

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1301 E Lockey
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **106 E. Broadway**

Historic Address (if applicable): **106/108 E. Broadway**

City/Town: **Helena**

Site Number: **24LC2429**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Lewis and Clark**

Historic Name: **Parchen Block**

Original Owner(s): **Henry M. Parchen**

Current Ownership Private Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Parchen Block, LLC**

Owner Address: **46 S Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601*4154**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **10 N** Range: **03 W**

$\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ **NW** $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section: **31**

Lot(s): **Parcel #49**

Block(s): **33**

Addition: **Helena Original Townsite** Year of Addition: **1869**

USGS Quad Name: **Helena** Year: **1992**

Historic Use: Commercial

Current Use: **Commercial**

Construction Date: Estimated Actual

Original Location Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov

NAD 27 or NAD 83(preferred)

Zone: **12 T** Easting: **420437.06** Northing: **5159753.25**

Geocode: **05-1888-31-2-36-03-0000**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date: **6/2/1972**

Historic District: **Helena Historic District**

NRHP Eligible: Yes No

Date of this document: **7/20/2016**

Form Prepared by: **Delia Hagen**

Address: **660 River Court, Missoula, MT 59801**

Daytime Phone: **(406) 360-0120**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: X yes no

Criteria: X A B C D

Date: 9/6/2016

Evaluator: Kate Hampton

Comments: Identifying Montana's African American Heritage Places Project.

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Architectural Description

Property Name: Parchen Block

Site Number: 24LC2429

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style: **Other:** If Other, specify:
Property Type: **Commerce** Specific Property Type:

Architect: **T.W. Welter** Architectural Firm/City/State:
Builder/Contractor: **unknown** Company/City/State:
Source of Information:

The property historically known as 108 E. Broadway Street (now 106 E. Broadway) occupies a rectangular parcel on the north side of E. Broadway Street and is centrally located within the block. The block is bordered by E. Broadway to the southeast, N. Cruse Ave to the east, and Jackson St. to the west. The building adjoins a multiple story historic commercial building on the west side and a contemporary single story commercial building on the east side. E. Broadway runs east-west on an eastern incline, and a small paved alleyway runs along the north end of the parcel. 108 E. Broadway is the only building located on the parcel, faces south, and takes up the entirety of the parcel. A city sidewalk runs along the south edge of the parcel. Two trees are located on the western side of the parcel, and are planted on the street side of the sidewalk. The building is located on a busy commercial street, in the heart of downtown Helena.

A commercial building, 108 E. Broadway is Romanesque Revival/Victorian Romanesque in style. This large, ornate building is three stories high, has a north-south oriented rectangular footprint and a mansard roof with two steeply-pitched front gable dormers. Roof features include a centrally located keyhole-dormer on the façade (south wall), which sits between the two gable-front dormers, pilaster caps with decorative molding, and heavy wood trim featuring curbs with decorated caps which sit atop the mansard roof. Cartouches are located within each façade dormer. Exterior walls are clad in brick with both concrete and wood ornamental detailing and trim. The building sits atop a rough stone and concrete foundation. All windows are wood-frame unless otherwise noted.

The façade (south wall) is divided into two retail spaces on the first floor and apartments and/or office space on the second and third. Fenestration includes three inset entrances on the first floor, all filled with wood French doors with fixed lights. Transom lights surround the entryways on top, and fixed windows line the first floor from ceiling to floor. Entrances are accessed by two concrete steps which adjoin the city sidewalks. The ground floor retail space is separated from the rest of the building by a cornice band which sits atop slender wood columns with Corinthian detailing. Two sets of three tall, rectangular windows are located on the second floor and are separated by brick pilasters with ornamented corbels. Each of the three windows is one-over-one double-hung, separated by ornamented mullions. The third floor features two sets of three windows. Within each set, the center window is a one-over-one double hung unit flanked by fixed one-over-one units. Each of the flanking windows displays an curved upper sash to accommodate the arched opening. Both sets feature brick arched lintels. The second floor windows and third floor windows are each separated by floral diaper bands.

Fenestration on the east wall features two rows of the three modified apartment entrances and windows with porches. Each porch is significantly inset within the building and has an arched cover. Ghosts of the original fenestration line the east wall. The southeast corner features original sign paintings on the brick. Roof features on the east side include a stepped parapet above a flat roof. Fenestration on the north side, which faces the rear alley, includes two rows of one-over-one double hung windows in their original fenestration pattern. The third floor features a row of five while the second row features a row of four. The ground floor includes an unadorned rear entrance, which is flanked by industrial-kitchen related vents and updated HVAC systems.

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History of Property

Property Name: Parchen Block

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HISTORY OF PROPERTY

This property was first platted in 1869 as Lot 3 of Block 33 of the Helena Original Townsite, along the northeast side of E. Broadway Street, southeast of its intersection with N. Jackson Street. Although tax records indicate the current building was built in 1890, it was actually constructed in 1886, in the midst of Helena's affluent boom period. In 1884, when the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company first mapped the neighborhood, Lot 3 (street numbers 4 and 5) was vacant, but by 1888 it contained the current building, then identified as 106 and 108 E. Broadway. At the time it was owned by its namesake, prominent local businessman Henry M. Parchen, who acquired Lot 3 in 1883 from William H. Allen.¹ Parchen likely contracted to have the lavish two-part commercial block that bore his name constructed shortly thereafter, reportedly hiring the architect T. W. Welter (or Shaffer & Welter) to complete it. The Parchen Block, as the property came to be known, remained in the Parchen family for over 50 years.

During that time, in typical two-part commercial block fashion, the building housed a variety of businesses and individuals. Originally, the street level housed W. E. Norris & Bro. Confectioners on the 106 side and a "composing" business on the 108 side, with an "independent printers" (ie. Independent Newspaper Publishing Co.) in the basement, and offices on the upper level. This arrangement endured for several years, and by 1892 Sanborn Maps offered a more detailed portrait of the building's occupants, which included candy making and an ice cream parlor on the street level of 106 with offices on the second floor and "sleeping rooms" on the third, and an "independent printing" business in the 108 section.

By 1902, at least, a portion of the building was being used by members of Helena's African-American community. That year, M. Oliver J. Arnett, was listed living at 106 ½ E. Broadway, where he worked as a janitor in the building.² By 1908 Arnett was holding down two jobs while he lived at 106 ½ E. Broadway, continuing to serve as the building's janitor while also working at Salsburg & Arnett, Tailors, located in 108 E. Broadway. That year his business partner, Harry E. Salsburg, lived at 534 Spencer. By 1909, Salsburg was living in the building as well.

Shortly thereafter, the Salsburg & Arnett tailoring partnership seems to have dissolved. In 1910, when census takers enumerated the inhabitants of the Parchen Block, they noted Pennsylvania-born Arnett, 49, living in 106 ½ and working as a "janitor" at an "apartment house." Missouri-born Salsburg, 26, and his wife Ada E., 27, lived at 108 E. Broadway. Both were both listed as "proprietors" of The Broadway Suitatorium at that address, offering "Cleaning Dyeing and Pressing of Ladies' and Gentlemen's Clothing." That year, the local black *Plaindealer* newspaper boasted of "the Broadway Suitatorium conducted by Harry Salsburg," calling it "one of the neatest in the West . . . located in the center of the city & in one of the largest buildings."

Living with the Salsburgs that year was Robert Wheeler (likely Salsburg's nephew), a 27 year-old African-American native of Missouri.

Harry Salsburg and his wife Ada appear to have split up around that time. By 1911, Ada alone (living at 317 Hauser) was listed as proprietor of the Broadway Suitatorium, which had moved to 15 N. Park, and in 1912 Harry E. Salsburg was noted in Spokane, possibly with a woman named Willa. Arnett remained at 106 ½ E. Broadway that year, where he continued to work as a janitor.

Shortly thereafter, Arnett moved on as well, as had Robert Wheeler. By 1915, Robert Wheeler was living in the Gans Block and working as a barber at F.A. Newton's. Three years later, Arnett could be found living at 515 2nd Street, where he remained for many years, and working as a laborer. Ada Salsburg, too, had moved again by then. She continued to operate The Broadway Suitatorium through at least 1915, and likely lived adjacent to the business at 19 N. Park. The following year, Ada remarried, becoming Mrs. Judge D. Hart, and directories listed her living at 113 E. State. If she

¹ Allen acquired lot 3 and lot 4 in 1873 from John R. Truman. Truman acquired it from a probate judge, M.F. Truett, in August 1869.

² The year before, city directories listed Arnett at 104 N. Ewing and working as a "laborer." In 1895, Arnett could be found living in the Atlas Block and working as a porter at The Helena Hotel.

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History of Property

Property Name: Parchen Block

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continued to own The Broadway Suitatorium, she no longer managed it: in 1916, the business, still located at 19 N. Park, was managed by William F. Green of 1012 8th Avenue.

The Parchen family retained their eponymous block until 1935, when H. S. Parchen conveyed it to Sophia Marino.³ The block had by then gone through a series of tenants—in 1930 the LDS church occupied 106 while a store occupied 108. Marino owned it until she died some 35 years later (during the 1950s, at least, both sides were occupied by stores), and in 1971 the estate of Sophia Marino Cavallari deeded it to the City of Helena. Around that time a grocery occupied part of the building. In 1979 the City conveyed the property to the Parchen Partnership, and the building was rehabilitated that year. Space in the building was subsequently used, in 1989 at least, for a restaurant and apartments. By the 1990s the property had been replatted during the third subdivision of the Last Chance Revision of the Helena Townsite, becoming Parcel #49 of C.O.S. 263163, and by 1998 the Parchen Partnership became Parchen Block, LLC. Judging from title records, people who may have had an ownership interest in the Parchen Partnership and its successor include Pearl and Richard Bourke, Joyce Jacobson, Donna Sinott, David S. Paull, Robert J. Kiesling, and Christine Nielson, among others.

³ This is likely really Henry B. Parchen, who acquired title from Henry M. Parchen in 1924.

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Information Sources/Bibliography

Property Name: Parchen Block

Site Number: 24LC2429

INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Hagen, Delia. "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: African- American Heritage Places in Helena, MT," 2016.

Helena, City of, Town Plats

1869 Original Townsite

1992 Third subdivision of Last Chance Revision of Helena Original Townsite (COS #263163)

Lewis and Clark, County of. Clerk and Recorder's Office, property title records.

Lewis and Clark County, Clerk of Court Office, marriage records.

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Statement of Significance

Property Name: Parchen Block

Site Number: 24LC2429

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date: **6/2/1972**

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

NRHP Criteria: A B C D

Area of Significance: **Ethnic Heritage & Social History** Period of Significance: **1902-1910**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Occupied in 1908-1910 by a series of black-owned businesses, the Parchen Block at 106-108 E. Broadway is significant under NRHP Criterion A (local level) as a commercial and residential property associated with the history of African-American people in Helena, MT. The two-part commercial block housed black residents, and employed them, by at least 1902, when M.O.J. Arnett lived there and worked as the building's janitor. Arnett was a longtime prominent member of the local black community. He served, for instance, as an alternate delegate to the Republican county convention (1894), an officer of the Manhattan Club, the local private black social organization, a founder of "the Afro-American Protective League [started in 1909] to bring political pressure in defense of black rights," and an honorary pallbearer at the funeral of Miles York (1925). Black businesses had operated in the vicinity of the Parchen Block at various times—in 1892 Walter Dorsey ran a restaurant next door at 104 Broadway—and when Arnett opened a tailoring shop in the building, in partnership with Harry Salsburg, ca. 1908, the building became visibly associated with the black community and the black business sector that thrived during the heyday of that community. The black business sector tended to focus on a few trades and occupations, and tailoring/dry-cleaning and related endeavors were primary among them. The building is thus associated with the heyday of Helena's, and Montana's, African-American community, ca. 1875-1910. The property's period of significance is the period during which it was known to be occupied by African-American people and/or their businesses, ie. 1902-1910.

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Integrity

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

The Parchen Block retains a high degree of integrity. Its location and setting remain intact, as do its materials, design, and workmanship. While the windows at the storefront level date to the mid-20th century, this change does not render the building ineligible. The building remains in mixed use – both commercial at the street level and professional offices above, contributing to its integrity of feeling and association.

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Photographs

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Feature #
Facing: N

Description: South elevation

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Site Map

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Property:

Parchen Block

106 E Broadway, Helena, MT 59601

Lewis and Clark County

Geocode: 05-1888-31-2-36-03-0000

UTM: 12 / 420437.06 E / 5159753.25 N

Lat 46.586639 / Long -112.038551

R10N R3W NW ¼ of Sec 31

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Topographic Map

Property Name: Parchen Block

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Property:

Parchen Block

106 E Broadway, Helena, MT 59601

Lewis and Clark County

Geocode: 05-1888-31-2-36-03-0000

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