

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

South Main Street hosted many of Asheville's first Jewish-owned businesses. Its heyday was from 1917–1929. Among the names that lasted the longest were Bon Marché, run by the Lipinsky family for 80 years which later moved to Patton Avenue and then Haywood Street. Palais Royal, started by Morris Meyers, stayed open for 40 years,

but moved to different spaces on South Main. Finkelstein's pawn shop opened in 1903 on South Main. No longer run by the family, it still exists on Broadway (formerly North Main). R. B. Zageir also stayed open for many years. Other shops lasted only a short time or moved around downtown frequently.

S. Main Street

From the 1880s until 1910, about 8–10 Jewish stores were located on South Main. In 1915 South Main became Biltmore Avenue. During the teens, there were consistently around 17 Jewish-owned stores on the street. They were not fancy stores, but instead catered to the necessities of the working man or woman. In 1919 and throughout the 1920s, the number soared to 25. By the 1930s the number had decreased again to around 8.



Morris Meyers, owner of Palais Royal, with his employees. Around 1910.

Morris Meyers, founder of Palais Royal, was also one of the founding members of Temple Beth Ha Tephila in 1891. He wrote many letters to the North Carolina Department of Transportation about the length of time it was taking to remove the street car tracks and repair the road in front of his store in the early 1930s. It made it difficult for his customers to come into the store and he suffered business loss because of it. The letters did not help.



WHITLOCK'S

Early on, businesses sometimes occupied space in the ground floor of a hotel, such as The Eagle (S. Whitlock, dry goods and fancy goods, and later Bon Marché) or The Swannanoa. Neither building exists today. Other stores occupied buildings still standing, as shown on the map.



BILTMORE AVENUE, 1924

The Asheville city directory of 1924 lists the following stores in this photo starting at Pack Square: **4** Guarantee Shoe Store (J. L. Blomberg, mgr.); **8** R. B. Zageir, clothing; **10** The Standard (Ben Schas, Isadore Goldstein), ladies wear; Globe Shoes (Lou Pollock); Outlet Bargain Store (Nat and Sigmund Blomberg); **10.5** S.H. Berman, tailor; **12** Economy Store, dry goods (Helen and Irving Kahn); **14** Cadison and Co., ladies wear (Max Scher and Leo Cadison); **14.5** Hyman Goldberg, men's furnishings; **16** The Racket Store, dry goods (L. Blomberg); **18** I. Goldstein, department store. Virtually every store in this block was owned by a Jewish merchant and several businesses occupied #10. (UNCA Ball Collection).

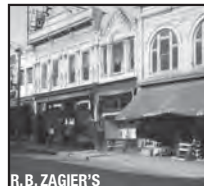
Small shops on South Main sold primarily dry goods—textiles, clothing, hats for men and women (millinery) and shoes. In addition some shops sold cigars and groceries.



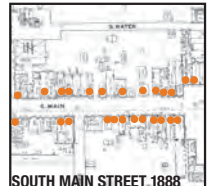
In 1880s housed the possible first location of Bon Marché.



THE RACKET STORE



R. B. ZAGIEIR'S



SOUTH MAIN STREET 1888
Dots show locations of Jewish businesses.

1890

Marble Hall, men's clothing; Strauss European Hotel; S. R. Kepler; A. R. Cooley, grocers; Arthur Field, jeweler; Bon Marché, dry goods; and A. Whitlock, clothing.

1901

W. Glaser and The Racket Store, both men's clothing; Bon Marché, Palais Royal; I. Goodman, H. Grossman, all dry goods; H. Swartzberg, millinery; and R. B. Zageir, tailor.

1911

Max Reiter's candy store; M. S. Schas, cigars; A. Blomberg, Maer Zageir, both clothing; Guarantee Shoe; NY Tailoring; W. W. Goldsmith, jeweler; and H. L. Fisher, jeweler.

1921

Michalove's grocery; Uncle Sam's Loan Office; Guarantee Shoe Company; R. B. Zageir's, men's clothing; and Asheville Furniture Company.

1929

J. B. Schochet, dry goods; The Fair, ladies clothing; I. Goldstein Department Store; Samuel Silverman, clothing.

1939

Ann's Hat and Dress Shop; Bane's, a small department store; Buffalo Sales Service, house furnishings; and United Tire Retreading Company.