

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **23 Main Street**

Historic Address (if applicable): **104-106 East Commercial**

City/Town: **Anaconda**

Site Number: 24DL0821

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Deer Lodge**

Historic Name: **Lee Pleasant Driver's Saloon and Club Rooms**

Original Owner(s): **William Copinus**

Current Ownership Private Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Celtic House, LLC**

Owner Address: **23 Main Street**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **04 N** Range: **11 W**

$\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ **NW** $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section: **03**

Lot(s): **18**

Block(s): **6**

Addition: **Anaconda Original Townsite**

Year of Addition: **1883**

USGS Quad Name: **Anaconda North (24K)** Year:

Historic Use: **Bar, Club Rooms**

Current Use: **Bar, Rooms, Restaurant, Bike Shop**

Construction Date: **1890** Estimated Actual

Original Location Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference [Google Earth](#)

NAD 27 or NAD 83(preferred)

Zone: **12** Easting: **349203** Northing: **5110381**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date: **02/25/1998**

Historic District: **Anaconda Commercial Historic District
Butte-Anaconda NHL (03/21/2006)**

NRHP Eligible: Yes No

Date of this document: **8/3/2016**

Form Prepared by: **Anthony Wood**

Address: **1957 University Street
Helena, MT, 59601**

Daytime Phone:

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: yes no

Criteria: A B C D

Date:

Evaluator:

Comments: Property record form written as part of the "Identifying Montana's African American Heritage Places Project."

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merge pages with this form

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:

NRHP Eligibility: Yes No Individually Contributing to Historic District Noncontributing to Historic District

NRHP Criteria: A B C D

Area of Significance: **African American History** Period of Significance: **1909-1917**

Montana Historic Property Record Form

Property Name: Lee Pleasant Driver's Saloon and Club Rooms

Smithsonian Number:
24DL0821

Architectural Style: **Romanesque and Second Renaissance Revival** If Other, specify:
Property Type: **Commercial Store Front** Specific Property Type:

Architect: **D. F. McDevitt** Architectural Firm/City/State: **Butte, MT**
Builder/Contractor: **Smith and Gilmour** Company/City/State:
Source of Information: **MT SHPO**

Architectural Description:

Setting and Location

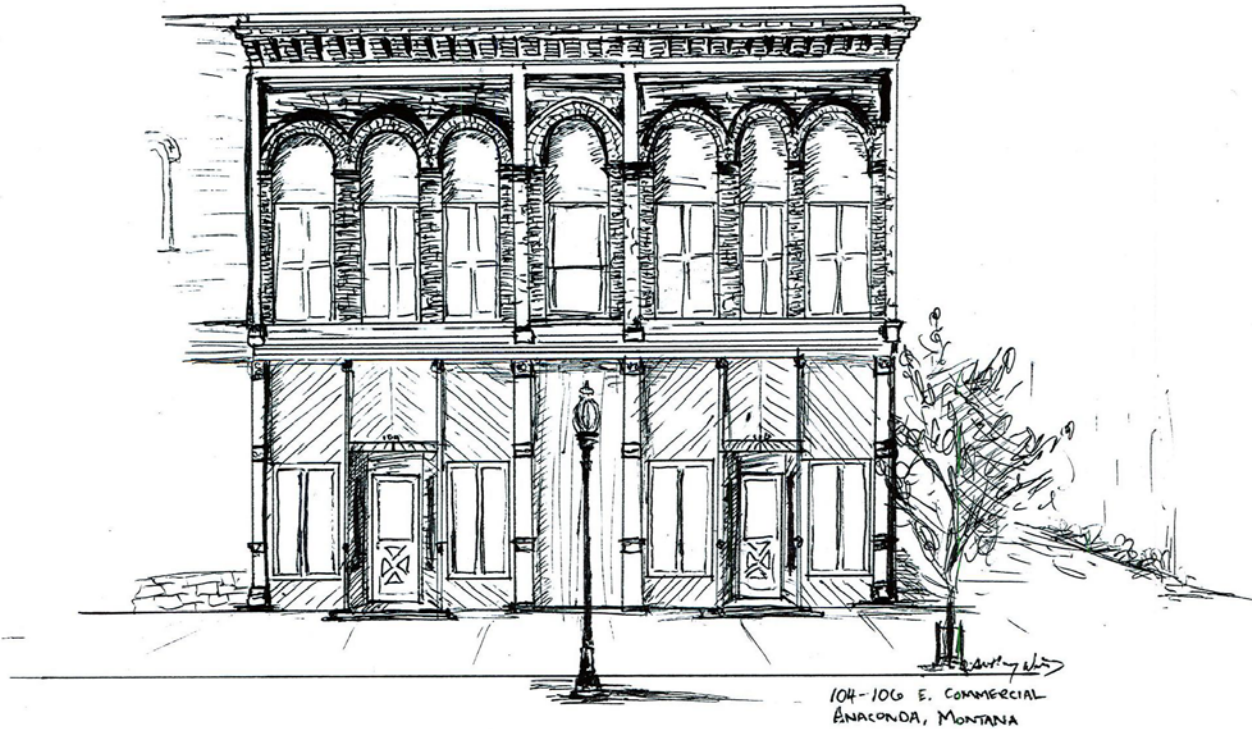
Lee Pleasant Driver's Saloon and Club Rooms, housed in the structure standing at 23 Main Street, is located on lot 18, on the southwest corner of block 6 of the Original Anaconda Townsite. The block is bounded by Main Street to the west, East Front Street to the north, Oak Street to the east, and Commercial Avenue to the south. The building is located in Anaconda's historic downtown, and is part of the Anaconda-Butte Historic Landmark District. 23 Main Street is comprised of two distinct components: the west two thirds, and the east third. The west section of the building is home to the current Harp Pub. The east section is home to Sven's Bike Shop, and an Italian restaurant. While the whole building is owned by Celtic House LLC, the historic structure important to this survey only pertains to the current east third of the building. The store fronts for both the bike shop and the restaurant are the historic entrances to Lee Pleasant Driver's Saloon and Club Rooms between 1909 and 1917. The two entrances serving Commercial Avenue on the eastern portion of the building each stand atop a single, half step above the city sidewalk running parallel to the street. The sidewalk extends from the stone foundation of the building, to the curb. A single street lamp, part of the Historic Anaconda Street lamp system, stands between two young cherry trees, planted in cut sections of the sidewalk, each protected by cast iron trunk-guards. The lamp and trees are roughly in line with the center point between the two entry doors. The east side of the building runs against the rear alley way that perpendicularly meets Commercial Avenue at the southeast corner of the structure. The other elevations of 104-106 Commercial are connected to 23 Main Street to the west and 21 Main Street to the north.

Constructed in 1889, the structure at 106 Commercial originally carried the title of the Starr Block. Built by William Copinus, erected by the Smith and Gilmour contractors, and designed by Butte Architect D. F. McDevitt, the Starr Block was constructed in conjunction and adjoining the structure at 23 Main, known as the Copinus Block. 104-106 Commercial is a rectangular, two-story, commercial storefront structure with Romanesque and Second Renaissance Revival detailing. The structure stands upon a stone foundation, not visible above the sidewalk. The exterior walls are brick, covered with wood siding on the first story, which include the recessed entry doors to both 104 and 106. Wood board skirting runs the width of the building between the first and second stories. The skirting features six horizontal boards, painted green, extending from the tops of the first story to the bottom of the second story windows. The brick walls of the original structure extend from the second story to the flat, deck roof of the building.

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South Façade

The first story of the structure features two identical store fronts. The entry doors each sit within a deep, recessed door way. The exterior walls cut in at nearly a 90 degree angle about four feet, before meeting the wall in which the main door are set. The opening created in the exterior for these recessed, open porticos measure roughly about six feet wide by eight feet tall. The corners of the porch are adorned with decorative wood columns, detailed in the Romanesque style. The entry doors are set with the center of rear portico walls, and each contain a half-door, single pane window, in the top half of the wooden door. Set within each of the angled walls extending from the rear wall of the porticos to the decorative columns, are a single pane, rectangular window, with wood surrounds. On either side of the open entry door porticos, the exterior walls contain two, side-by-side, single pane window fixtures. Each store front section is contained within large, decorative wood beams that extend from the sidewalk to the top of the first story. The beams on the far west end of the building delineate where 104 Commercial ends, and where 23 Main begins. The beam on the easternmost end of 106 Commercial extends from the southeast corner of the structure. Between the two store fronts, a space of plane wall, about five feet wide, extends from sidewalk to the second story skirting between the two interior beams.

The top story of 104 and 106 Commercial is characterized by pilasters, large semi-circular arched brick window openings, and a brick corbeled cornice, exhibiting the Romanesque and Second Renaissance Revival Styles throughout. Directly above each of the store front sections, three large semi-circular arched brick window openings, each encasing a pair of one-over-one double hung windows with wood framing and surrounds, sit side by side between brick square columns. The brick columns rise from where the wood beams of the first story end and the wood skirting between the stories. In between the identical sets of the three arched window openings, in the space directly above the center point between the two store front sections, a single, narrower, arched brick window opening contains a single one-over-one double hung window feature. Above the arches of the window openings, the detailed brick cornice runs the width of the building, and is one of Anaconda's only and finest example of the Romanesque design.

East Elevation

The east elevation of the structure is the only visible exterior side other than the façade. It contains only four distinct features set with the brick wall. At the base of the elevation, at the level of the alleyway running adjacent to the exterior, two arched basement window openings are visible. In the second story of the east elevation, two, one-over-one double hung window fixtures are set within the brick exterior. The windows retain the stylistic features of those on the Façade, but are far more modest, without large brick arches. The top of the elevation also does not feature the detailed cornice of the façade. At the center of the elevation, at the top of the exterior walls, the roof line exhibits a drop of about a foot, and the lower section of roof extends from the center of the building to the north.

The north and west elevations are connected to the adjoining buildings at 23 and 21 Main Street, and are not visible.

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History of the Property

Lee Pleasant Driver arrived in the smelter city of Anaconda in 1895. In less than seven years, the Tennessee native who had made his way to the Big Sky State via the 25th U.S. Colored Infantry, became Anaconda's first major black business owner. L.P. Driver's Saloon and Club Rooms had two previous locations before finding a more permanent home on the corner of Main and Commercial, the city's two major roads. His business prospered for fifteen years, an accomplishment to be sure, and afforded him and his large family the stability to retire to a hundred acres of beautiful ranch land about ten miles east of town. His success was a hallmark of the state's short period of racial and social progressivism at the turn of the century. More remarkably, Lee Pleasant Driver continued to prosper even in the face of the renewed "Jim Crow-ification" of many local and state policies that took effect around 1910. Truly his building which still stands at the corner of Main and Commercial is a testament to the hard work and resiliency of the men of his Lee Pleasant Driver's generation.

Lee Pleasant Driver

In June of 1863, Samuel and Mary Driver announced the birth of their son, Lee. The Drivers lived in Fort Worth, Texas at the time, largely secluded from the havoc and violence of the Civil War raging just to the east. It is possible that the Samuel had taken his family away their home in Tennessee to avoid the conflict, but by 1880, he returned to the state of his own birth. Young Lee Driver was the second of the nine children born to Samuel and Mary. In the 1880 federal census of Marshall County, Tennessee, sixty-eight year old Samuel lived with his 48 year old wife Mary on their farm along with sons John, Lee, William, Sammie, Richard, and Robert; John being the oldest at twenty, and Robert the youngest at only one year old. The Drivers also had three daughters, Laticia, Narcissia, and Mary.¹

Lee soon proved himself to be a bright and avid student. In what was surely a minimal education system for young black children following the conclusion of the war, Lee continued to learn and thrive in academic settings. For some time, Lee taught grade school in the Memphis area most likely between 1883 and 1886. Following this short spell as a teacher, Lee moved on to seek his own education at the nearby Fisk College.² Fisk had been established in 1867 for the higher education of young African Americans. Though specific dates are unknown, it is most likely that Lee attended the famed institution for two years, preceding 1888. According to Driver's obituary in 1935, he attended Fisk shortly before joining the U.S. Infantry.³ This would mean that Lee, who enlisted in December of 1888, would have been part of the graduating class earlier that same year, a class which included some of the most important academic minds in American History. Not only would he have known a young woman named Margaret Murray, later to be Mrs. Booker T. Washington, but Lee Driver also shared classes and lectures with W.E.B. Dubious, the most prominent black historian and activist of the post-Civil War era.⁴

Following his time in academia, Lee Driver set out on a new adventure. In December of 1888, he enlisted in the 25th U.S. Infantry Division, which was beginning its move from the Southwest to the Montana and Dakota territories.⁵ By signing his name, Lee Pleasant Driver became a part of an iconic group of black Americans known as the Buffalo Soldiers. This was also the first time that Pleasant became part of the young man's name. It is unclear if it truly was a middle name, given from birth, or a friendly moniker picked up during his early life. Regardless, Pleasant became common place in his name and business for the rest of his life. He set out on what would prove to be the final campaign of the western Indian Wars, certainly a change in pace from the quiet halls of academia. During his three years of service, Driver reached the rank of Corporal. Though the different companies of the 25th found themselves spread out across the vast plains of eastern Montana and the Dakotas, the late 1880s stationed the 25th at Fort Keogh in Miles City, then Fort Missoula in the 1890s, and finally Fort Harrison in Helena until the colored infantries disbanded in 1904. Corporal Driver saw the very last campaign of the Indian Wars in 1891, at the battle of Pine Ridge in the Dakotas, where the 25th played a small but vital role in the battles.⁶ He did not reenlist in 1891, and chose to stay in Montana. Had he continued in the infantry, Driver would have soon found himself fighting alongside Roosevelt's roughriders in the Spanish-American war in Cuba. The 24th and 25th Infantries joined the 9th and 10th Calvary divisions on the small island as the core of the Army's African American fighting force. Interestingly enough, many of those who survived the war returned to Montana in the early 1900s, stationed in Missoula or Helena.

¹ U.S. Census, 1880 (*District 1, Marshall, Tennessee*; Roll: 1269; Family History Film: 1255269; Page: 310C; Enumeration District: 132)

² "Lee Pleasant Driver Obituary" *The Anaconda Standard*, Jan 12, 1935. Page 6.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "History of Fisk College", available online at <http://www.fisk.edu/about/history>.

⁵ Ancestry.com. *U.S., Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925-1963* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

⁶ John Carroll, *The Black Military Experience in the American West* (Liveright Publishing, New York, 1971.) 245.

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Now a civilian, Lee Pleasant Driver made his way west from Fort Keogh in search of a work and opportunity. For those seeking work in the late 19th century, the mining city of Butte, and its smelter city of Anaconda were promising places. It took Driver several years to make it to Anaconda. Arriving in 1895, Lee found work in the busy smelter city as a porter and laborer, and rented a room on the north end of Main Street.⁷ By 1902, the educated man with an easy going name broke into Anaconda's local business scene. Pleasant Driver opened club rooms at 15 Main Street. He sold wines, beer, liquors, and a selection of fine cigars. By 1905, Lee moved his saloon across Main Street to the number twelve building. No longer standing, the structure held Driver's business until around 1909.⁸

During Lee Pleasant Driver's push into Anaconda's business community, he met the young Pearl Payne, who arrived in the Smelter city early in 1907. By August of that same year, Lee and Pearl were married.⁹ Change continued for the Drivers as Lee's Saloon and club rooms moved to yet another location, at 106 East Commercial (currently the location of Sven's Bike shop, in the rear of the Harp and Thistle Pub building on the corner of Main and Commercial).¹⁰ Lee Pleasant Driver was by all accounts very successful, and by 1910, he expanded into the space to the west of 106 Commercial, and doubled the size of his business. He operated his Saloon until 1917, at which time he retired to his ranch in Opportunity.¹¹ By this time, Lee and Pearl had started their family. The 1920 Census lists the Driver family living on their farm, with sons Lee Jr, William, Woodrow, and Felix. Lee and Pearl also had two daughters, Geneviève and Alyce Margie, followed shortly by their seventh child, Paul, in 1922.¹² The second generation of Drivers would mostly stay in Anaconda and Western Montana, as would many of their children. Lee resided at his home in Opportunity until a lengthy illness forced him to seek treatment at the hospital at Fort Harrison. After six months in Helena, he passed away on January 10th, 1935, around the age of 72.¹³

The Drivers and the first Black Montanans

The seven children born to Lee Pleasant and Pearl Driver became part of a social anomaly. The generation that the Driver children belonged to were among the first able to call themselves both native Montanans and African American. Only a handful of other black men and women had made their way west to the Big Sky and started their own families prior to the turn of the century. Several had started west immediately upon hearing the news of emancipation, such as Richard and Mary McDonald. The McDonalds came to Virginia City in 1864, and soon moved to Bozeman later that year, where they welcomed one of the earliest black children born in the territory, Mollie McDonald.¹⁴ Mollie and her sisters were certainly some of the very first native black Montanans, being born before it even became a state. Such individuals were truly unique in this way, but the continued waves of African Americans leaving the south following the civil war in search of opportunity, freedom, and adventure grew the population in Montana and neighboring states to their highest percentages ever following the close of the 1800s. In many ways, the children of these pioneers, ranchers, miners, and Buffalo Soldiers were Montana's first generation of African Americans.

While Lee Jr, William (Leonard), and Genevieve would attend school in the smelter city, as they grew older, the course of their lives took them farther from their ranch in the Deer Lodge valley. In this way, the Driver children were typical of Montana's African American Community as a whole during this time. The late 1800s into the early 1900s was a time of relative progressivism in much of the west, both politically and otherwise. Places like Great Falls and Helena elected black constables, and Billings even selected an African American named Walker Browning to serve as a representative for the city's Republican commission, alongside the some of its richest men, like rancher Peter Yegan.¹⁵ As political historians of the west will often note, the early years of statehood exhibited a leftist leaning among the general population. This combined with Montana's values of rugged individualism in such a way to create a place where many African Americans felt that their own ambition and hard work would be less impeded by racial barriers. This was the Montana that Lee Pleasant Driver sr. came to in 1888, but it was not the Montana in which his own children would grow up.

Montana's era of progressivism gave way to decades of unprecedented racism starting around 1909. New anti-miscegenation laws were passed disallowing whites and blacks to marry, and several cities passed zoning ordinances forcing blacks to live only in

⁷ "Lee Pleasant Driver Obituary" *The Anaconda Standard*, Jan 12, 1935. Page 6. ; R.L. Polk & Co, Polk's 1902 *Anaconda (Deer Lodge County, Mont.) City Directory*. 126.

⁸ R.L. Polk & Co, Polk's 1902, 1905, and 1909 *Anaconda (Deer Lodge County, Mont.) City Directories*.

⁹ "Marriage License for Lee Driver and Pearl Payne" 9/3/1907. Accessed online at Ancestry.com.

¹⁰ R.L. Polk & Co, Polk's 1909 *Anaconda (Deer Lodge County, Mont.) City Directory*. 94.

¹¹ "Lee Pleasant Driver Obituary" *The Anaconda Standard*, Jan 12, 1935. Page 6.

¹² U.S. Census, 1920 (*Gregson, Silver Bow, Montana*; Roll: T625_977; Page: 1A; Enumeration District: 256; Image: 225).

¹³ "Lee Pleasant Driver Obituary" *The Anaconda Standard*, Jan 12, 1935. Page 6.

¹⁴ Gail Schontzler, "McDonald House Hold History of Freed Slaves Who Helped Settle Bozeman," *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, February 13, 2011.

¹⁵ *The Billings Gazette*, Billings, Montana, 1902-1914. Search For "Walker Browning" Chronicling America. Accessed online at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>.

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designated neighborhoods.¹⁶ While it would be unfair to say that individuals became more racially prejudicial during this time, these new social precedents made the extent of the existing racism all the more obvious. Jobs that the black men of Lee Driver's generation had always been able to count on—such as porters, janitors, and railroad work—became steadily less available for his own sons. For these reasons, Montana's peak population (by percentage) of African Americans in 1910 fell to half of its numbers by 1930.¹⁷

The lives of the Lee and Pearl Driver's children took many different paths as the seven children grew up under the Big Sky. The youngest, Paul, graduated from Anaconda High as did the rest of his siblings, and stayed to work jobs around Butte for several years. Paul eventually left for the University of Oregon, where he earned M.A. and Ph. D in biology. In the late 60s, he chose to further his academic career at Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, Florida. Dr. Driver taught biology, later becoming the head of the science department, and from 1972-1973 Paul served as the president of one of the nation's only and oldest black colleges.¹⁸ Like Fisk College, which Paul's father Lee had attended nearly one hundred years before, Edward Waters had been founded in 1866 for the higher education of African Americans in the Reconstruction era.¹⁹

Alyce, Woodrow and Felix all married other members of the state's small, close-knit black community. Like them, their spouses all came from the ever shrinking number of native black Montanans. On August 14th, 1938, Alyce Driver married a young doctor from Butte named Walter Duncan, son of the mining city's first black doctor, John Duncan.²⁰ The two younger Driver boys both married daughters of Thaddeus and Frances Mundy of Helena. Woodrow Driver and Mary Alva Mundy were married on January 3, 1940.²¹ Two years later, Woodrow's younger brother Felix married Mary's younger sister Ruth Mundy.²² Felix later moved to Billings in the late 40s and worked as a piano tuner, as well as holding other odd service jobs.²³

During the 30s and 40s, Montana's African Americans, though dwindling in numbers, continued to press for political and social reform. Black Mason lodges and other fraternal clubs did their part in such matters, but arguably, the driving force and center of Montana's black community were its women's organizations. Alyce Driver Duncan soon became active in such clubs. Her new mother in law, Armeta Duncan helped found, and was later the president of the Montana State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. The MSFCWC, worked to promote education, the family, and the general enhancement of black women in the home and the community. This state-wide organization had a significant impact on the lives of African Americans in Montana, as they fought to quell prejudice in the community, pushed for civil rights legislation in the Capitol, and helped dozens of black students pay for college.²⁴ Alyce also had a deep love for learning. She attended Montana Tech for two years while working at St. James Hospital, and graduated with a degree as an X-ray technician. She also received a degree from the University of Montana Western in Dillion in secondary education, later becoming principle of the Basin Elementary School.²⁵

Woodrow not only stayed in western Montana after graduating from high school, but also decided to go to work for the Anaconda Company. The jobs on the hill were highly coveted, and historically, very few of Anaconda's black men had worked on the smelter. As the depression set in, smaller businesses could no longer support the workforce, and more and more people began turning to the more stable employers such as the massive Anaconda Company. However, the Company also felt the effects of the depression, and could not hire all who applied. African Americans and other minorities in Butte and Anaconda suffered the most during this time. Even so, Woodrow began work on the hill, eventually working at the foundry as a steelman. For this position, Woodrow joined the united steelworkers union, likely becoming one of the first black union members in Anaconda (likewise, Woodrow's son, Woody Driver, became the first black man in the state to receive his union card from the Teamsters some years later). Woodrow worked for the Company his entire life. He and Mary had four children together, Woody, John, Kenneth, and Alva. As his health started slipping, he retired to his home on the north side of Anaconda, at 117 N. Locust, a neighborhood where many African American families made their homes in the 20s and 30s. Woodrow would pass away in Missoula on April 24, 1969, at the age of 53.²⁶

¹⁶ Great Falls had racially predicated residential ordinances forcing blacks to live only in the Southside neighborhood.

¹⁷ 1910 and 1930 Montana Census Numbers (available online at <http://svcalt.mt.gov/research/AfricanAmerican/AfricanAmericanInMT.asp>).

¹⁸ "Dr. Paul Driver" *The Montana Standard*, September 15, 1974. Page 25, accessed online at Ancestry.com.

¹⁹ "History of Edward Waters College", available online at <http://www.ewc.edu/index.php/about-us/history>.

²⁰ "Marriage License for Walter Duncan and Alyce Driver" 8/14/1938. Accessed online at Ancestry.com.

²¹ "Marriage License for Woodrow Driver and Mary Mundy" 1/3/1940. Accessed online at Ancestry.com.

²² "Marriage License for Felix Driver and Ruth Mundy" 1/20/1942. Accessed online at Ancestry.com.

²³ R.L. Polk & Co, Polk's *Billings (Yellowstone County, Mont.) City Directories. 1947-1955 search for "Felix Driver"*.

²⁴ Christene Meyers, "Negro Women Talk Disbanding the Club," *Billings Gazette*, June 18, 1972.

²⁵ "Alyce Duncan Obituary" *The Independent Record*, Feb 21, 2009. (Accessed online at http://helenair.com/news/local/obituaries/alyce-marjorie-duncan/article_77176f28-0371-57e2-a44d-d2816d06def4.html).

²⁶ "Woodrow Driver Obituary" *The Anaconda Standard*, April 26, 1969. Page 8.

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One hundred and twenty years after arriving in the Deer Lodge Valley, the Drivers still have a lasting presence in the area. While the many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great, great-grandchildren of Lee Pleasant and Pearl Driver have spread out across the nation today, some still call Anaconda and Western Montana home. The history of their family encompasses much of Montana's history. The Drivers saw and participated in the end of the western Indian Wars, the social progressive era, the copper boom, and the labor movement, all while encountering the systematic racism that would carry through till the civil rights movement of the 1960s. They did not live separate from their fellow Montanans, instead, their past added to the fabric of the state's unique society. And though the state's early African Americans were but a small minority, their history illustrates the profound impact they had on Montana and the West.

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Information Sources/Bibliography

Ancestry.com searches for Lee Pleasant Driver and family included: Marriage License for Felix Driver and Ruth Mundy, 1/20/1942; Marriage License for Lee Driver and Pearl Payne, 9/3/1907; Marriage License for Walter Duncan and Alyce Driver, 8/14/1938; Marriage License for Woodrow Driver and Mary Mundy, 1/3/1940. U.S. Census, 1910, 1920, 1930 and 1940. Accessed online at www.ancestry.com.

Chroniclingamerica.loc.gov. Access to Historic Newspapers included: *The Anaconda Standard*, *The Billings Gazette*.

R.L. Polk & Co. *Polk's Anaconda (Deer Lodge, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co. 1902-1917.

R.L. Polk & Co. *Polk's Billings (Yellowstone County, Mont.) City Directories*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co. 1947-1955 search for "Felix Driver".

Newspapers

"Alyce Duncan Obituary" *The Independent Record*, Feb 21, 2009.

"Dr. Paul Driver" *The Montana Standard*, September 15, 1974. Page 25.

"Lee Pleasant Driver Obituary" *The Anaconda Standard*, Jan 12, 1935. Page 6.

"McDonald House Hold History of Freed Slaves Who Helped Settle Bozeman," *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, February 13, 2011.

"Negro Women Talk Disbanding the Club," *Billings Gazette*, June 18, 1972.

"Woodrow Driver Obituary" *The Anaconda Standard*, April 26, 1969. Page 8.

Websites

"History of Edward Waters College", available online at <http://www.ewc.edu/index.php/about-us/history>.

"History of Fisk College", available online at <http://www.fisk.edu/about/history>.

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Statement of Significance

The historic building at 104-106 Commercial Avenue that held the business of Lee Pleasant Driver is significant as a contributing structure to the Anaconda Commercial Historic District, a part of the Butte-Anaconda National Historic Landmark. Beyond the distinctions the building has for its ties to the early community and mining history of the city, it gains further significance for its deep association with both the local and state wide history of Montana's African American community. As the home to one of Anaconda's only and longest lasting black businesses, 104-106 Commercial remains as not only the finest example of a African American owned business in Anaconda, but also one of the few such properties that still exist in the state of Montana. In addition, the building stands as one of the only remaining structures associated the Driver family in Anaconda from the early 20th century. The history of the Lee Pleasant Driver and his children and their families is in many ways representative to the greater experiences of the African American community in Montana as a whole. For these reasons, the buildings at 104-106 Commercial should be considered at both the local and state level.

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Integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association)

The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historical and architectural significance. The building appears to have gone through only minor changes since construction, mostly including refurbishing and painting the first story exterior wood siding. The Romanesque detailing of the bricks at the top of the second story is intact, and remains as one of the only examples of such architecture in Anaconda today. As such, the design, materials and workmanship retain sufficient integrity. Though the store fronts are no longer owned or operated by members of the Driver family, the two units that comprise the bottom story of the structure are both utilized by local businesses. The other adjacent buildings on East Commercial and Main Street are historic, dating to roughly the same period in the late 1800s, giving building significant integrity of both feeling and association.

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Photographs



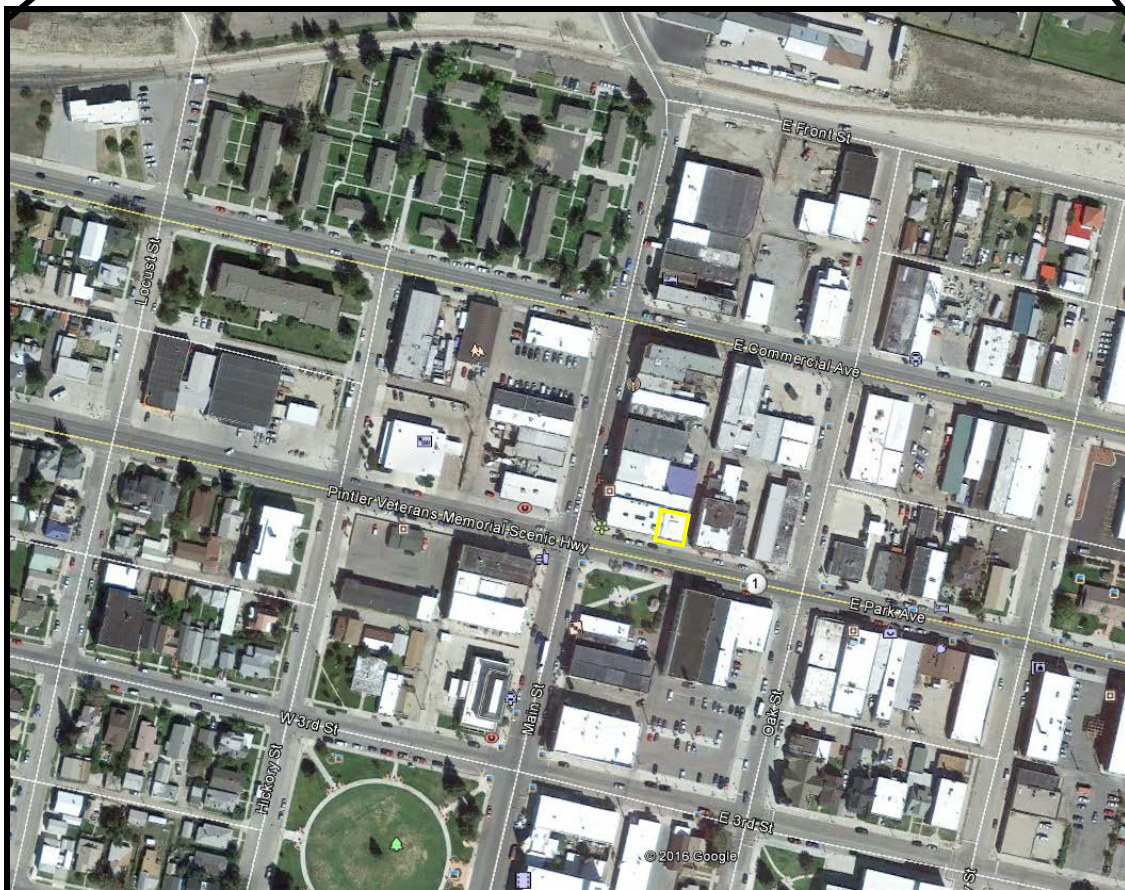
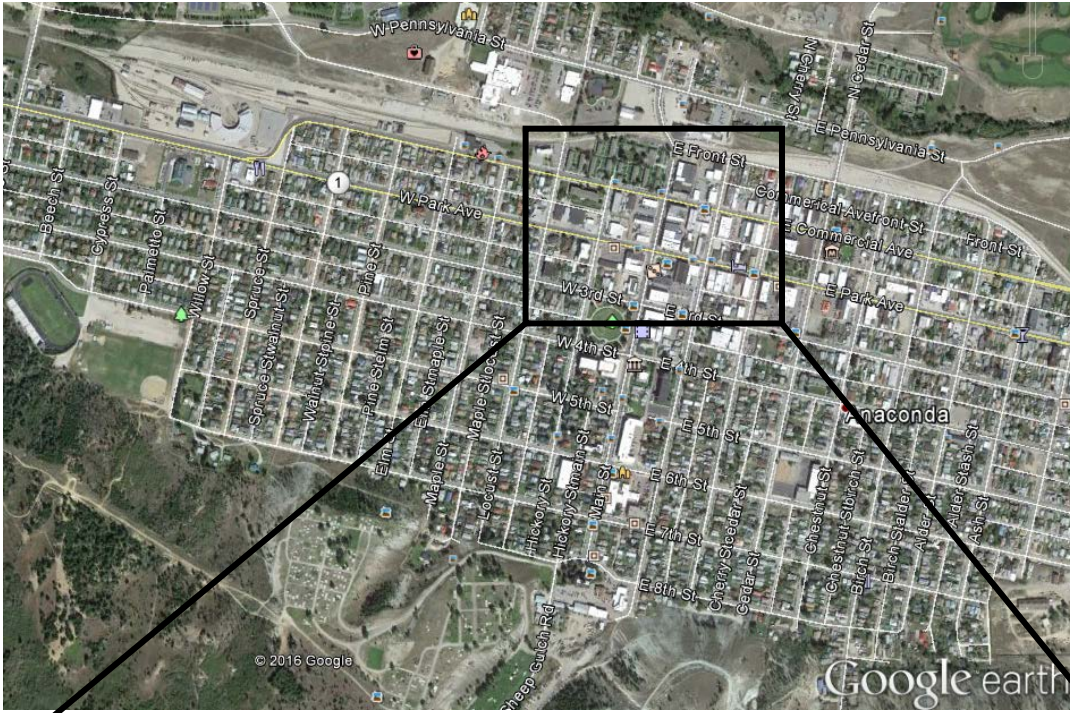
104-106 East Commercial
Anaconda, MT
South Façade, view North
Photograph from Google Earth

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Site Map/Aerial Photo



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Topographic Map

