-308 West Pine Street) and the much larger Methodist Episcopal Church (1911; 300 East Main Street). Both are a Gothic Revival style of architecture, popular for churches of that time. The Baptist Church is a masonry building with running bond brick walls, double-hung windows with pointed arched surrounds, and a tower with decorative round windows accented by wide, round wood molding with four directional keystones. The front gable is covered with shingles. The Methodist Episcopal Church is a brick structure featuring castle-like towers, a large distinctive center dome reminiscent of European churches of the Middle Ages, and towering arched windows. Its massing and prominent dome makes it a landmark building that can be seen for blocks.

Most of the larger post-1890s buildings constructed in the downtown commercial area were designed by professionally trained architects. The local dynasty of Albert J. (A.J.) Gibson and his associates and successors in his firm including Ole Bakke and H.E. Kirkemo, transformed the Missoula architectural landscape from the late 1890s through the 1950s. Between 1898 and 1916 Gibson designed a significant number of public and private landmark buildings within the downtown blocks. Having secured his reputation during the late 1880s and throughout the last decade of the century with, among others, the design of St. Patrick's Hospital, University Hall and the Thomas Greenough Mansion, Gibson won the commission to design the Carnegie Library in 1902.

With certain conditions attached, Andrew Carnegie offered communities throughout the country grants for construction of libraries. The philanthropist required that the community have in place a tax levy for maintenance and a matching dollar amount of the largest of ten percent of the total grant or \$1,000. Carnegie insisted that architectural designs, with a few exceptions, follow the "Classic Carnegie" style, which promoted the concept of these buildings as representative of, "temples of learning." Constructed at the

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southwest corner of Pine Street and Pattee, just a block east of Higgins Avenue, the library design consisted of a one-story rectangular floor plan, stone and brick materials and a classically pedimented front entrance dominated by tapered stone columns, all in the "Classic Carnegie" style. Lighter colored stone window surrounds capped by keystones contrasted with dark red brick walls. Ten years after its construction in 1903, Gibson's assistant, Ole Bakke, designed a second story that departed from the classically styled first story. It featured modern Prairie style elements and the contrast, though startling, must have passed the required review of James Bertra, administrator of Carnegie's library grants at that time.

A. J. Gibson was born in Savannah County, Ohio, in 1862 and first began his architectural training as an apprentice to H.M. Patterson, a Butte architect and builder. In 1887 Gibson moved to Missoula, accepting a partnership first with E.C. Selander, and later with Robert Westrum. Selander had designed much of the Missoula Mercantile store during the 1880s. Gibson's career would eclipse both of his partners as he became Missoula's premier architect and many Gibson designed commercial buildings still survive in Missoula's commercial core. In addition to the Carnegie Library, they include the Missoula County Courthouse, the Keith-Ross Building (1903-1905; 403 North Higgins Avenue), the Lucy Building (1909; 330 North Higgins Avenue), the Atlantic Hotel (1902; 519 North Higgins Avenue), the Norden (the Depot) (1909; 201 West Railroad Street), and the St. Francis Xavier Rectory (1903; 420 West Pine Street).

The first year of the new century saw construction of one of Missoula's most elegant architectural landmarks, the Northern Pacific Depot (1900-1901; 100 Railroad Street). Designed by Reed and Stem of St. Paul, Minnesota, the Missoula depot is one of four by that firm still standing in Montana. They include depots in Livingston, Butte and Helena. The Missoula Northern Pacific Depot features a toned-down version of Renaissance Revival style incorporated into a long rectangular brick building. It contains a three-story center section flanked on the east and west by one-story wings. Decorative elements include four pilasters detailed with terra-cotta urns supporting the capital and displaying the yin-yang Northern Pacific symbol. The ornamental bricks on the building's exterior came from China.

The construction of the Northern Pacific depot enticed investors into constructing a series of hotels in the vicinity of the depot. Those that remain today include: the Atlantic (1902; 519 North Higgins); the Belmont (1905; 424-432 North Higgins); the Grand Pacific (now the Park Apartments) (1902; 118 West Alder); and the Norden (now the Depot) (1909; 201 West Railroad). All of these are large, multi-story brick buildings that have been converted to uses other than that of a hotel. The five-story brick Palace Hotel (1909; 147 West Broadway) broke the pattern of locating within a few blocks of the depot and offered lodging at a location between the Northern Pacific Depot and the soon-to-be-completed Milwaukee Depot. The Palace, with its grand scale, rusticated granite Romanesque-arched entryway, fourteen-foot-high granite base and multi-colored brick exterior walls remains one of Missoula's most recognized former hotels. It now contains sixty apartment units.

The expansion and improvement of the Northern Pacific's lines west to the Coeur d' Alene Mining District and beyond in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century contributed significantly to the economic health of Missoula. The arrival of the Milwaukee Railroad in 1908 added to the community payroll. General prosperity became increasingly evident with the continuing construction of multi-story, highly ornamented buildings within the commercial center of the city. The firm of Link and Haire of Great Falls, perhaps the most prominent architects in the state, designed two landmark buildings in downtown Missoula that still stand. The buildings include the Beaux Arts style Masonic Lodge (1909; 120-136 East Broadway) and the Neoclassical style Elks Lodge (1911; 120 North Pattee Street). Link and Haire, well known for designing large public and quasi-public buildings throughout the state (including the wings of the State Capitol Building), added to their Great Falls, Helena and Butte fields of operation by opening a Missoula office that functioned between 1909 to 1913. The Masonic Lodge, with its Beaux Arts extravagance, was the most ornate building in Missoula. Extensive terra-cotta detailing on the front facade of the building typified Beaux Arts expressiveness and provided an apt fit for a fraternal lodge presentation. While Link and Haire were designing the Masonic Lodge, A.J. Gibson was also employing Beaux Arts elements as part of the upper section of the Missoula County Courthouse. The design of the Elks Lodge looked to a neoclassical treatment to portray its sense of importance and timeless elegance. A two-story-high center gallery with Ionic columns dominated the front facade and announced the organization's status to every passerby.

The years between 1908 and 1913 were extremely productive in adding high style buildings to Missoula's downtown. Between the Masonic Lodge and the Elks Lodge, both geographically and chronologically, the Independent Telephone Company Building (1910; 207 East Main Street) designed by George Shanley, who worked with Shanley, Wilson and Hugenin Architects of Butte, proved to be

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an impressive addition to the downtown. Shanley boldly employed the use of cream colored enameled brick and an elaborate cornice emblazoned with the building's name, to form a striking neoclassical statement.

In the public sector, Senator Joseph M. Dixon of Missoula flexed his political muscle by securing funding in 1911 for a Federal Building (1912; 200 East Broadway) to be constructed on the corner of Broadway and Pattee. A stately presence soon took shape displaying Italian Renaissance elements captured in Indiana limestone and granite. The building originally housed the U.S. Post Office and the U.S. Forest Service Regional Office. Throughout the years, compatible additions were constructed until the complex stretched east from Pattee along Broadway for most of the block.

By 1907 Missoula had outgrown its wood frame County Courthouse. Considering his dominance over local architecture, it is not surprising that the County Commissioners turned to A. J. Gibson to design a new building befitting the importance of the county seat of government. Still, the choice was controversial considering Gibson's position as an alderman with the city and as a good friend of two of the County Commissioners who chose him as the architect. One public protest came in the form of a poem advising Gibson to refuse the contract and threatening that retribution, should he not do so, waited with ... "Feathers and tar"... Nonetheless, Gibson proceeded in 1908 with an eclectic design combining Neoclassical and Beaux Arts styling. Despite unfortunate delays involving materials, which triggered public outcries to the point where a second architect, John Brechbill, was employed to examine every load of brick, stone and terra cotta, the project finally saw completion after two years. The resulting magnificent structure gained immediate positive reaction from the citizens of Missoula and beyond, and courthouses in Sidney and Forsyth Montana adopted the Gibson design.

Native sandstone blocks gave the impression of granite to the three-story building, which sat upon an elevated basement. A portico pediment supported by two-story-high Ionic columns set atop of massive sandstone bases graced the entryway to the courthouse. Above and behind the pediment and continuing the vertical span, Gibson capped the impressive building with a Beaux Arts-influenced clock tower with a lantern-shaped cupola. Leaded glass windows framed brass covered entry doors, while ornate terra-cotta exterior trim added elegance to an entrance topped by a much smaller, but similarly shaped pediment, which defined the entrance above at the third story level. An arch of leaded glass with a terra-cotta surround rose above the entry area. The courthouse lawn has unique civic importance. It is the place for serious announcements, press conferences, weddings, proclamations and Sheriff's sales of tax delinquent property. It is the "oldest" piece of public landscape in the downtown, dating back to 1871.

The interior of the Courthouse was no less impressive, with a rotunda rising to culminate in a glass-covered, highly decorated dome surrounded by landscape paintings. Faux marble painted columns supported the floors of the second and third story. The columns were Doric on the first level, Ionic on the main level and Corinthian on the upper level. White Italian marble steps connected each floor. Gibson had outdone himself, creating a monument to Neoclassical architecture and besting even his University Hall design. He was at the top of his form and commissions rolled in.

The prosperity that grew during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century allowed Gibson to experiment with a variety of architectural styles for his commissions throughout the downtown. The Keith-Ross Building (1908; 403 North Higgins) and the Lucy Building ( 1909; 330 North Higgins) showed a more modern approach, abandoning much of the Victorian era ornamentation in favor of cleaner, less cluttered facades. In so doing, Gibson simply followed national trends and the wishes of his clients. At the same time, he utilized a much better quality of brick than the highly porous type manufactured in the Missoula area. Gibson's 1913 conversion of his single-story Queen Anne style home (1888; 402 South Second Street West) into a one-and-one-half-story Craftsman Bungalow style residence evidenced his growing attraction to the new styles of the new century.

As Gibson neared the end of his career many of his commissions were undertaken by his chief architect, Ole Bakke, who began working for Gibson in 1900, the year he arrived in Missoula. Born in Norway, Bakke adopted a more modern approach to design than his employer, and this was evident in his 1913 second-story addition to the Carnegie Library (1902-1903; 335 North Pattee). That same year Gibson retired or at least partially retired, leaving Bakke as his heir apparent in the continuing dynasty.

Bakke wore the mantel with great gusto, leaving his mark on Missoula's architectural landscape with designs for schools, university buildings and private residences, many of which still stand today. His major contribution to the commercial district is the Wilma Building (Smead-Simmons) (1921; 131 South Higgins). Towering above other buildings of its time, the Wilma announced a new decade and embraced modern construction techniques and material applications to become "The Showplace of Montana."

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### *Prosperity, Depression, War, and It's Aftermath – 1921-1955*

William “Billy” Simons, a “Wild West Show” entertainment producer who had built theaters throughout the Pacific Northwest, provided much of the capital to construct the Wilma Building as a monument to his beloved wife, Edna Wilma. Looking to the premier architectural firm in the city, Simons chose Ole Bakke to design the tallest building in western Montana. It would receive the somewhat exaggerated moniker as “Missoula’s first skyscraper.” Bakke adopted a Sullivanesque style, named after Louis Sullivan of Chicago, one of the country’s most influential architects. The design combined well-integrated ornamentation with overall basic geometric form. The Wilma featured a theater, a restaurant, a barbershop, twelve apartments, two retail stores, fifty offices, and an Olympic-size swimming pool. Paying particular attention to the theater section of the building, at the request of Edna Wilma, who fancied herself a “light opera” performer, Bakke’s design produced a marvel of acoustics, which modern testing (Charles G. Kahane – P.G.S./Broadcast Media Services – 10/17/1996) has shown rivals that of Carnegie Hall and some of the finest concert halls of Europe. The sounds of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra filled the beautiful theater for its opening night on May 11, 1921. The Wilma continues to be a beloved performance center and stalwart landmark, towering over the banks of the Clark Fork River.

The Wilma marked the end of Ole Bakke’s career in Missoula, and soon after the completion he left to reside in his native country of Norway. During the construction of the Wilma, Bakke’s assistant, H.E. Kirkemo played a leading role in supervising the structural engineering and other aspects of the project. When the Wilma opened for business, Kirkemo rented an upper-floor apartment in the building. Kirkemo, originally from Great Falls, soon took on the commissions that would have been directed to Bakke and quickly established himself as Missoula’s most influential architect.

Even before Bakke’s exit, H.E. “Kirk” Kirkemo began to immerse his designs in the newly popularized style of the day – Art Deco, bringing that style to Missoula in the design of the Humble Apartments (1920; 704 South Higgins) south of the Clark Fork River. His first opportunity to utilize deco design within the downtown did not come until 1928, with the Missoula Laundry Building (Missoula Textile) (1928; 111 East Spruce). His most distinctive and well-known deco design in the downtown is the Zip Auto Building (1937; 251 West Main Street). Combining Art Deco and the evolving Art Moderne, the Zip Auto design features stucco on concrete block with stylized typography cut into the surface spelling out the name and functions of the building. Its lines are clean with high-contrast geometrical detailing.

As the 1930s progressed other Art Deco designs began to appear in buildings within the commercial business area. One of the most notable was the Hammond Arcade (1933-1934; 101 South Higgins), the work of Butte architect Roscoe C. Hugenin. The Hammond Arcade, which was built to replace the original Hammond Building after a fire destroyed it, is a one-story, irregular shaped, brick commercial building with stepped polychrome battlements, a variety of soft-tone brown, green and red brick, and ornamental ceramic tile. Its interior arcade was unique in Missoula. The Studebaker Building (1921 & remodels; 216 West Main) also displays the deco touch with its cloud-shaped parapet on the east end of the building.

As the nation sunk into the depths of the Great Depression, construction of new buildings in the city center slowed to a crawl. The exceptions, however, were impressive in scale and vital to the economy, such as the Montgomery Ward Building (1935; 201 North Higgins) and the east addition to the U.S. Post Office (1937) and Forest Service Regional Headquarters Building (1936; 330 Pattee). The latter two were federal public works projects that connected physically to the U.S. Post Office and mirrored its appearance in both its neoclassical style and use of buff-colored limestone blocks. The rectangular-shaped brick Montgomery Ward Building was unique in the downtown with Renaissance Revival styling. The building’s elongated multi-paned windows, stretching an entire story high, and its raised brick corner quoins and balustrades defining the roofline cornice, set it apart from the buildings that surrounded it. The idea that a major chain store would invest in such a grand building during the height of the Depression, gave hope to Missoula’s business community. Having recently undergone a restoration of its exterior with brick and trim being painted its original color of gray and black, and refurbishing of its elegant round clock set in the upper center of its front facade, the Montgomery Ward Building remains an impressive presence in Missoula’s downtown.

Missoula’s downtown had been dealt a crushing blow, when at the height of the economic depression in October of 1936, fire destroyed the Florence Hotel. Standing as Missoula’s most important hotel at its most vital business location, the loss of the Florence was both visually and economically disheartening to the entire community. This was especially true for merchants such as W.H. McLeod, president of the Missoula Mercantile, located directly east across the street from the site where the Florence now lay as crumbled debris. As the ruins were scrapped and hauled away, Missoula’s downtown was left with a gaping hole that remained so for

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the next four years. Capital and investors to build on the site could simply not be found during those economically hard-pressed years. McLeod, however, was not the kind of business leader to accept such a situation as status quo. Using all of his promotional skills and community prestige, he began a campaign unlike any before --- a public-private effort to build a new Florence Hotel. With the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce, McLeod led a publicity drive to fund construction of the new hotel and by 1941 he had succeeded in raising the required funds. A new Florence Hotel would be built with the Missoula Mercantile Company controlling 67 percent of the stockholder's shares and the public holding the remainder. The building of the new Florence would truly be a community event.

The magnificent structure that rose above the ashes of the old Florence was as modern in design as existed in Montana at its time. Futuristic in appearance, with the sleek and streamlined lines of Art Moderne styling, the Florence, according to Missoulian reports, "radically altered" the appearance of the corner that had traditionally been defined as the southern boundary of the commercial business district. Designed by Spokane architect G.A. Pehrson, who had worked previously for the Chicago architectural firm that had designed the stately but more conservative-appearing Davenport Hotel in Spokane, the Florence assumed a place among the leading hotels of the Northwest.

Starkly different in appearance than anything Missoula had seen, the Florence with its strong horizontal lines, flat concrete and metal exterior, terra cotta tiles and general "futuristic" look of the Art Moderne school, gave the city a new and exciting landmark building that invigorates the visual landscape to this day. From the moment of its grand opening the Florence became the social gathering place for the community's most important events, and a source of pride to the citizens of Missoula, especially those who contributed financially to the construction of the grand hotel.

During the same year of the Florence construction, a six-story annex was built on the east end of the Palace Hotel located on West Broadway kitty-cornered from the Courthouse. While never competing stylistically with the Florence, the Savoy (147 West Broadway) as it came to be known, did take its place in conjunction with the Palace, as one of the larger downtown structures along one of the city's main thoroughfares. The Savoy, constructed in 1909 and similar in massing to the Palace, differs in character. Unlike the Palace the new building features bays, piers and windows that all align vertically. A cornice with decorative terra cotta thunderbird detailing easily identifies this building as more modern than its counterpart and with the vertical delineation of the rest of the building, connects its styling to the late deco period. The completion of the Florence and the Savoy marked the last of the great building projects that would change Missoula's downtown during the historic period.

### *Residential and commercial mix within the Downtown Historic District*

Accepting Higgins Avenue as the as the historical center north-south demarcation point, residential buildings are a strong component in the commercial center of the city to both the east and west. Many of the residences to the east of Higgins Avenue are part of the East Pine Street Historic District, located between Pattee Street (one block east of Higgins) and Madison Avenue (four blocks to the east), and running north and south between Spruce and Broadway streets. Many of these residences have been converted to commercial use and those that have not, still retain a close identification as part of the "Downtown." The Neighborhood Council in the area has adopted the name "The Heart of Missoula Neighborhood Council" and includes the businesses along Higgins. The same holds true for residences east of Pattee Street and along Spruce and Alder streets, north to the Rail-Link tracks. Within that area just outside of the designated East Pine Street Historic District, all of the residences and three of the commercial buildings were built within the historic period. All of the residential housing in those blocks appears to be "contributing" to the historic character of the area. Twenty-one of the residences were constructed before 1900, 19 between 1900 and 1913, and the remaining 2 between 1921 and 1951.

The housing styles reflect the era of their construction with the pre-1900 houses exhibiting Queen Anne and larger pattern book appearance, many front-gabled or cross-gabled and some hiped. The post 1900 houses favored pyramidal hip and gable-on-hip formats. Of the two houses constructed between 1921 and 1951, one is a hip and gable, while the other is a Saltbox style. The 200-300 blocks of East Alder, directly south and across the street from the rail yards, is especially impressive with its concentration of historic residences. Five pyramidal hip roof houses, all constructed between 1902 and 1912 when the Northern Pacific was involved in expanding its services, rest along that street. They are very similar to the rows of houses on the North Side that help define that historic district. There are also 5 Victorian Era houses, 2 of which are Queen Anne in styling (1891; 215 & 219 East Alder).

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The blocks outside of the East Pine Street District that are located south of Broadway and east of Higgins contain a mix of commercial and residential that represents one of the highest concentrations of pre-1900 buildings in Missoula. Twelve of 25 of the houses and apartments along East Front Street are pre-1900. Another 9 are pre-1913. All but 3 of the residences and commercial buildings are "contributing" elements built within the historic period. Along Levasseur Street, which is the closest street paralleling the Clark Fork River, all but one of the residences are within the historic period, with styles that include Folk Victorian, Craftsman and Front and Cross-Gabled.

In the 1930s Ole Parsons, one of the first and most-respected stucco contractors as well as a County Commissioner, created Parsons Drive near the east end of East Front Street. The Drive turned south off of Front Street toward the Clark Fork River. There he built an eclectic blend of 1930s era houses in styles that include Art Deco and Mission, as well as an English Cottage representation and a somewhat International Style flat-roofed house. All of the houses were built between 1933 and 1939, and all are contributing elements in the historic district.

There are 11 large apartments along East Front Street constructed within the historic period, and 7 built before 1913. The buildings are sometimes referred to as row houses. The apartments at 294-298 East Front (ca.1925) display Italian Renaissance styling, while the other apartments are a variety of multi-gable. Many of these apartments resemble the row houses designed by A.J. Gibson on Missoula's South Side and University Area. Gibson's designs were widely imitated throughout the city and in fact, these apartments might well be Gibson-designed, since many of the records of his architectural projects were lost through the years.

Along East Main Street east of Higgins Avenue, there are 29 buildings constructed during the historic period. These are a mix of commercial and residential Queen Anne, Craftsman, Front and Side-Gabled, Hipped Roof and a Second Empire residence at 533-535 East Main (1888-1891). The architecturally significant Gothic Revival- influenced Methodist Episcopal Church, constructed in 1911, is located at 300 East Main. Central School (Missoula Children's Theater) (1935; 200 Adams Street), another large pivotal building, is located between Main and Broadway.

Architect designed residences and commercial buildings representing identifiable styles are common throughout the blocks east of Higgins to Madison avenues, and include an impressive Victorian-influenced design at 523 East Front Street (1891). This two and one-half story, wood frame multi-family residence has a prominent front-facing gable roof, gable dormers and a turret with a polygonal gable roof with flared eaves. The house features a partial length porch supported by spindle-work columns and rails, and a shed-covered balcony above. Two projecting bays add to the Victorian look of the house. The windows include 1/1 double-hung and Palladian with ornate windows moldings. Decorative brackets accent the closed eaves and the gables are detailed with arches, starburst ornaments and finials. The gables, the turret and a wide flared belt that separates the first and second levels are all covered in fish scale shingles. A majority of the exterior is covered in sculptured clapboard siding. A detailed brick chimney is centrally located and the building is resting on a rubble stone foundation. This house has won two Missoula Historic Preservation Commission awards for excellence of maintenance and is singularly important because of its location near the major arterial of Madison, which makes it visible to everyone who uses the Madison Street bridge. The house is associated with its original owner, William Reid, a prominent Missoula chiropractor.

Other fine representations of Queen Anne styles include a residence across the street from the Reid house at 526 East Front Street (1891), and a residence across and a few houses west at 503 East Front Street (1888). Queen Anne styling is readily apparent in the Gustav Morratz residence (512 East Broadway), an 1891 design by architects Galbraith and Fuller. Other examples are represented by the Joseph Steiger residence at 405 East Pine Street (1902), local cigar manufacturing businessman A. P. Tietjen's home at 329 East Pine Street (1891), and the S.H. Draper house at 420 East Broadway (1902).

Neoclassical influenced houses in the area include the mansion built for Joseph M. Dixon at 312 East Pine (1891-1902, 1912-1921) which started as a modest Queen Anne home, but ascended as Dixon's political career did, under the supervision of A.J. Gibson and later, Ole Bakke. The Watson Building, located at 200 East Pine (1927), incorporates neoclassical columns and other details suggesting that style.

Colonial Revival and Federal Period designed brick buildings are represented in the area east of Higgins by the Frockenbrock Funeral Home (now law offices) at 234 East Pine (1929) and the Tyler Worden residence at 410 East Pine (1902). Both the Frank Worden

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house, which is the oldest residence in the city and is located at 328 East Pine (ca. 1874), and the W.P. Mills residence at 432 East Pine, are front gable-and-wing examples that display Gothic Revival and Folk Victorian elements.

The blocks west of Higgins Avenue to the old Northern Pacific spur line between Broadway and the railroad yards contain a mix of commercial and residential, most of which were built during the historic period. An area that grew primarily because of the railroad features the Catholic Block situated between Orange Street, Owen Street, West Pine Street and West Spruce Street. This block is made up of historic buildings that includes St. Francis Xavier Church (1891; 420 West Pine), the Rectory (ca.1910), old Loyola High School (1911; 430 West Pine Street) and the more modern St. Francis School, built in 1927 (401 West Spruce).

Most of the housing in the area west of Higgins Avenue to the old Northern Pacific spur line is of a working class nature, which include small pyramidal hip roof houses at 631, 633, 635 and 637 Owen Street, and pattern book houses scattered throughout. Larger gable-front and gable-front-and-wing homes line the 700 block of West Pine Street and are also found randomly throughout the area. They are usually one to two-story residences. Two elegant examples of larger Queen Anne style houses appear at 505 West Spruce Street (the John Cyr house; 1902) and at 412 West Alder Street (the John S. Johnston house; 1902). The Cyr house has a brick carriage house on the rear alley portion of its lot. Both houses have wrap-around porches, turrets, irregular roof lines and are listed in the National Register. Also, both houses are used for commercial purposes, as are many of the larger houses in the area. That is exclusively the case on the 300 block of West Pine Street and the 200 block of West Spruce Street, and to a somewhat lesser degree on the 400 block of West Spruce Street. There are a number of larger brick and wood frame apartments built during the historic period in the area west of Higgins Avenue. Perhaps the finest example of the former is the Glorianna Apartments located at 432 West Spruce Street (ca. 1902), which is similar in style and detailing to many of A.J. Gibson's row houses, with two-stories, two projecting bays and a broad connecting porch. The decorative brick work includes arched inlays and dentilated brick lintels over the windows.

There are three parks located within the Downtown Missoula Historic District. One is located west of Higgins and the other two are located south of East Front Street. Little McCormick Park is a triangular piece of land located between the intersection of Alder Street and Toole Avenue. Kiwanis Park was completed by the Kiwanis Club in 1934 and is located south of East Front Street between Adams Street and Madison Street, and Bess Reed Park is located at the corner of Clay and Levasseur Streets.

Little McCormick Park was built on land donated by the McCormicks, one of the founding families of Missoula. Little McCormick and Kiwanis parks were constructed during the established historic period and are considered small neighborhood parks, as distinguished from large acre parks such as Greenough Park and McCormick Park. Bess Reed Park is also a small neighborhood park, but was constructed after the historic period. The park was named in honor of Bess Reed, a resident of Levasseur Street. It is believed that Bess Reed was one of the last homeowners who held out against the condemnation of the properties within a two-block area. The condemnation was an early 1980s effort of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency to condemn property for the (then) Sheraton Hotel site. It is said that Bess Reed died before they moved her from the house, and they named the park for her. All three of these small neighborhood parks are an important part of Missoula, providing recreational facilities for residential and commercial entities nearby.

The Downtown Historic District displays a fairly cohesive sense of historic commercial streetscapes with the exception of a few blocks in the central area that contain all modern buildings and/or parking lots. These include the City Hall block bordered by the north side of the 200 block of west Pine Street, the south side of the 200 block of West Spruce Street, the west side of the 400 block of Ryman Street and the east side of the 400 block of Woody Street. The Public Library block, which was discussed previously, also contains a large modern building and parking. The wide varieties of architectural styles and influences that came and went during the late 19th century and during the first half of the twentieth century are well represented throughout the district.

The works of Missoula's most prominent architects such as A.J. Gibson, Ole Bakke and H.E. Kirkemo are prominent within the Downtown Missoula Historic District. Designs by architects of state-wide and regional note, such as Link & Haire of Great Falls, George Shanley and R.C. Hugenin of Butte and G.A. Pehrson of Spokane, appear in landmark buildings within the district.

Significant themes in Missoula's past are represented by buildings such as the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot located along the railroad corridor, on the northern edge of the district. Historic automobile-related businesses are concentrated along the 200 and 300 blocks of West Main Street and some, such as both Zip Auto Buildings and the building at 233 West Main Street (Reynolds Radiator) continue in related functions to that historic theme. Civic buildings are represented by a number of outstanding buildings that serve as strong visual anchors to the historic downtown due to their large massing, location and impressive architectural sophistication.

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Each of the district's building styles, age and integrity are provided in the building list below. Building dates are recorded in the Missoula County tax records, but a majority of the dates have been found to be historically inaccurate. For this reason, a range of building dates has been chosen over the use of dates recorded in tax records and title information or circa dates, because they are believed to be as historically accurate as possible (given the available time and the research materials available in Missoula County). The term "circa" reflects a building date that is approximate, whereas the range of building dates is a definite and accurate range based on information collected from Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, Missoula County directories, deed information and research materials that include building lists published in local area newspapers. The buildings that do not fall into a range have either been traced to a specific year, or are labeled "prior to (P)" or "after (A)." Those labeled "P" are typically the earliest constructed buildings in the district, and are hard to track beyond the given date. Those labeled "A" are known to have been constructed after the established historic period, or because of their non-contributing status, were not given priority during the building date research.