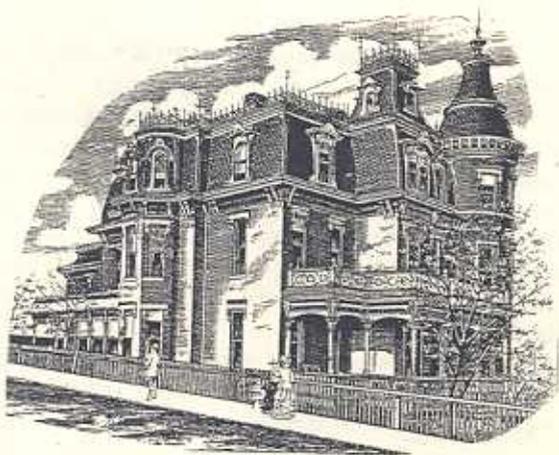


# Helena's West Side

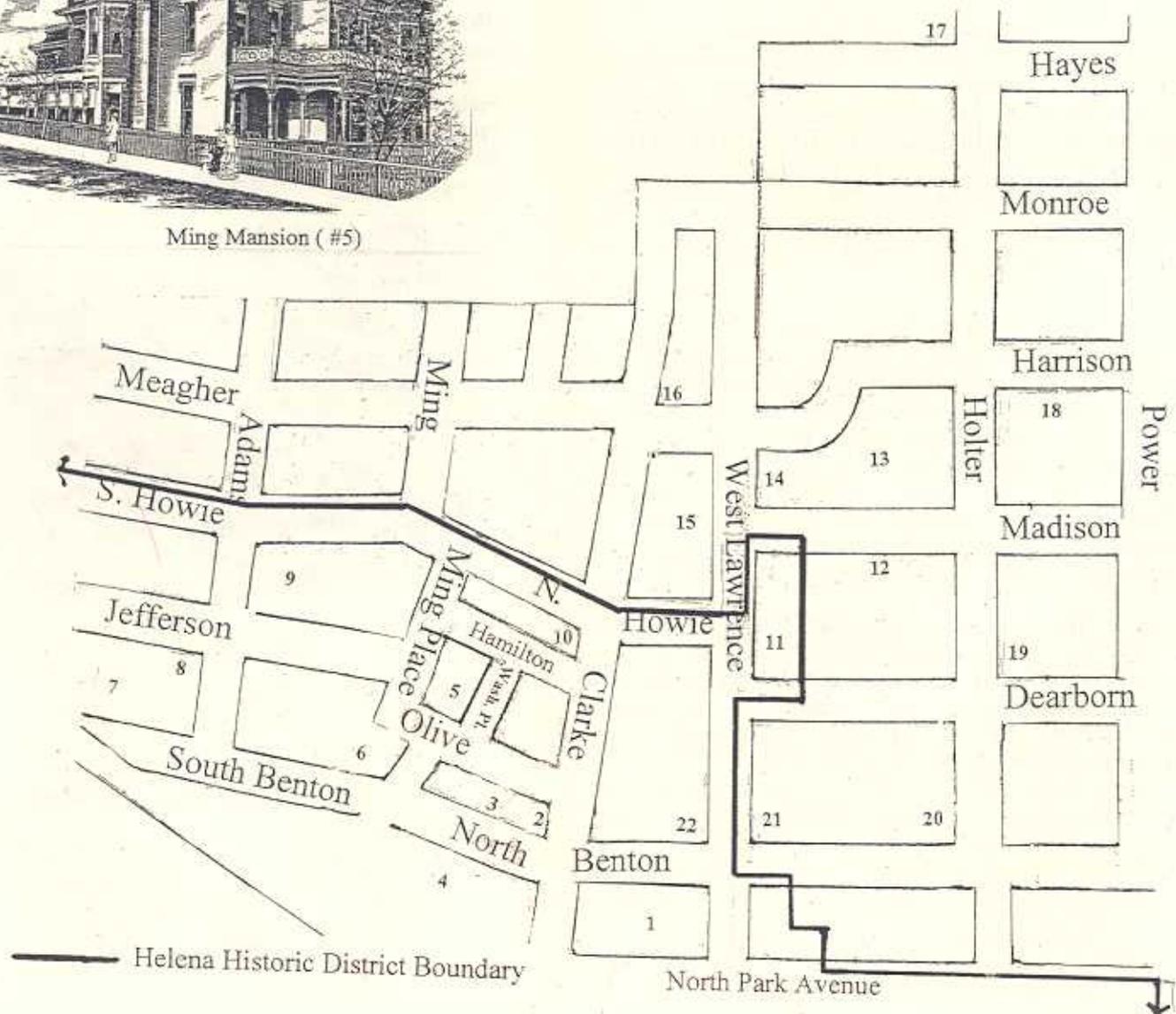
The Helena Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, emended in 1989 and 1993, includes downtown, the Rodney Street neighborhood to the east, a detached section of the West Side mansion district to the north, and the southeast quarter of this tour area contiguous to downtown. The partial boundary is noted on the map. A few district properties on the West Side have National Register signs displayed; those have not been further interpreted here, but have been identified.

It is important to know what has been to appreciate what has been preserved. This short survey includes descriptions of some early landmarks that no longer stand. They and their respective owners are significant to the history of the community and help to present a fuller picture of the Helena that once was. Fortunately, careful owners have beautifully preserved many early homes. Although space here allows discussion of only a few, each home has its own history and its place in the story of the community.

As you wander about the legacy left by both prominent and lesser-known pioneers, take note of the stunning architecture, but also pay attention to the more modest dwellings, numerous apartment buildings, former boarding houses, outbuildings, and carriage houses that recall a bygone era. Take time to enjoy, explore, and make your own discoveries.



Ming Mansion (#5)



### 1) 316 N. Park City-County Building—1900-1903

Payne's Hotel, a wood-frame false-front structure, was a fixture on this corner from 1870 until it was razed to make way for Helena's first Federal Building in 1900. The hotel had a huge corral across Park Avenue where most of Helena's horse-trading was done. Helenan Norman Holter fondly recalled that, as a boy, he spent many evenings sitting on the corral fence observing the negotiations. Contrary to common belief, this residential section of Benton Avenue was not an extension of the Benton Road and never saw heavy ox-drawn freight wagon traffic. In fact, Benton Avenue dead-ended just beyond the May Butler House (see #7). Teams took up so much room that freighters kept their animals overnight in the flat areas northeast of town and brought them into town to unload via a more northeasterly route. This building was completed in 1903 housing the federal court and offices until 1977 when a new facility replaced it and city-county offices moved in.

### 2) 303 Clarke and 307 Clarke

Both homes have National Register interpretive signs displayed.

### 3) 40 N. Benton—c. 1879

A prime example of a family home converted to multi-family housing during the 1890s, the distinctive Italianate style architecture is indicative of Helena's earliest substantial buildings. In 1900, the boardinghouse keeper employed a Chinese cook and a servant who saw to the needs of her seven lodgers. Like many of Helena's early brick buildings, this one received its stucco after devastating earthquakes caused widespread local damage in 1935.

### 4) 29 N. Benton—demolished

Dr. E. S. Kellogg set up practice in 1885 and from 1895 to his death in 1915 was proprietor of a private hospital specializing in abdominal and obstetric diseases and surgeries. The only private hospital in Helena, it boasted the latest "antiseptic and aseptic" surgeries, graduate nurses, and first-class cuisine. The community was divided over Dr. Kellogg's reputation. Twice he was tried and acquitted of performing "illegal" operations (i.e., abortions) in which the female patient died. Thomas Walsh (see #10) defended him in 1900; in 1901, Dr. B. C. Brooke, (see #6) testified against him. The building, later converted to apartments, stood until after 1953.

### 5) 6 Olive Street—1883; demolished in the 1930s

John Ming is best known for his fine 1880 opera house on Jackson Street where famous actors and entertainers of the 1880s and 1890s played en route to Portland and St. Paul. Remodeled in 1915, it now serves as the Consistory Shrine Temple. Ming's impressive home had 22 rooms and all the latest innovations including gas pipes that delivered furnace heat to every room and plate-glass windows with the newest invention: weighted sashes. Ming died in 1887 and the home passed out of the family after 1900.

### 6) 12 S. Benton Avenue—c. 1889

Dr. Benjamin C. Brooke was a third-generation physician who pioneered medicine in Montana. He arrived in Virginia City from St. Louis in 1863 and came to Helena in 1865 where he set up a successful practice. He was a fine doctor, but even his skills could not save two of his small daughters who died of diphtheria in 1885. Dr. Brooke died in 1891, estranged from his wife, but his son and grandson, both of whom grew up here in the family home, carried on family tradition by becoming doctors. Built of locally quarried blue granite, the raised first floor adds impressive height. Queen Anne style elements include the magnificent tower, wraparound porch, and multi-paned windows. During the early 1880s, before the Brooke house was built, the Helena Skating Amphitheater directly across the street provided entertainment for Helena youth.

### 7) 128 S. Benton Avenue—c. 1879

National Register interpretive marker displayed.

### 8) 221 Adams—c. late 1860s; extensively remodeled

Martin and Louise Maginnis were very early residents of this neighborhood. Longtime friend Mary Ronan wrote that the Maginnises in the early 1870s, "in their rambling cottage with unexpected steps up or down into equally unexpected rooms, were as refined and cultured and gracious as anybody one meets today." Maginnis was a U.S. congressman and senator, a well-known orator, a prominent attorney, and a staunch Irishman largely responsible for the procurement of the statue of Thomas Francis Meagher in front of the Montana State Capitol. Although substantially altered, the Maginnis home was incorporated into the present residence.

### 9) 22 Jefferson—1885; burned to the ground in 1988

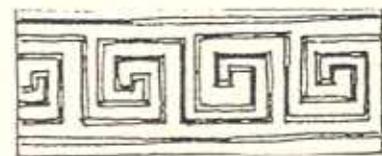
Stone retaining walls are the only remnant of the elegant mansion that once covered this block. Contractor Albert Kleinschmidt built the huge home for his wife and family of nine children. The family moved to California in 1907 and the mansion stood empty until 1927 when it became the Helena Florence Crittenton Home, sheltering as many as 55 young women and 30 children at any given time until 1974. Facilities included a nursery, maternity hospital, dormitory, and private rooms for wives or widows of servicemen.

### 10) 343 Clarke Street

Attorney Thomas J. Walsh established a fine reputation handling cases for injured workers although he did not them win all. He also defended Harry Anderson, the young arsonist who destroyed the first Montana Club in 1903, negotiating his sentence to the boys' correctional facility at Miles City instead of the penitentiary. Walsh was elected U.S. senator in 1912 and gained national attention when he exposed the Teapot Dome scandal in 1924 that sent Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall to the penitentiary. Franklin Roosevelt appointed Walsh attorney general in 1932, but Walsh died on the train en route to Washington, D.C., in 1933. Walsh died at 74 of natural causes but some, including family members, have speculated that his death was suspicious. The Queen Anne style home originally had a sweeping veranda that wrapped around the east side; a third story open porch sat atop the tower. A granite mounting block inscribed with "Walsh" and a hitching post recall that horses were essential in the early 1900s.

### 11) 418 West Lawrence and 400 Dearborn—1887

Louis Kaufman and Louis Stadler were close friends and longtime business partners in the OH Ranch near Utica, Montana. Artist Charlie Russell worked at the OH during the disastrous winter of 1886-87. When Kaufman inquired about his livestock, Russell responded in a letter with the famous drawing of a starving cow titled *Waiting for a Chinook*. Each home expresses a different aspect of the fashionable Queen Anne style, and both have beautifully finished interiors. The Kaufmans and the Stadlers shared the carriage house that included one side for the horses and carriages of each family.



**12) 407 Madison—c. 1890**

Hugh Kirkendall was a freighter, teamster, and general contractor well known to Helena's pioneer community. He was involved in many freighting ventures. It was he who held the lantern for surgeons operating on casualties during the Battle of the Big Hole in 1877 and then conveyed the wounded to Helena and Fort Shaw. He and his wife, Isabella, settled in this wood frame home circa 1890. Kirkendall died quite suddenly while on a picnic with his wife in 1897. At the time, he was engaged in hauling materials for construction of the Canyon Ferry Dam. Isabella remained active and was elected first president of the Florence Crittenton Home's board of directors in 1900. She walked daily to the first Crittenton home on Hauser (now the Cottonwood Apartments) to help the matron with housework and sometimes personally paid maternity fees for destitute "inmates."



Old Hawthorne School (#13)

**13) 416 Madison—1921**

The first Hawthorne School was a two-room building established on this site in 1879. In 1882, separate schools for African-American children were discontinued in Helena and Hawthorne was integrated. A typical classroom included 50 to 75 students. In 1887, the school was substantially enlarged and in 1888, African-American residents received permission to use one of Hawthorne's rooms for church services. Overcrowding in 1920 prompted the rebuilding of many of Helena's older schools. Despite public outcry, old Hawthorne was razed and this building replaced it in 1921. Inside, ramps instead of stairs access the several floors. Its top story was lost to the 1935 earthquakes and not replaced.

**14) 454 West Lawrence—c. 1887**

A graduate of Chicago's prestigious Rush Medical College, Dr. William Treacy set up practice in Helena in 1886. He pioneered the use of antiseptics and was the first in Helena to perform surgery using sterilized instruments and aseptic techniques. Previously, simple washing was the standard method. He and his wife Isa built this home and filled it with art, especially paintings by Ralph DeCamp. Dr. Treacy took care of artist C. M. Russell and the artist recuperated here in the 1890s when he broke his leg. In gratitude, Russell gave the family *The Antelope Hunt*, painted in 1897. The painting was donated to the Montana Historical Society in 1974. Dr. Treacy died in 1912, but Isa kept the house until 1935.

**15) 427 West Lawrence—c. 1879**

W. O. Whipps, teller for the Merchants National Bank, reputedly built the first home on the south side of Lawrence here on this lot. Attorney Odell McConnell bought the home in the mid-1890s and twice extensively remodeled the original modest house, once at the turn of the twentieth century and again in 1916 when the McConnells' daughter was married. In 1922, Judge Llewellyn L. Callaway purchased the property when he was appointed to the Supreme Court to fill the unexpired term of Judge Theodore Brantly (See #17). He served on the bench until 1935.

**16) 302 Harrison—c. 1890**

From 1897, noted musician Madame Marie Ericke made her home and ran a studio here where she gave music lessons to several generations of Helena youth and rehearsed her several orchestras. Madame began her career at age six and was a renowned violinist. She played for many crowned heads of state in Europe before coming to Helena in 1890. No social event was a success without beautiful Madame and her violin. Her first musician-husband, Ernest, died in 1913 and Madame married bachelor Jake Zimmerman, a former boarder of the Erickes. Zimmerman was a fine musician-arranger and first director of the State Capital Band. He died in 1921. Madame outlived yet a third husband and lived next door in her last years. She died alone in 1940, surrounded by mementos, perhaps unaware of how many mourned her passing.

**17) 801 Holter—c. 1890**

Appointed chief justice of the Supreme Court in 1898, prominent Deer Lodge attorney Theodore Brantly moved into this impressive home in 1905. The judge, whose family name is etched in the sidewalk, was a workaholic and spent his spare time researching family history up in his third floor office. The judge spent little time with his wife and three children and later regretted his obsession with work. He died in 1922, and the home remained in the family until 1963. Since then, it has become well known for supernatural phenomenon. Residents have reported hearing the judge's footsteps incessantly trudging up the three floors to his office and other manifestations.

**18) 501-515 Harrison—mid-1880s**

These three charming multi-family dwellings, nearly identical, typically housed two families each. Individual tenants like Miss Millie Davie, at #511 in 1890, offered furnished rooms to boarders. Also in 1890, Dr. E. S. Kellogg (see #4) resided at #509 and Leslie Sulgrove occupied #507. Sulgrove was a journalist and librarian at the public library. From the mid-1890s, his wife conducted a popular dance academy attended by most Helena youth. Mrs. Sulgrove required every boy to wear one white glove so his partner's dress wouldn't get dirty.

**19) 504 Dearborn—1873**

John Stedman brought his bride, Alice, to this home in 1873. It was one of the first in this neighborhood. Stedman established the first planing mill in Helena in 1870 and the Stedman Foundry in 1878 which he managed until his death. The foundry near Spring Meadow Lake is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and now houses the new Montana Wildlife Center where orphaned or injured animals are rehabilitated and returned to the wild. The Stedman home, originally a modest one-and-one-half stories, was extensively enlarged and remodeled between 1892 and 1930.

**20) 448 N. Benton Avenue—pre-1888; converted in 1930**

Helena was once known as the City of Churches for its many houses of worship. The First Congregational Church organized locally in 1883. This building was its second church, constructed between 1884 and 1888. Its bell tower was originally on the northeast corner. The church was enlarged circa 1910 and the tower moved to the center. In 1930, contractor Albert DeKay purchased the church. His son, architect Norman DeKay, converted the church into nine three-room apartments. Norman DeKay's work includes the current Helena Middle School on Ewing and the former National Guard Armory at Main and Euclid.



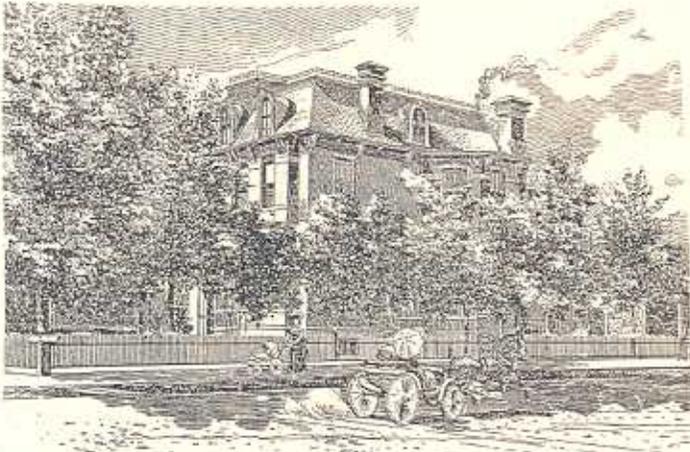
First Congregational Church (#20)

**21) 404 Benton Avenue—1877**

The Christmas Gift Evans House, outside the Helena Historic District, is independently listed in the Register; interpretive marker is displayed.

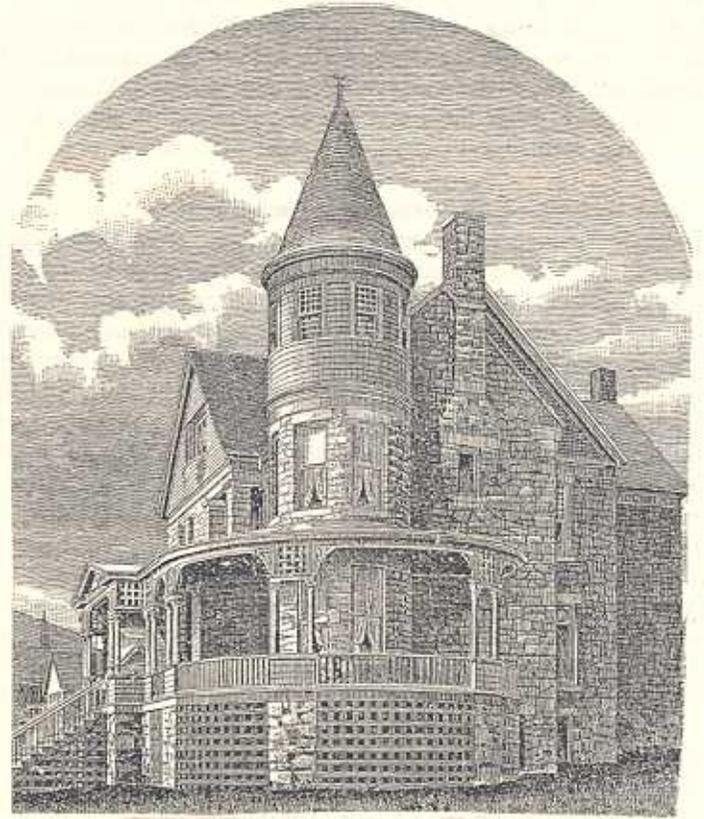
**22) 238 N Benton—mid-1880s; razed 1960s**

Thomas Cruse purchased the beautiful home that once stood on this corner from T. C. Power in 1886 in part because he believed it was bad luck to live in a house he built for himself. Despite the purchase, the wealthy Irishman led a tragic life. His wife died soon after moving in and left him the single parent of a newborn infant. His wayward daughter, Mamie, had a sheltered childhood, grew up rebellious, and died in 1913 amid scandal. Cruse, the major benefactor in the building of St. Helena Cathedral, died as it was being finished. His was the first funeral mass said in the new church in 1914. The fence that once encircled his yard now borders the Lewis and Clark Library; it is a strange tribute to a man who reputedly could not read and had no use for education.



Thomas Cruse Mansion (#22)

# *A Short Tour of Helena's Historic West Side Neighborhood*



Dr. B. C. Brooke Residence

This brochure prepared by  
Ellen Baumler, Interpretive Historian  
and  
Joyce Kronholm, Research Assistant  
Montana Historical Society  
225 North Roberts  
Helena, MT 59620  
2003

*Montana Historical Society*  
2003