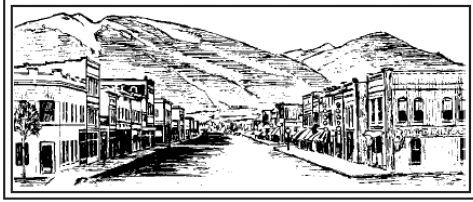


## HISTORIC



# H DOWNTOWN HAMILTON

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## THE HAMILTON RECORD

A Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Hamilton - 2006

Downtown Hamilton was a bustle of activity as the city's population grew from 1,800 to 3,000 between 1907 and 1911. This photograph was taken on Labor Day in 1910 of the first block of Main Street at the corner of First Street, also known as Highway 93. The Bitter Root Steam Laundry is on the right.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*



### THE 100 BLOCK OF MAIN STREET

**100 Main Street:** Site of the Bitter Root Steam Laundry  
*Citizens State Bank*

The Bitter Root Steam Laundry was housed in a two-story brick building that stood on this corner from 1907 until the 1950's when it was razed to make room the present bank. It was owned and operated by C. E. Hartley who purchased Hamilton's first steam laundry, initially located on South Second Street, and moved it here. The laundry had a whistle that called employees to work at 8 A.M., marked the noon hour and the end of the workday at 5 P.M. It also had a horse named "King" who pulled the laundry wagon, picking up and delivering clothes. King had a weakness for ice cream, eating all he could get. One day, while delivering laundry at the Ravalli Hotel, King got into a container of whipping cream, eating a whole gallon and enraging the hotel pastry cook.

**110 -120 Main Street:** The Peterson Block  
*Wagner & Moore Emporium, Atlas Travel*

Andrew Peterson (one of 7 Swedish brothers who moved here in 1906) built this two-story brick building in 1911. The main floor housed the Brunswick Barber Shop, Billiard Parlor and Card Room, and the Valley Liquor Store. The second floor was the European Hotel, operated by Peterson until 1935. The east portion of this building was razed in the 1950's to make room for what is now Citizens State Bank. The remaining structure still reflects the past.

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**126 Main Street:** Blindaur Building  
*Main Street Rug Company*

Peter Blindaur, and his nephew Nicolas, built this two-story building in 1910 for commercial use when the “apple boom” rekindled Hamilton’s economic growth. It retains much of its original architectural character of clean lines, recessed door, and large display windows.

**128 - 132 Main Street:** The Burns Block  
*Mini Mall: The Romantic Connection, Cliff’s Coral, Montana Gold Realty, Bitterroot Blooms Florist, Baker Mortgage*

Frank Burns erected this two-story brick building around 1900. He emigrated from Scotland and was one of Hamilton’s first businessmen, a member of the first fire department and also served as mayor in the late 1930’s. Burns had a store here that carried everything from jewelry, perfume and candy to fishing supplies and tobacco. The second floor was a dance hall. In 1929 it was the location of the J.C. Penny department store. In the 1940’s it was used as an appliance store, while the upstairs became apartments. The original style of this building is still visible despite some alterations.



This was the bar of the Brunswick Billiard Parlor, located in the Peterson block.  
*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

**134 Main Street:** Originally the Montana Cafe  
*Ford Annex*

When the original wood building burned in 1920 Mr. Burns built the present one-story brick building. The Montana Cafe was owned and operated by Chinese families for 60 years from the 1920’s. Harry Hom was born in China, and moved to Hamilton with his uncle. He worked in the cafe in the 1940’s before becoming its owner in 1952. The Homs retired from business in 1983. Hank Williams Jr. featured this building on the cover of one of his albums.

The brick parapet remains intact and gives an indication of the character and style of a 1920’s brick building although the storefront was completely altered when it became an annex to the Ford Building.



Frank L. Burns, jeweler and proprietor, seen standing watch in his store, circa 1935. He built the Burn’s Block, which is now known as the Mini Mall. *Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

**136 Main Street:** Ford Building  
*Ford’s Department Store*

The early wood buildings on this location burned in 1920, and were replaced by a corner Standard Oil service station. In 1947 the existing building was built for Ford’s Federated, a clothing department store that is still owned and operated by the Ford family. It was built along the same commercial style popular in pre-war buildings, using variegated brick in a running bond pattern.



# Hamilton Commercial Historical District

*is listed in the*  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF  
HISTORIC PLACES

Downtown Hamilton has many buildings of historical importance and rich architectural heritage.

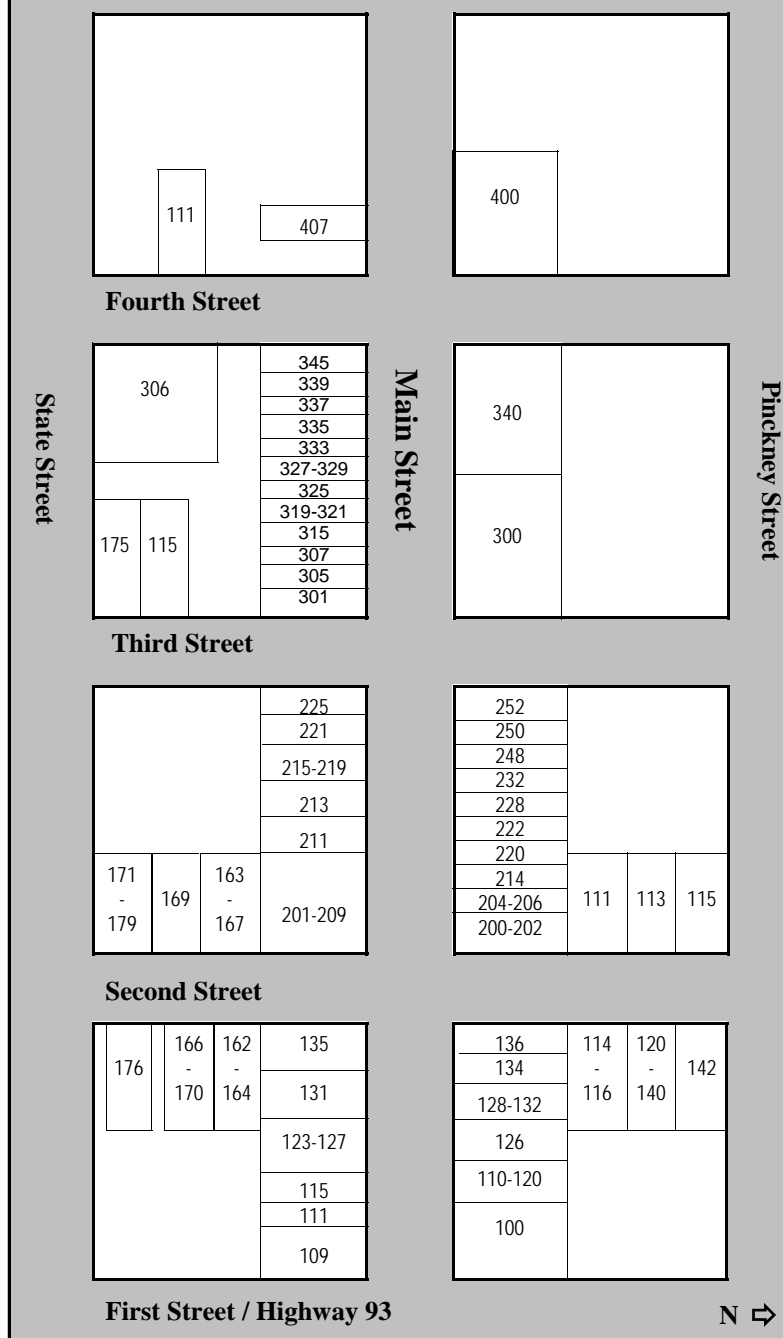
The buildings date from the 1890's to the present and coincide with the economic booms of the city. They include 1890-1894 "boomtown" wooden structures with false fronts, early commercial brick structures from the Marcus Daly era of 1895-1905, the "Big Ditch" and "Apple" booms from 1907-1917, the establishment of the Rocky Mountain Laboratory which generated the Art Deco and Moderne structures of the 1930's to the 50's, and a few more recent buildings.

Brick predominates, with a variety of accents from insets to cornices. Some of the oldest buildings retain pressed metal ceilings, leaded glass transoms, recessed entrances, and other distinctive features.

This is the first block of Main Street in 1898, at the intersection of what is now Highway 93. The building on the left is the Hotel Hamilton. Notice the original wood frame buildings that lined the entire street.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

## Tour Map of Downtown Hamilton



**109 Main Street:** Site of the Hotel Hamilton  
*Silver Coin Casino*

The Hotel Hamilton was the first building in the downtown area. H.S. Page moved it to this site by flatcar in 1890 from Riverside (2 miles north of here). It burned in 1892 and Mr. Page replaced it with a wood frame building with a blacksmith shop and livery behind the hotel. In 1900 a fire swept through most of the businesses on this block and the hotel and livery were destroyed. In 1901 it was replaced by a new two-story brick hotel designed by architect John Kent, who designed the Montana State Capital. This building had hot water heat, electric lights and bells, 47 rooms, an office, barbershop, parlors, dining room, barroom, kitchen, and a large storage area. A newspaper of the day, the RAVALLI COUNTY DEMOCRAT, boasted: "The first building to greet the eyes on alighting from the train, it is certain to give a good first impression to the visitors to Hamilton". Louis Peterson eventually acquired the hotel from the Page estate. It remained in use as a hotel under various names until it was torn down in the 1960's.

**111 Main Street:** Originally the Scandia Saloon  
*Ponderosa Bar*

This two-story brick building has been a saloon or cafe for most of its existence. Louis Peterson and his 7 Swedish brothers constructed it around 1901. The Scandia Saloon soon became the headquarters of his Swedish countrymen throughout the valley. In the 1920's E. L. Sanderson had his hardware store here. Jens and Karen Nygardd operated the Silver Grill in the 1940's. Although the first floor storefront has been altered the upper story still retains its original character.

**115 Main Street:** The O'Brien Block  
*Coldwell Banker Western States Association*

Erected in 1910 by William O'Brien, this two-story masonry building was originally the O'Brien Hotel where O'Brien, an Irishman, flew an Irish flag from the second story window on St. Patrick's Day. The Owl Saloon and men's card room were on the main floor. Boldt's Emporium, a clothing store, was located here in the 1920's. This is an excellent example of the neo-classical revival style popular in early 1900's storefronts and it retains much of its original character.

**123 - 127 Main Street:** The Daly Block  
*Signal Square: Forrest Weeks Insurance; Montana Mortgage Company; Steve N. Eschenbacher Attorney at Law; Stenerson Law Office; Charles E. Umhey III Attorney at Law; Saliwanchik, Lloydd & Saliwanchik, Colleen Wall-Hoebe, Phd*

The Bitterroot Stock Farm erected this building in 1908 at a cost of \$10,000. It was designed for Margaret Daly by Missoula architect A. J. Gibson, who also designed the old County Court House (now the Ravalli County Museum), and the old City Hall (now the Fire Department). Three shop spaces were located on the main floor and there were 22 rooms on the second story. Those in the front were used for office space while the ones in the back were living quarters. Japanese families owned the Model Cafe, a main floor occupant, for over 20 years until the outbreak of World War II. In 1942 it became the Victory Cafe, and later the Rogers Cafe. This neo-Classical style building has undergone numerous changes that have altered the original appearance of the ground floor.



The view looking west up Main Street at the corner of First Street in 1927 when Main Street was paved with concrete. On the right corner is the Bitter Root Steam Laundry and the Hotel Hamilton is on the left.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*



The first block of Main Street, circa 1915. The Peterson, Blindaur and Burns buildings can be seen on the right, The Hotel Hamilton is on the left corner and further down the street are the O'Brien, Daly, and "Yellow Front" buildings as well as the Lucas Opera House.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **131 Main Street: Yellow Front** *Signal Bar, Sapphire Suites*

One of 2 original wood frame business buildings left on Main Street, this two-story structure was erected in 1892 when it housed the Hamilton Restaurant and, later, the Grand Park Oyster and Chop Shop. The upstairs rooms were used for meetings. Although it housed restaurants and saloons through much of its history, the building acquired the name "Yellow Front" while it was a drug store from 1917 to about 1930 because the front was painted yellow. By the 1920's the back of the building was the site of the Frogge Pool Room and Arthur Holt opened the Signal Bar. The appearance of the building has changed considerably over the years and little remains of its original appearance.

#### **The January 5, 1893 edition of the BITTER ROOT TIMES boasted that Hamilton had the following businesses:**

- 1 drug store
- 4 hotels
- 5 restaurants
- 1 clothing and gent's furnishings
- 2 fruit and confectionery stores
- 1 bookstore
- 1 weekly newspaper
- 3 public halls
- 2 blacksmith shops
- 3 butcher shops
- 1 wallpaper store
- 2 carpentry shops
- 2 millinery shops
- 2 dressmaking establishments
- 3 barber shops
- 3 livery stables

### **135 Main Street: Downing Building - Site of the Lucas Opera House**

*Hamilton Pharmacy, The Kitchen, Blondies Salonne, Hearing Instrument Specialists*

This site was once home to the two-story brick Lucas Opera House, which Sam Lucas built in 1895 at the request of Marcus Daly, at a cost of \$30,000. The first floor housed the Valley Clothing Store. The Opera House was located on the second floor with seating for 400 people. From 1895 - 1900 Marcus Daly and Sam Lucas hosted the annual Copper and Green Ball, which was the social event of the year.

One can imagine that every seat was full in 1909, when Arctic explorer Frederick A. Cook fell into a heated debate with 2 Darby residents who had accompanied him on his trip to the North Pole and publicly challenged his assertion that he reached the top of Mount McKinley.

In 1910, Carrie Nation brought her crusade against "demon rum" to the Bitterroot. She spoke to a full house, and then sold souvenir hatchets and copies of her book to her dedicated followers.

In addition to these big box office attractions, the Opera House played host to numerous events such as prize fights, wrestling matches, political conventions, church gatherings, school graduations, stage plays, even a performing horse!

Through the years the building housed a saloon, 2 theaters and a rolling rink.

In the early 20's the First National Bank moved here but the bank soon failed and Downing Pharmacy moved in. It was owned by Lewis Downing and later his son Bill. The name of the drug store was changed to Hamilton Pharmacy. This wonderful building burnt down in 1986, and was rebuilt as you see it today.



## THE 200 BLOCK OF MAIN STREET

### **200 – 202 Main Street**

*Bitterroot Grocery Emporium,  
Hamilton Hardware, Bitterroot Bistro*

This was a busy corner in the development of early Hamilton. In 1891 it briefly housed Marcus Daly's company store. Hamilton's first doctor, George McGrath, had his office here when it was The Corner Drug Store. Over the next several years it housed the Southern Saloon & Restaurant, a tin shop, the First National Bank and a tailor shop. In 1910 Citizens State Bank remodeled, moved in and remained here for over 40 years. Although built in 1891, this building has been altered extensively with stucco.



The Town Grocery in 1937, which is now the Bitterroot Christian Bookstore. The method for customers to place orders: 1) Give clerk list. 2) Clerk consults posted list as to where items are shelved, with corresponding numbers on shelves. 3) Clerk boxes order and ties with white string. 4) Customer waits or returns to pay. 5) Prices are hand written and tallied by the clerk.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **204 - 206 Main Street: Johnston Block** *Bitterroot Christian Bookstore, Bitterroot Trading Company*

In 1893 the Johnston brothers had a real estate business at #206, which later became the home to McGee's millinery store. In 1893 #210 was a fruit stand, which later became the location for the James Fitzgibbon Saloon, and the Weichelbaum & Johnson Barber Shop. Eventually both storefronts were combined and became the home to Anthonys. These buildings have been significantly remodeled.

### **214 Main Street**

*Western States Insurance*

Dr. Thomas Owings was an early Hamilton doctor who built this two-story building in 1892. He had his office here and started the Ravalli County Drug store, which merged with the Corner Drug Store. Later it became Borden's Variety Shop, and from 1929 - 1985 it was a Ben Franklin store. Anthonys expanded into this storefront. Although the storefront has been significantly altered the second story retains much of its original brick and cornice detailing which is some of the best in the district.



Robert's Book Store in 1911. Today the same building houses The Paper Clip, where it is easier to select items off the shelf for yourself.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **220 Main Street: O'Hara Building** *The Perfect Fit Heath & Wellness Center*

This single story building was built in 1893 and first housed a drug store. In 1896 it became a bakery and ice cream parlor, then again a drug store and jewelry store. Robert O'Hara, Hamilton's first mayor, moved his law office here from across the street at the Ravalli County Bank. O'Hara was one of Marcus Daly's attorneys and had particular knowledge of water rights. U.S. Senator Henry Myers was O'Hara's partner for a while. Emma Madeen, a woman attorney in a male dominated society, worked for him for many years. In 1913 W. Higman returned to operate his bakery in the part of the building that had been occupied by the Table Supply Company. This building was remodeled in the 1940's - 50's.

The interior of Wayne Robert's first store, which is now the Ravalli Republic.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **222 Main Street**

*Edward Jones Investment*

In 1896 this location first housed a fruit and confectionery store. Later it became a cobbler shop and office. It was also the first location of the Spaulding Grocery Store. Later this was Sanford Shoe Repair, and later still, Meuchel's Shoe Repair. This building was significantly remodeled in the 1970's and little remains of its original architecture.



### **228 Main Street**

*The Paper Clip*

Wynne Roberts erected this two-story masonry building in about 1900 to house his expanding business - Robert's Book Store. Around 1929 he moved again (across the street) and this became the Spaulding Grocery Store, selling groceries, meat, tobacco and calico. Spaulding was a teacher-turned-merchant who was known for his hearty greetings to his customers. The appearance of this building has been altered considerably but you can still see some of the original architecture in the second story.

### **232 Main Street: The Roberts Building**

*Ravalli Republic*

Built in 1894, the two-story brick building was the first home of Robert's Book Store, owned and operated by Wynne Roberts. Roberts started his business with \$300 and did \$9,000 worth of business the first year. His first two nights in Hamilton were spent sleeping on a billiard table because no rooms were available. His family lived on the second floor of this building, which retains much of its original appearance. The RAVALLI REPUBLICAN, at the time a weekly paper, moved here in 1923.

### **248 Main Street: The Crutchfield Building**

*Greater Montana GMAC Real Estate, KC Construction & Design*

Charles Crutchfield, an attorney for Marcus Daly, acquired this two-story building from the Bitter Root Development Company around 1907 and used it as a rental. The structure was erected in 1901 and rebuilt after a fire in 1911. In 1901 it was Hamilton Bargain Store (a hardware store) with a plumbing shop in back. Sanderson opened his hardware store here in the 1920's, where it remained until the 1970's. Although it has changed over the years, the original character of the building is still evident, especially the upper story.



Sidney Wheeler operated the City Meat Market in what is now First Montana Title Company.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **250 Main Street: Originally known as the City Meat Market**

*First Montana Title Company*

This two-story brick structure was completed in 1912, replacing an earlier one that burned in 1911. Both it and its predecessor housed the City Meat Market, owned by Sidney Wheeler who had a substantial operation. In addition to this market in town he had a farm with a slaughterhouse from which he shipped to other areas. A track ran from the rear door of this building to the alley where meat was unloaded from wagons and carried on the track into the market. Major alterations have changed the appearance of this building.



Lewis Downing (on the left) in the Bitter Root Drug Store as it looked in 1910. Notice that customers never "shopped" from the shelves but had to ask the clerk for everything.  
*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

**252 Main Street: N.W. Blindauer Building**

*Chapter One, Espresso Y Mas*

In 1893 this was the site of the Mint Saloon. This building was built in 1916 and was significantly altered in the 1940's. In the 1930's this building was the home of the Modern Barber Shop & Beauty Parlor. Later it was the Fabric Shop. It has an interesting basket weave brick pattern above the canopy and is one-of-a-kind in Hamilton.



**211 Main Street: Corner Drug Store Bitterroot Drug**

The Bitterroot Drug Store was one of the first in Hamilton, and was popularly known as The Corner Drug Store because it was located on the corner of North Second and Main. It was established circa 1890 and was bought in 1900 by Dr. George McGrath of Canada, who came to Hamilton to be the company doctor for Marcus Daly. In 1909 it moved to this location. While the drug store has remained in this location the building has changed considerably since 1910. You can still see parts of the original brick wall from the Valley Mercantile at the back of the store by the pharmacy where historic photos of the building's old interior are hung.

**201 - 209 Main Street & South Second Street: The Bower Building**  
*Mikesell's Fine Jewelry, Out West, Tai Chi, ... West, Robbins Hallmark, Robbins on Main, Out West Ice Cream Parlor, Fridays Family Styling Salon, Merle Norman Cosmetics, The Sale Room*

Constructed in 1936, the Bower Building replaced the Valley Mercantile Company Department Store that burned for the second time in 1936. The Valley Mercantile was a two-story "company store" owned by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company (Marcus Daly). It sold everything from clothing, groceries, and furniture, to hardware, lumber, gardening implements and threshing machines.

The Bower Building was designed by H.E. Kirkemo in the Moderne style (the architect for the Hamilton High School, Rocky Mountain Laboratory, and the Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital). It was constructed with 5 firewalls and the high-fire smooth buff colored brick accented with dark brick horizontal banding gives it a contemporary polychrome effect. The building occupies six commercial lots with multiple storefronts on Main and South 2nd Street. It looks much as it did in 1936.



The Valley Mercantile was Marcus Daly's company store. This shot was taken in 1936, just before it burned down on March 5 of that year. It stood on the corner of Main & Second where the Bower Building now stands.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*



**213 Main Street: Lyric Theater***Tamiko's*

This single story building was built in 1909 from brick salvaged from the Ravalli Hotel and was originally the Lyric Theater, one of five theaters in Hamilton. Although motion pictures were popular this theater only lasted a few years. By 1911 the building had been converted into the Regal Clothing Store and later became Noble's Clothing Store in the 1940's. Modification of the storefront has changed the original appearance.

**215 - 219 Main Street: The McGrath Block**
*Maggie's, Art Focus, Wild Covenants, Timber Frame Business Council, GreenPath Realty, Marty's, Mountain View Lighting & Design*

Early Hamilton physician, George McGrath, erected this two-story brick building in 1909. The architect was A. J. Gibson. It was intended to be a professional building and most of the doctors and dentists in town had offices here at one time or another. U.S. Senator Henry Myers had headquarters here. The two main floor spaces were initially occupied by The Toggery (a clothing store) and The City Bakery. The shop on the east housed Robert's Book Store, Table Supply, and later Chapter One Book Store. The shop on the west had a number of occupants including Town Grocery in the 1920's, Tyler Harness, and Robbins Hallmark. This is the best example of a neo-classical revival building in the downtown area and has been preserved well.



The McGrath building in 1912. Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum

**221 Main Street: Barron's Jewelry Store**
*Sandra Brown Real Estate, Sharon Dedmon Real Estate*

This narrow (10 feet wide) brick structure was erected in 1909 by physician and real estate speculator George McGrath. It was the home of Barron's Jewelry Store from 1909 until 2003. John Barron began his career as a jeweler in Scotland at the age of thirteen. He immigrated to the United States when he was twenty and operated the shop until the 1940's when he turned it over to his grandson Ellsworth Smith. This building looks much the same as it did in 1909.

**225 Main Street: Ravalli County Bank**
*The Banque Club, Exchange Bar & Grill*

This Classic style structure was built in a solid front bank motif rather than storefront style and features Romanesque granite block. Marcus Daly built it in 1895 for his bank - the Ravalli County Bank. It was the first state chartered bank in Montana and Daly was its first president. The Bitter Root Stock Farm had offices here shortly after the bank opened. The back of the building housed the City Library and a United States Post Office while the offices upstairs were for doctors and dentists. The bank remained there until 1962 when it moved to its present location on Pinckney Street. Although this building has undergone some alteration it still retains its original character - it is even possible to dine in the former bank vault.



Hamilton's first Post Office in 1894, with Wynne Roberts, Post Master (owner of Robert's Book Store) and Emma Steib, Assistant. Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum

## THE 300 BLOCK OF MAIN STREET

**300 Main Street:** The Smyth Block  
*Bell-McCall Company*

Patterned after the Savoy Hotel in Missoula, this single story brick structure was built in 1909. It originally housed a department store owned and operated by J.H. Theis of Mandan, North Dakota. The J.H. Theis Merchandise Store sold ladies' garments, dry goods, ladies' shoes and hosiery, notions and novelties and millinery as well as furniture, rugs and draperies. It was modified in the 1920's when it became the Ford auto dealership of Bell and Reinhold, and though the name has changed several times since then, the building has remained the same.

**340 Main Street:** The United States Post Office

The post office was built in 1940 at a cost of \$100,000 and remodeled extensively in 1997. The original entrance was located on Main Street, and the lobby has been preserved as a postal museum which includes a wonderful and now-rare WPA mural as well as historic postal equipment. The building has a timeless style with a contemporary classic motif and the original part of the building is the best example of late eclecticism of the modern style in Hamilton.



Main Street's south side at the 3rd and 2nd blocks. The buildings on the right were built by Marcus Daly and are still standing today. The first one was built in 1895 for the Ravalli County Bank, and the second (far right) was built in 1900 for *The Ravalli County Democrat*.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

**301 Main Street:** Ravalli County Democrat  
*The Red Door, The Back Door Deli*

Marcus Daly built this building in 1900 to house the RAVALLI COUNTY DEMOCRAT. It was one of the last masonry buildings attributed to him. When Daly was unable to buy any of the local papers he established his own. The paper did not last long after Daly's death in late 1900 and in 1902 the building was purchased as an office for another newspaper, the RAVALLI REPUBLICAN. When the RAVALLI REPUBLICAN moved across the street in 1923 this became the Bitter Root Bakery, known for its large loaves of bread baked in a "modern steam oven" which sold for 15 cents each. There was a small coffee parlor in the front of the bakery and the entire operation employed eight people. The building remained a bakery, under various names, until recent times. It has changed little over the years.



Looking east on the 3rd block of Main Street in 1927. On the left is the Theis Merchandise department store. Prominent on the right side of the street were the Ravalli County Bank, the Bitter Root Bakery, Central Meat Market, Good Year Shoe Shop and the Hamilton Bottling Works. This photograph was taken in 1927 just after Main Street was paved with concrete from the railroad tracks to Fourth Street.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*



### 305 Main Street

*Me & Mom, J C Penny Catalog*

In 1909 this building was a meat market. In 1914 it became an office building, in 1936 it was the home of Sanford's Shoe Store, and by 1939 it became a law office. Check out the original ornamental tin ceiling. The exterior stucco remodel completely removed all traces of its original appearance.

### 307 Main Street: Central Meat *Shirts Etcetera*

This building was the site of the Central Meat Market, operated by Percy Edwards. Edwards (who came from England) had quite a sense of humor. Photos of the interior of his shop include a shot of a stuffed pig wearing a hat and sitting at a lunch table. His delivery wagon was a familiar sight as it made its daily rounds throughout the area. The only remaining exterior evidence of the original building is the slightly higher cornice.

### 315 Main Street

*Appearances*

In its early days this building housed a grocery store with numerous owners. It has been extensively remodeled.



The Central Meat Market in 1890.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### 319 - 321 Main Street: O. B. Collins *Big Sky Candy*

This two-story brick building was built in 1945. It was occupied by C & D cleaners from the 1940's into the 1990's. It is a fine example of the "4th generation" commercial style of the 1940's.

### 325 Main Street

*The Frame Shop & Gallery*

This building was built in 1911 and retains much of its original character. Buildings located on this end of Main Street tended to be less pretentious due to their distance from the main core. Early real estate speculators erected simple buildings for income property and rented them to service oriented businesses.



Percy Edwards puts his sense of humor on display in the Central Meat Market, circa 1910, in what is now Shirts Etcetera.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### 327-329 Main Street: Reimel Building

*Terry's Barber Shop, Foss Realty Inc.*

Built in 1909, this two-story concrete block building retains much of its original appearance. Commercial concrete block buildings of this vintage are rare in Hamilton and this is one of the finest examples of the traditional tri-partite pattern. In 1911 it was a furniture store and an undertaker service, run by John C. Wagner.

### 333 Main Street

*Job Service*

This building was erected in the 1980's.

### **335, 337 & 339 Main Street:**

#### *River Rising Bakery*

Built in 1946, these buildings have the low one-story masonry style popular at the time, using multi-colored red striped brick in a common bond pattern. There were no buildings here before 1946. #337 was the location of Sears. #339 is set back 20 feet and appeared to be an apartment connected to the building to the right.

### **345 Main Street**

#### *Law Offices of Koch & Johnson, Weber, & Goheen*

This was originally the Mountain States Telephone Company building. It was built in 1935 and included a 2-car garage on Fourth Street. It was constructed using the same deep red bricks that were made popular in the Rocky Mountain Laboratory. The polychrome accent on the Romanesque arched doorway is similar to the Marcus Daly Hospital. In 1952 it underwent additional construction to expand the switchboard and add more garage space. The telephone company moved in 1964.

## **THE 400 BLOCK OF MAIN STREET**

### **400 Main Street:** The Ravalli County Creamery

*The Creamery: Fabric Shop & Quilts, A Place to Ponder, Natural Indulgence, Kibo Group Architecture, Discover Montana, Caribou Creek Log Homes, Kearns & Sons, Kopavi Systems, Montana Lumber Company, US Foodservice*

The largest creamery in Ravalli County, the original brick and masonry building was erected in 1933. In 1946 it was expanded to two buildings which were later joined together. The owner, John Howe had a similar operation in Stevensville. His dairy products won top awards at both State and County Fairs. In the summer of 1967 a fire swept through this structure extensively damaging the interior. It remained a creamery until 1985. It was empty for many years until it was renovated in 2003 for retail and office space.



The Ravalli County Creamery Company as it looked in 1946. The original building on the right was built in 1933.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*



Built in 1895, this is the only remaining false front wood building to retain its original character. *Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **407 Main Street:** Western News

#### *Art City*

This two-story wood building is extremely important and unique because it is one of the two wood frame buildings remaining on Main Street and the only fully intact example of the false front commercial structures that originally lined the street. It was erected in 1895 as the first office of the WESTERN NEWS. It was a plumbing and heating shop in 1909. By 1944 it was used as a residence. Today it is an art gallery and it looks very much the same as it did when it was built.

## **FOURTH STREET**

### **111 South 4th Street:** O'Hara House

*Solid Rock Café, Refresh & Renew Therapeutic Bodywork, Judy K Banks Integrative Massage Therapy*

This house was built for Robert O'Hara, an attorney and close associate of Marcus Daly and agent for the Bitter Root Development Company. He assisted James Hamilton in acquiring the townsite of Hamilton for Daly. He set up a practice in the new town, became City Attorney and the first mayor. In 1905 he helped establish Citizens State Bank. In 1920 he was elected to the Montana House of Representatives. The original structure was a single story home of modest size and detail built in 1896. It was expanded into a stately two-story house with Italianate influence in 1909. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



## STATE STREET

### **306 State Street: The Bitterroot Public Library**

Built in 1916, on a site contributed by Margaret Daly, this library is one of the many erected throughout the United States with the funds donated by steel Magnate Andrew Carnegie. The architectural style is similar to other Carnegie Libraries of the period. Constructed of pressed red brick, the structure had the first slate roof in the town. The main floor consisted of a reading room and librarian's room while the heating room, storeroom and bathrooms were in the basement. The total cost of the building was \$7,650 with \$730 worth of furniture inside. Changes to the front entrance and a recent addition have not detracted from the original appearance of this building.



The Bitterroot Public Library retains much of its original character.  
*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

## THIRD STREET

### **175 South 3rd Street: City Hall**

*Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department*

Hamilton's City Hall was erected in 1906 according to plans drawn up by architect A.J. Gibson (who also designed the original Courthouse and remodeled the Daly Mansion). The two-story brick building was designed to accommodate town officials, the fire department and a public library. The fire wagons and horses were kept behind the two sets of double doors flanking the main entrance to the building. The library was also located on the first floor with its entrance on State Street. Patrons often complained that library books smelled like horses. The city offices were on the second floor. Although the library and city offices were moved to their current locations the fire department is still here. The only major change has been the movement of the fire department truck doors from the front to the State Street side of the building.



In 1906 the original City Hall also housed the fire department and public library. Today it is home to the Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department.  
*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **115 South 3rd Street: The Masonic Lodge**

The Masonic Lodge was originally designed by a Missoula architect in 1909, but ground was not broken until 1915 after B.G. Peterson, a Hamilton architect, altered the plans, reducing the construction costs from \$17,000 to \$10,000. It had two club rooms (one for ladies, one for men) each with a brick fireplace, a lodge room, a kitchen equipped with electric ranges, a dining room and a storeroom. It was heated with a steam furnace. A large ventilating dome was installed in the center of the ceiling in the lodge room and a paneled rail along the front of the gallery in this same chamber was said to lend an artistic affect. This structure looks as much as it did when it was new and is an interesting example of eclecticism in revival architecture.



The original character of the Masonic Temple is still evident today.  
*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

## **SOUTH SECOND STREET**

### **162 -164 South 2nd Street:**

Drinkenberg Rooms  
Savannah's Boutique, Woman  
Cosmetics

F. H. Drinkenberg built his first commercial block on a lot directly behind the Lucas Opera House in 1909. In 1914 the first floor was the Family Theater with apartments and a photo gallery on the second floor. In 1924 it became the Wells Creamery where Mr. & Mrs. Wells sold milk and cream, and Mrs. Wells sold flowers and household goods. The rooms above were rented out to nurses who worked at the hospital next door, and were called the Drinkenberg Rooms. The original storefront was replaced in the 1920's. Later it was the home of Valley Plumbing & Heating.

### **166 - 170 South 2nd Street: The Daly/Tiedt Building**

Designed by A.J. Gibson, this two-story structure was built in 1909 by the Bitter Root Stock Farm for the Chamber of Commerce, which had space on the ground floor. In 1911 the Montana Independent Telephone Company was located here. The second floor was initially used as offices, but in 1912, it became the 20-

room Hamilton Hospital, where it remained until the Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital opened in 1931. When the Chamber of Commerce vacated the building, the Kendall Drug Store, noted for its soda fountain featuring homemade ice cream, took its space. The Bitter Root Stock Farm offices, in turn, replaced it. In 1937 the Economy Grocery Store was located here, where it remained until the 1950's. Various businesses have occupied this building in more recent years but its appearance has not been significantly altered.



The Kendall Drug Store was well known for its soda bar in the 1920's. Notice the spittoon located for the convenience of the customers and all drugs are behind the counter. You can still get great refreshments at the same location in what is now A Place To Ponder.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **176 South 2nd Street: Western News Bamboo Garden**

This single story concrete block building was erected in 1946 to replace the original one built in 1895. THE WESTERN NEWS, a popular Hamilton newspaper, was published here from 1902 until its demise in 1976. The WESTERN NEWS was established in Stevensville in 1892, and then moved to Hamilton in 1893. It was purchased in 1895 by Miles Romney Sr. and continued by his son Miles Jr. In the late 1800's large corporate interests controlled many Montana newspapers but THE



South 2nd Street in 1915.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*



WESTERN NEWS remained independent. The Romney's brand of journalism was distinctive. Most notable were Miles Jr.'s often quoted editorials and his colorful obituaries, which usually appeared on the front page. Publication ceased with the death of Miles Jr. in 1976.

**163 - 167 South 2nd Street:**  
**Drinkenberg Block**  
*Spice Of Life, Mountain Music*

F. H. Drinkenberg owned The First National Bank, and along with 3 partners, erected this two-story masonry structure for the bank headquarters in 1909. The bank building replaced a frame building whose second floor housed Hamilton's first hospital from 1895 through 1896, while the first floor had a bicycle shop and Hub Clothing. Two generations of Haighs ran Haigh's Pool Hall and Bar which occupied this structure for over 50 years. They had a card room in back, a pool table in front and a long bar on the side, which is still there. In the 1950's patrons of the Liberty Theater next door could stand out on the sidewalk and buy fresh popcorn and sodas through an open window. This building still retains much of its original character.



Before the Spice of Life there was Haigh's Pool Hall. This photo was taken in 1932, when women weren't allowed inside. While some things have improved it still retains a lot of its original character.

*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

**169 South 2nd Street: Doran Block**  
*Don Rand Gallery*

This building was the first masonry building on South 2nd Street. It was built in 1895 in a simple vernacular style made of brick, which was later covered over with stucco. Perkins and Doran had a clothing store here. In 1911 it became the Star Theater and in 1919 the name changed to the Liberty Theater. In 1920 a pipe organ was installed at a cost of \$8,000. The small 6-light window was the projectionist's window and still suggests its former use. This is the oldest building on this block and the only property to stop Drinkenberg and his associates from completing the entire quarter block in the 1910 style seen on either side.



South Second Street under construction

*. Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

**171 - 179 South 2nd Street:**  
**Drinkenberg/Bell & Drinkenberg/  
 Coulter Blocks**  
*Simply Elegant, SK Cuts*

In 1910 Drinkenberg joined with R.B. Bell and C.C. Coulter to build additional buildings on the block in the same pattern as the First National Bank building, thus completing the block with the same pattern except the Doran Building. In looking at the block, one wonders whether Mr. Drinkenberg anticipated acquiring the Doran Building to continue the facade and create the largest building block in Hamilton. This building was the home of Zelinsky the Tailor and Carica the Jeweler. Gage's Mercantile was here in 1911. By 1914 John Gilray had a drug store in this building, and in the 1930's it was the Hamilton Post Office and a garage.

## **NORTH SECOND STREET**

### **111 North 2nd Street: Mountain Outfitters Annex *Grandma's Bargains***

Built in 1897, this one-story building has been substantially remodeled. One can still sense the original structure from the details such as the original tin ceiling. In 1896 it was the site of a saloon. In 1908 it belonged to the Bitter Root Development Company who sold it to Louis Peterson. (Peterson previously owned the Scandia Saloon.) Over the years it has been home to many businesses: a Nash dealership, grocery store, washeteria, carpet store, and a second hand store, to name a few.

### **113 North 2nd Street: City Market *Rainbow Bar***

Originally owned by Frank Drinkenberg, in 1893 this building housed the Meat Market owned by Walter Fox. By 1896 it was called the City Market. In 1901 it was a first class billiard hall, cigar and confectionery store. In 1915 it was known as the Owl Pool Room with Joseph Haigh as the proprietor until 1922. (Haigh later opened his pool hall on South Second Street.) Later it became the Rainbow Bar and still operates under that name. It looks much the same as it did when it was built.

### **115 North 2nd Street: Smith & Brown Building *Fraternal Order of Eagles/ Eagles Club***

Joe Iten (a mayor of Hamilton) built this building in 1908. In 1914 the Star Theater was located here. The Eagles purchased it in 1944 and have operated their club here ever since. Extensive remodeling has altered its appearance.



The interior of Spaulding's Store around 1919. It is now Red's Office Supply.  
*Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*



Playing pool in the Owl Pool Room was popular in 1915. Even though it has been remodeled, you can still play pool there today in what is now the Rainbow Room. Back in the old days Joseph Haigh sold cigars in the front of the pool hall. *Photo courtesy of the Ravalli County Museum*

### **142 North 2nd Street: J.C. Penny *Valley Furniture***

This was built in 1946, and was the originally the home of J.C. Penny, and later Coast To Coast Hardware.

### **120 & 140 North 2nd Street: Twin Roxy Theater**

Oscar Paisley and Floyd Bailey built this as the Roxy Theater in 1935. It is a good example of a small, independent movie theater design, using the same deep red bricks that were popular in the Rocky Mountain Laboratory. It embodies the Art Deco style and social statement of the pre W.W.II period. There has been very little exterior alteration since it was built. 140 North Second was a small addition of matching design built in 1938, which has been remodeled with a stucco exterior. It was the home of the Rocky Mountain Book Store.

### **114-116 North 2nd Street: No. #48, I.O.O.F. Hall *Red's Office Supply***

This building was built in 1895 and McMurry (a mayor of Hamilton), Cooper and Grill (president of Citizens State Bank) operated a mercantile here. Spaulding moved his mercantile business here (from Main Street) in 1910. More work was done to the building in 1918 and the upstairs was for the use of the I.O.O.F. lodge. In 1926 Skaggs Store operated on the lower floor. Later it was the location for Safeway. You can still make out the Safeway sign painted on the brick outside in the alley, and there is a great photo of the old Safeway interior behind the cash register.

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