

The Family Store: A History Of Jewish Businesses In Downtown Asheville, 1880–1990

The Family Store: A History of Jewish Businesses in Downtown Asheville, 1880-1990, is a multi-station exhibit showcasing the era when all downtowns were destinations of purpose, providing all items necessary for daily life, from groceries to clothing to medical services. It was a time when downtown Asheville was the shopping hub of Western North Carolina.

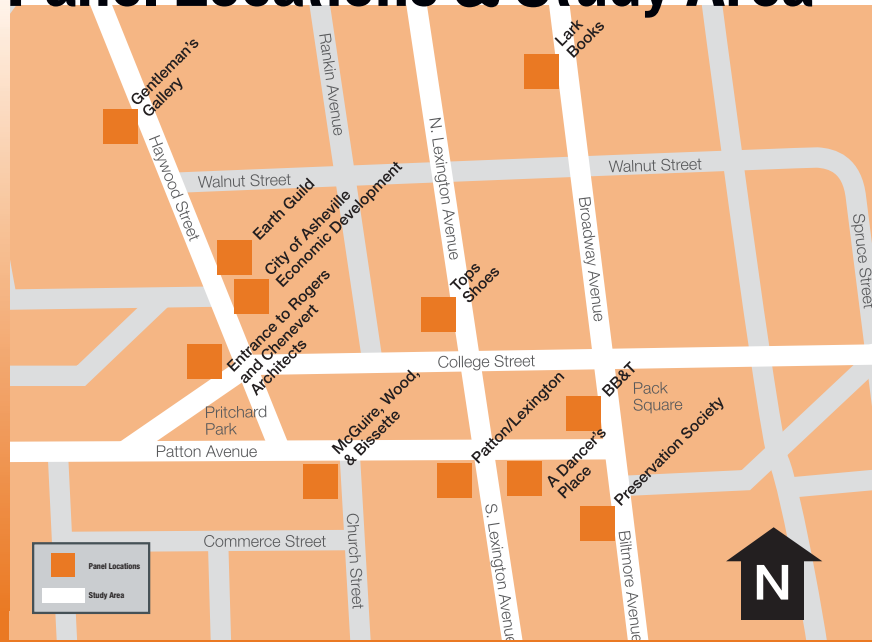
This exhibit acknowledges 110 years of undocumented history by revealing the presence, the abundance and the importance of downtown Asheville's Jewish businesses. These merchants laid the groundwork, both physical and commercial, for downtown Asheville to exist as it does today.

Family Store Exhibit Panel Locations & Study Area

Early newcomers came because:

- Asheville's growth meant business opportunity for merchants, some new to America.
- The mountains were recommended for health reasons
- They were joining friends and relatives who had already settled in Asheville.

The downtown of the family store existed in an era before malls, when businesses were mostly locally-owned and family-operated, sometimes for many generations. Often relatives in one family owned several businesses in downtown.



Time Line 1880s - 1900s

Downtown Growth and the Jewish Community

1880s	1880-1890	1891	1896	1900	1902	1912
Population: 2,616 Railroad came to Asheville	Businesses spread from Pack Square to North and South Main Street	Beth Ha Tephila synagogue founded. Jewish burial ground at Riverside cemetery begun a few years later.	Bikur Cholim synagogue formed. Today Beth Israel.	Population quadrupled to 10,235 Businesses spread down Patton Avenue. "Go west with success" became the motto.	Beth Ha Tephila purchased first building, formerly First Baptist Church	Local chapter of B'nai B'rith, oldest Jewish service organization in America (1843) formed

1915	1916	1920s	1930s	1940s	1941	1950s	1970s and 1980s
Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) formed	Bikur Cholim started a cemetery in West Asheville	Asheville building boom E.W. Grove removed Battery Park Hill to develop downtown. Grove Arcade, Battery Park Hotel, Flat Iron Bldg, and Bon Marche department store all built	Depression Still many businesses were coming and going	Haywood Street new heart of downtown Rise in up-scale businesses	Jewish Community Center (JCC) formed. Asheville was (and still is) smallest Jewish community in America to support a JCC.	Post-World War II prosperity Returning soldiers looking for opportunity opened new businesses	Malls arrived Shopping patterns changed Businesses began leaving downtown

Beth Ha Tephila founded 1891. This Spruce Street location was across the street from Thomas Wolfe's mother's boarding house, "My Old Kentucky Home." Built as First Baptist Church in 1868.

The Supply Company pictured here shows the temple building after the congregation moved out in the 1940s. The linotype shows how the temple looked while it was occupied by Congregation Beth Ha Tephila.



Bikur Cholim synagogue founded 1896. This location was at 121 S. Liberty Street. Today it is renamed Beth Israel. The congregation moved from its downtown location in 1969. Now located on Murdock Avenue.

