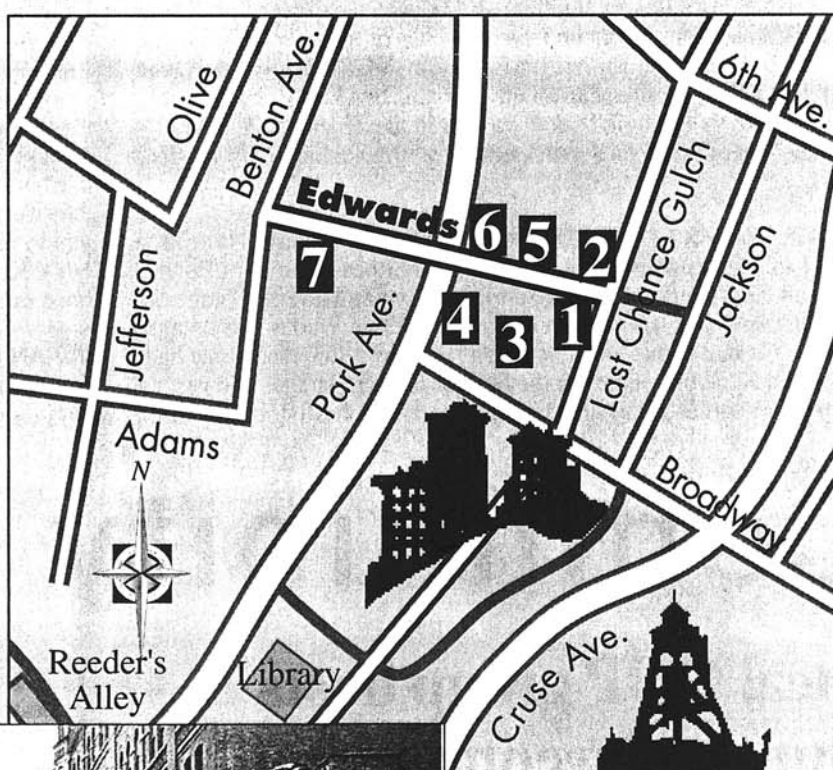
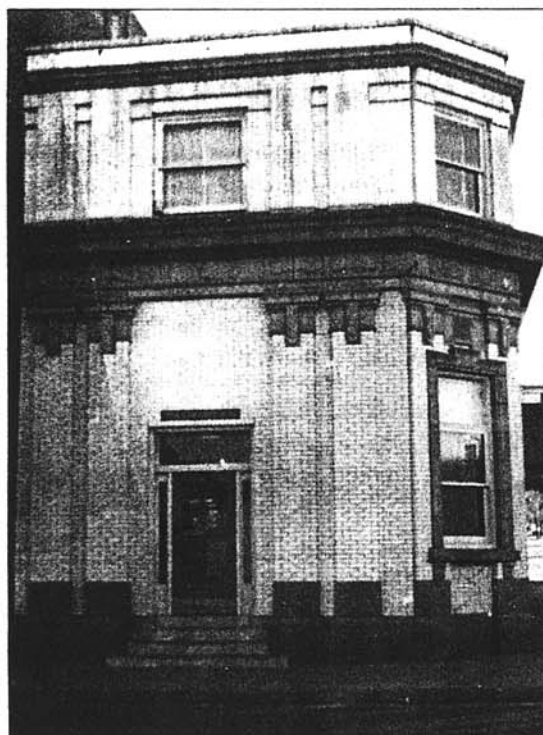


An Urban Renewal casualty

Edwards Street



Photos courtesy of the Montana Historical Society; Map by Wayne Klinkel

Pictures show Eddy's Bakery vehicle and bakery at left; and the bus depot, upper left. Map numbers correspond to numbers in story to help pinpoint building locations.

Edwards Street was a densely populated, two-block business area that once ran from North Main (now Last Chance Gulch) west to Olive Street. Historic maps of Helena show that by the early 1880s, Edwards was already crowded with businesses lining both sides. The spectacular Marlow Theater, the first location of the Helena branch of the Federal Reserve Bank, Eddy's Bakery and the Union Bus Depot all had Edwards Street addresses. During the 1960s and 1970s, when money from federal programs resulted in great changes in historic downtown Helena, some of these changes occurred as Urban Renewal clashed with Edwards Street.

During the 1870s, the Northern Pacific Stable and Snub Saloon occupied the southwest corner of Edwards and North Main (#1 on map). Charles A. Broadwater purchased the property and built the five-story Montana National Bank in 1883. The Helena City Directory described Broadwater's bank a few years later as "an institution which enjoys the confidence of the entire community." The upper floors originally housed offices while a barber shop and bath house operated in the basement.

TRAGEDY STRUCK ON JAN. 9, 1944 when the Montana National Bank building burned. Two women died in the fire and eight others, including two firemen, were injured. Wellington Rankin owned the building at this time, which then housed the State Unemployment Compensation Commission, other offices and apartments. Helena's Navy Recruiting Station had its storeroom on the fifth floor while the U.S. Unemployment Service offices were at the rear. According to the local newspaper, Carroll College sailors and soldiers on pass from Fort William Henry Harrison formed a bucket brigade and succeeded in removing many records and office fixtures from the building. Firemen fought the blaze from the roof of the Union Bank building (#2) across the street. Coffee and sandwiches donated by the Spencer Cafe were served to the firemen on the rooftops by Louis Teddy, secretary of the local Cooks' and Waiters' Union. The Livestock Building, now a familiar landmark on the modern walking mall, was constructed by the Montana Livestock Company on the site the following year.

Before the current Masonic Temple was built at Broadway and Jackson, the fraternal organization met in a two-story temple at the northwest corner of Edwards and Main (#2). L.H. and Aaron Hershfield paid the Masons \$25,000 for the property and the Merchants National Bank (later the Union bank) was erected in

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MORE FROM THE QUARRIES OF LAST CHANCE GULCH

place of the temple in 1887. The bank, located south of the present Park Plaza Hotel, was one of the more substantial buildings razed by Urban Renewal in the early 1970s.

The Marlow Theater (#3) made its appearance on Edwards Street in 1917, but long before that, livery-related businesses operated on much of this block. These included saddle and harness shops, the Central Stables and Carriages, J.H. MacFarland's City Stables and W.H. Holbrook's livery. Liveries had become nearly obsolete when the Marlow opened to serve the community. Several generations of Helenans grew up on silver screen attractions at the Marlow until the 1970s when, like the Merchants Bank, the theater stood in the way of the planned extension of Broadway to Park Avenue. Previously, Broadway ended at North Main (Last Chance Gulch). Both the Merchants Bank and the Marlow were sizable landmarks on sites

A walk of the area is the best way to understand the changes that brought about the disappearance of this once-bustling street.

designated for parking under the Urban Renewal plan.

IN ADDITION TO LIVERIES and related enterprises, other businesses were also housed in the first block of Edwards Street where the Marlow was eventually built. Early Helena had an active Chinese community, which was centered around the present-day federal building at the southwest end of town. In 1890, Helena had 29 Chinese laundries; among them were the

Song Long and the On Wah, located in this block tucked in among livery services. By 1909, an undertaking business occupied the corner (site #4). In 1921, the Federal Reserve Bank bought the building for \$15,000. Before the bank could move into the remodeled funeral parlors, mining tunnels underneath had to be filled with concrete to support the weight of the bank's vault. In 1930, John Dillinger rented a room across the street. Worried that the gangster might be casing the bank, officials hired a second guard. Dillinger's stay in Helena, however, was uneventful. The bank moved to North Park Avenue in 1938 and the Union Bus Depot moved into the former bank. The bus depot was home to the Intermountain Transportation Company, Washington Motor Coach System, the Northland Greyhound and Northwest Greyhound Lines, and the Canyon Transportation Company. Helenans might chuckle at Butte for having a market with the name Terminal Meats, but Helena's depot boasted the Terminal Luncheonette.

Typical of most downtown areas, many of the Edwards Street buildings had lodgings upstairs. Frank Hervey Cook of the A. B. Cook Ranch was among well-known locals who lived briefly on Edwards Street, renting a room in the building next door to the Marlow in the late 1930s. Dr. Everett Lindstrom's Helena Clinic later operated in this building in the 1950s and 1960s. Many Helenans might remember taking lessons at the Cummings School of Dance, also located during this time along the block.

BY 1891, A NUMBER of businesses had located cross the street on the north side of Edwards Street. The Helena Meat Company under L.E. Kaufman and Louis Stadler with D.J. Arnold as manager (#5) was one of these. The block also accommodated an assay office, hotel, electrical supply shop and the Merchants Bank. After the turn of the century, the block became home to Eddy's Bakery, one of Helena's well-known businesses.

Twenty-year-old James E. (Eddy) O'Connell came to Helena in 1906 and first worked as a waiter at the Broadwater Hotel. A year later he became manager of the prestigious Montana Club. In 1910, O'Connell and Eddy Gallivan bought the Capital Cafe at 105 North Main and changed its name to the Eddy Cafe. A steaming cup of coffee was its logo. Three years later in 1913 the partners bought the Grand Central Hotel around the corner on North Main Street next to the Merchants Bank and changed its name to the Eddy Hotel. They moved the cafe to the hotel and opened the Creamery Cafeteria in the old