

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

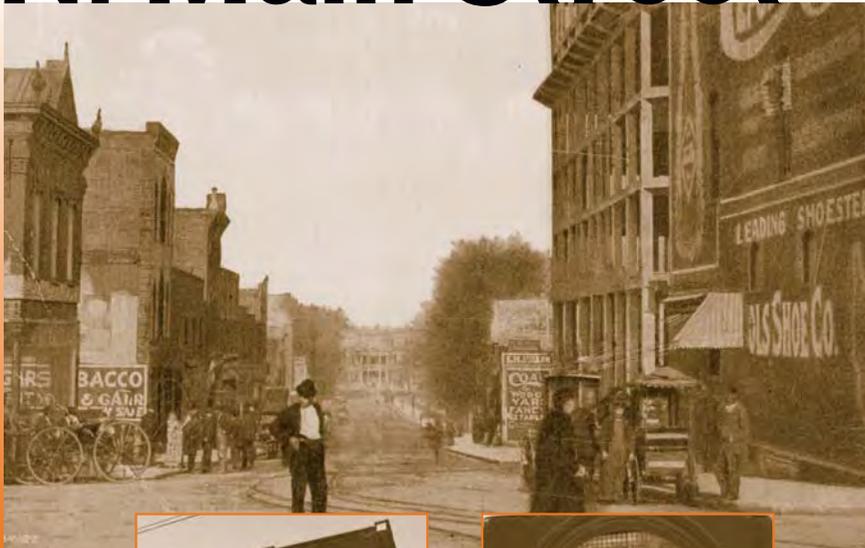
In the 1880s, Asheville's streets were unpaved and the business district consisted of the town square plus a block beyond in each direction.

North Main Street underwent a name change in 1915,

becoming Broadway. Most of the former storefronts from this period on the west side of the street remain intact with shops and restaurants today.

The small shops in the first block of North Main were dwarfed by the largest hotel in Asheville, The Langren, which was built across the street and opened to much fanfare on July 4, 1912. It stood seven stories tall and boasted 100 rooms. People stayed there for months at a time. Some were there for their health, traveling salesmen quartered there, bachelors lived there. In the city directories over the years, some of the employees of downtown Asheville's Jewish businesses are listed as living at the Langren. A parking garage took its place when it was torn down in the mid-1960s during the urban renewal era.

N. Main Street



North Main Street, now Broadway, looking north from Patton/Park Square intersection, 1911.

Leon Rocamora, Jr., oral history interview, August 9, 2004

He (Leon Rocamora, Sr.) started out as the Asheville Candy Company, and grew from that into Asheville Showcase, because the people that bought the candy wanted a showcase to show their candy and so they started selling showcases; and then these places added food, and then they wanted china and then they wanted glass and they wanted silverware and so forth.

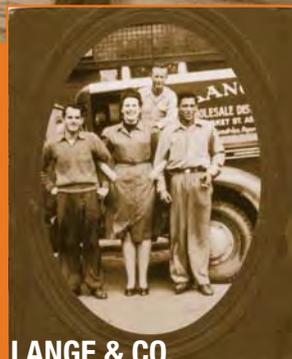
And that's how it evolved into restaurant equipment. ...he died (Leon Rocamora Sr.) real sudden, and my mother had to take over the business. And I helped out with her in the business, after school. I changed my scheduling so I would get out of school at 12 o'clock—I was in high school at that time, at Lee-Edwards. And I would go and work, and work all afternoon, to help her out with the store. And she was the first lady in our industry, to be involved in the business.

...Leon Rocamora, Jr.



ASHEVILLE SHOWCASE

For many years, Asheville Showcase provided restaurant equipment to most area restaurants. Leon Rocamora, Sr., was the only woman in America active in the restaurant supply business for most of her career, 1931 through the late 1960s. Asheville Showcase is still family run, but is no longer on Broadway.



LANGE & CO.

Mrs. Herschel Lange with delivery men for her husband's wholesale candy and notions business which was on Walnut between Spruce and Broadway from the early 1950s until the late 60s. Before WWII, he had worked for his cousins, the Hirsches, who owned Biltmore Cigar and Candy Co., a wholesale supply business at 75 Broadway.



LATE 1950S ARTMORE FURNITURE CO.

In the 1930s, small factories operated on the second floors of some of the buildings in this area of Broadway. Sam Kaltman ran a pants factory, Fred Pearman ran a furniture factory and, on Tingle Alley behind Tingle's Restaurant near Broadway and Walnut, Vanderbilt Shirt Company made men's shirts. Artmore Furniture Company occupied one of the larger retail spaces at 15 Broadway from 1948 until the late 1970s.



SCHANDLER FAMILY

David Schandler owned several businesses during his life in Asheville. In the early 1900s, he and his family made handkerchiefs at their home on Oak Street. He opened a cigar store, The Social Smoke

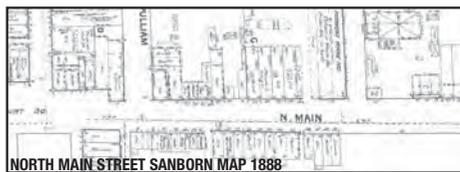
Shop, in 1914, on South Main Street (now Biltmore Avenue). In the 1920s he opened Schandler's Oak Street Cash Store, a grocery shop in the retail level below their apartment. It was next to the First Baptist Church. Displaced by urban renewal in 1964, it reopened as a sit-down deli at 50 Broadway in a former Pure Oil gas station. Called Schandler's Pickle Barrel, and run by Aaron, the oldest Schandler son, it also housed Aaron's wife's hobbycraft business, Linda Schandler Newman ran the store after her father's death in 1981 until the store closed in 1984.

North Main Street

From the 1880s through 1930, stores began on the first block of North Main that would later move to South Main or Patton.

- Business Names**
- S. Hammerschlag (1883-1887)
 - A. Blomberg (1900-1911)
 - J. B. Swartzberg (1906-1909)
 - S. I. Blomberg (1904-1910)
 - J. B. Schochet (1904-1928)
 - S. H. Michalove (1915-1918)

- Business Names**
- Gross Restaurant (1916-1935)
 - Miller and Grand (1922-1925)
 - Susquehanna Furniture Co. (1919; 1931-1934)
 - Susquehanna Salvage Co. (1935-1938)
 - Milton Swartzberg (1929-1931)



NORTH MAIN STREET SANBORN MAP 1888