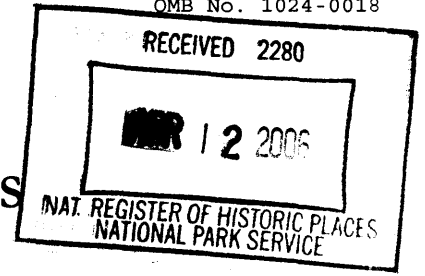


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Home of Peace

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: Alexander Street between Brady Street and Custer Avenue

not for publication: na
vicinity: na

city/town: Helena

state: Montana code: MT county: Lewis and Clark code: 049 zip code: 59601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

(_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register see continuation sheet
- other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

E. Beall
Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

5-24-06

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private	Number of Resources within Property	
	Contributing	Noncontributing
Category of Property: District	<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u> building(s)
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: na	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
	<u> 4 </u>	<u> 1 </u> structures
Name of related multiple property listing: na	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
	<u> 8 </u>	<u> 1 </u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions:
FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification: n/a

Materials:

foundation: stone

walls: stone

roof: stone

other: wrought iron (fence); brick (pavers)

Narrative Description

The Home of Peace is Helena’s oldest active cemetery, founded in 1867 by the Jewish community. It is also the oldest active Jewish Cemetery in Montana. The Home of Peace Cemetery Association owns the cemetery and adjacent land. The property includes the portion used as the cemetery grounds. The Association leases a portion to the Helena School District, and a third portion has remained undeveloped. The grounds include five acres of land north of Helena, much of it enclosed within a fence. The cemetery is adjacent to Capital High School and south of Custer Avenue, roughly across from the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds. To reach the cemetery, turn left from the intersection of Custer and Henderson, proceed south on Henderson to Brady. Turn east onto Brady and take the first turn left (north) onto a dirt/gravel road that ends at the cemetery’s main entrance. The gated front of the cemetery faces west. A second gate at the rear faces east. A metal chain link fence separates the current cemetery grounds from the north portion of the original grounds that now functions as Capital High School’s practice field. The grounds of the practice field were used only minimally as a burial ground during the mid-nineteenth century, but there are unmarked graves in that area. The undeveloped portion north of the practice field was intended for later expansion of the cemetery. This nomination includes the entire five acres including the cemetery, the undeveloped area and the practice field.

Front Entrance Arch (one contributing structure)

The cemetery’s front entrance, erected circa 1910, reaches more than 20 feet in height, artfully crafted of cut granite blocks that form an impressive tripartite archway. The archway resembles a Palladian window with decorative wrought iron gates filling the lower portions of the three arched openings. Each voussoir of the large central arch spandrel contains one letter, spelling out “Home of Peace,” cut into the granite. The date, “1908,” is above the keystone. The central gate is large enough to accommodate vehicles on those occasions when vehicular traffic is necessary. The smaller two arches flanking the center have latched, wrought iron pedestrian gates that can be opened to allow entry to visitors. The inscription on the support pillar of the south arch reads:

ERECTED BY MORRIS SANDS
AS A MEMORIAL
TO THE SACRED MEMORY
OF HIS BELOVED WIFE
LIZZIE
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
JAN. 9, 1907

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Areas of Significance: EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT;
SOCIAL HISTORY; RELIGION

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): D

Period(s) of Significance: 1867-1943

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1867, 1868, 1875, 1879, 1904, 1905, 1910,
1916, 1932, 1943

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: n/a

Narrative Statement of Significance

Jewish people are one of few European groups who left rare landmarks in Montana documenting their achievements in the evolution of the state. The Home of Peace is one testament to this group of people who settled in Montana with the first gold rushes in the mid-1860s and contributed to its earliest communities. Further, the Home of Peace is Helena's oldest active cemetery, dating from 1867, and the oldest active European ethno-religious cemetery in the state.

Although Jews dwindled in western Montana into the twentieth century, their impact as a group on the economy and social makeup of the Helena community and territorial Montana is a highly significant factor in the evolution of Helena from rough gold camp to the capital city of the new state. Persons buried in the Home of Peace reflect the Jews' diverse and significant contributions as well as the religion that bound this cultural group together throughout Montana's formative years.

Original physical elements include the formal delineation of a large area with a wrought iron fence dating to the cemetery's founding in 1867. The 1867 fence remains intact surrounding three and one-half sides of the original grounds. The extensive enclosure and the land included as a whole are indicative of the optimism and faith early Helena Jews had in the settlement's stability and the high stakes they had in its future. Contributing elements include the fence, more than 200 tombstones, a nineteenth century outbuilding associated with the delivery of water for cemetery upkeep, a landscaping shed, a water tower, and two impressive stone and iron entry gates.

For these reasons, the property is eligible for listing under Criterion A.

Criteria Consideration D

The Home of Peace includes the graves of many people who, as group, represent a significant and dynamic influence in the earliest settlement of Montana and as an ethno-religious group, undeniably impacted territorial commerce in particular. Many of the first Jews who came to Bannack and Virginia City moved on to Helena to establish businesses and families. Many of these pioneers are buried in the Home of Peace. These include Solomen Content, Samuel Schwab, Ben Ezekiel, and Jacob Feldberg and others who were also part of the earliest Virginia City community.

Not only did these and other Jewish residents contribute a variety of businesses, banking houses, numerous goods, services, and relief efforts to the first communities, they also helped stabilize the early economy in the wake of financial disasters. During the period 1869 to 1874 when a series of fires left the business community devastated time and again, Jewish businessmen with financial resources in larger cities like San Francisco and Chicago were able to rebuild their businesses when others could not. Jewish residents thus played a major role in Helena's survival beyond the gold camp phase.

The Home of Peace is Montana's oldest active Jewish Cemetery and the oldest active cemetery in Helena. Its association with this very early period of settlement and the dynamic people buried there add significantly to its importance during Montana's formative territorial period.

Few properties remain to document early Jewish heritage in Montana. While the 1891 Temple Emanu El (NR listed July 11, 2002 Ref #02000724) is one significant remnant and represents the first Jewish house of worship built between St. Paul, Minnesota and Portland, Oregon, it does not date to the earliest settlement period. The Home of Peace and the rare records that document it are the only surviving remnants of the Jewish presence in the first few years of settlement in Montana.

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 5 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	12	419504	5162754	(NAD27)
2	12	419635	5162753	
3	12	419639	5162602	
4	12	419501	5162604	

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): Northwest quarter (NW ¼) of the northeast quarter (NE ¼) of Section Twenty-Four (24) Township Ten (10) North, Range Four (4) West.

Verbal Boundary Description

Commencing at a point on the Western boundary line of the Northeast quarter (NE ¼) of Section Twenty-Four (24) Township Ten (10) North, Range Four (4) West of Montana Principal Meridian 340 feet South from the Northwest corner of said quarter and running thence South 466 ½ feet along the Western boundary line of said quarter; thence 466 ½ feet East; thence 466 ½ feet North; thence 466 ½ feet West to the place of beginning, containing five acres.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the Home of Peace Cemetery, and that constitutes its historic location and setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ellen Baumler
organization: date: November 2005
street & number: 729 11th Avenue telephone: 406-449-3062
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59601

With significant contributions by Charleen Spalding

Property Owner

name/title: Home of Peace Cemetery Association
street & number: 1615 Stuart Street telephone: 406-442-1215
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59601-2335

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 1

The inscription on the support pillar of the north arch reads:

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF
MORRIS SANDS
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
DEC. 14, 1910

Heavy stone masonry walls flank the two smaller arches. On each side of the massive end supports, the masonry extension begins at the base of the outer arch and forms a sloping wall that terminates a foot from the ground where it joins the wrought iron fence.

Wrought Iron Fence (*one contributing structure*)

The wrought iron fence, erected in 1867, encloses the present cemetery on all sides but the north. The front, or west, portion of the fence extends beyond the cemetery proper, running the entire length of the boundary line to the northwest corner. Posts and barbed wire run the length of the north boundary line. A section of the historic fence delineating the practice football field has been removed. The fence is less ornate than the ironwork at the gates and in several places it is in disrepair and vegetation hides it from view. Overgrown brambles, trees, and tangled shrubs delineate the northwest corner. This portion was intended in the mid-nineteenth century for potential the expansion of the cemetery that never came to fruition.

Rear Gate (*one contributing structure*)

Two massive pillars of granite blocks mark the back gate on the cemetery's east side. They mirror the granite block pillars that support the tripartite arches at the front entry. The pillars, like those at the front gate, contain memorial inscriptions. The south pillar reads:

ERECTED BY ALICE GANS
AS A MEMORIAL
TO THE SACRED MEMORY
OF HER BELOVED HUSBAND
HERMAN
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
SEPT. 3, 1901

The inscription on the north pillar reads:

ERECTED BY
SADIE AND DOROTHEA
IN MEMORY OF
THEIR BELOVED FATHER
HERMAN GANS

Water Tower (*one contributing structure*)

There is a small metal water tower, dating to the late nineteenth century, approximately 35 feet in height just north of the west entrance inside the fence. The elevated metal water storage drum sits on four metal legs strengthened with cross pieces at the mid point. The wooden ladder that provided access to the top of the drum, its bottom rungs missing, remains fixed to the side of the rusted metal.

Landscaping Sheds (*two contributing buildings*)

Two sheds, one of late nineteenth century vintage and the other from the 1930s, lie just east of the water tower. From at least the late 1880s, the smaller building next to the water tank served as a pump house. It is covered in simulated brick metal siding, added around 1905. Corrugated metal of the same period covers the original roof. The larger building likely functioned historically as a storage shed for landscaping tools and a wagon. Vintage corrugated metal siding covers this building and corrugated metal also covers its roof. A rusted hose rack, used to store a garden hose, hangs on the larger shed's east side.

Discarded tombstones (*one contributing object*)

Broken, discarded tombstones collected from twelve graves, outside the chain link fencing, lie at the base of the water tower. Some of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 2

these may have marked the oldest burials in the north section now outside the fence. The inscription on Bertha Levy's stone, made by T. Kain in 1910, is the most legible. It reads: "Born in France, died April 22, 1909." The stone for Marcus Alexander, who died in 1877, includes a Hebrew inscription. Another stone marked the grave of two-year-old Arthur Auerbach who died of diphtheria in 1892. Only bits and pieces of words can be discerned on the other stones. Seven additional tombstones lie stacked and buried in the southwest corner of the grounds.¹ Collectively, these nineteen items are counted as one contributing object for the purposes of this nomination.

Spatial Arrangement and Circulation Patterns (*one contributing site*)

The cemetery is laid out in a perfectly symmetrical pattern. The road through it, planned as the center of the grounds, today runs along the present cemetery's north edge. Grand old cottonwood trees line either side, and the grounds exhibit natural, park-like landscaping with many trees and bushes and grass kept well trimmed and mowed. Several marked family plots lie to the north side of the driveway. Most of the graves are symmetrically laid out on the south side of the road grouped by family plots. Graves of family members are spaced close together; most have a stone curbing outlining these plots. There is brick paving in a herringbone pattern between two of the rows running north to south at the back of the cemetery. The layout is reminiscent of a neighborhood street. The mature grounds are well maintained and manicured.

A section north east of the chain link fence has been leased to the Helena School District since 1975. Its use as a practice football field has kept it well maintained. Broken tombstones, now piled at the base of the watertower, were removed from this area, evidence of burials. Although an unknown number of graves rest below the turf, the present use of the area as a football field has had no impact on these historic resources. Rather, its use has kept the area well groomed.

A section of the property at the northwest corner, bounded by the wrought iron fence on the west and the barbed wire fence on the north is a tangle of ancient trees, shrubs, and tall grass. This portion of the cemetery remains as it was historically, not maintained or landscaped, with vegetation out of control. Huge tree branches, low to the ground, provide a setting for generations of neighborhood children who have obviously played in this area. The wild jumble contributes to the historic setting. This portion of the cemetery was intended for later expansion.

Burials and Plots

Among more than 240 recorded burials, there are 204 tombstones. Most are simple and unpretentious like the pioneers who lie beneath them. Large, simple monuments name the families with smaller individual markers noting individual graves. Although the first burials occurred in the 1860s, no marker survives from that early time. The oldest surviving tombstone is that of Hattie Jacobs, dating to 1873. The most recent burial is that of Gary Coopersmith, interred in 2003.

The stonework in general is of quality, mostly of varied colors of granite or sandstone. The earlier family monuments exhibit raised letters on sandstone while the later monuments are of polished granite with letters cut into the stone, indicative of advanced stonecutters' art. A few of the earliest tombstones are white imported marble, but most are of local sandstone or granite, cut by A. K. Prescott, the Kain Brothers, and other local artists. Markers are both upright and flat against the ground. There are a number of monuments naming families and persons prominent in Helena's business community such as Ezekiel, Schwab, Morris, Fligelman, Sands, Gans, Silverman, Israel, Lissner, Feldberg, Hepner, and Kaufman, whose lives are well documented in numerous primary and secondary sources. Some stones note Masonic affiliations and military service, and several include inscriptions in Hebrew. An additional 34 burials listed in the records are unmarked, their tombstones having been lost or removed; some burials, as documented in the cemetery record books, were never marked at all.

Modern Chain Link Fence (*one noncontributing structure*)

Modern chain link fencing runs the length of the cemetery's north edge forming a boundary between Capital High School's practice football field and the cemetery grounds.

¹ <http://www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/northamerica/Montana.html>; accessed 1/29/05.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 3

Integrity

The Home of Peace, despite the close proximity of Capital High School, remains tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the twenty-first century. As its name implies, this historic cemetery retains a feeling and setting evocative of the isolation it once enjoyed when wagons decked in black mourning made the long trip from town. Much of the 1867 wrought iron fencing that originally encircled the five acres remains intact. Within the five acres, the portion used as a practice football field has insured that the grass is kept mowed and the grounds well maintained, as they would have been historically. Nature has taken over the northwest corner, leaving it undeveloped as it was historically. The water tower and pump house are as they were in the late nineteenth century, and, along with the later landscaping shed, document the historic method of watering and maintaining the grounds.

The small cemetery is in excellent condition, well tended by loving hands over the last century and a half. Although none of the first tombstones remain, the many that cover the grounds mark the burials of dozens of pioneers and their families who came West and had faith in Helena's future. The size of the cemetery, and its potential for expansion, reveal that this is so.

Inscriptions in Hebrew, Masonic emblems, military epitaphs, and unassuming monuments and headstones tell of a people united by religion, yet individual in their lives. Burials dwindle today, and this speaks to the children and grandchildren of these Helena Jews, many of whom left for better opportunities elsewhere.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 4

Jewish Immigration in the United States

The American Jewish population in 1840 was only 15,000. By 1860, this small ethno-religious group had rapidly grown in the United States to a much more significant population of 150,000.² Entire villages migrated to America, and Jews by this time were an integral part of many American communities in eastern cities such as New York and Chicago.

The California gold rush of the 1850s saw Jewish merchants play an important role as provisioners and exchange agents, dominating the clothing and dry goods businesses as well as tobacco and liquor sales. The largest Jewish community was in New York City, but second largest was at San Francisco where Jews established benevolent societies, synagogues and consecrated burial grounds. Goods sent to mining camps of the Pacific Northwest often originated in San Francisco, and Jewish merchants formed partnerships with links to brothers, uncles, and cousins that formed a far-reaching chain. Earnings—in the form of gold dust and nuggets—often went to networks of family employers in San Francisco.

As the western gold rushes to Nevada, Colorado, and Montana opened other mining communities, Jews seized these entrepreneurial opportunities and became miners, barbers, tailors, jewelers, bankers, attorneys, and cattlemen. But it was especially in the roles of merchant and provider that offered a stepping stone for these enterprising men—many of them immigrants from poor villages in Poland, Germany, Prussia, and Austria—to move on to other entrepreneurial pursuits, gaining economic stability and civic status in a single generation.³ In the East and in the West, Jewish business owners contributed to local economies and founded empires. Adam Gimbal, for example, who started out peddling notions along the Mississippi River, opened a small business in Vincennes, Indiana. Under his sons it became the eastern giant, Gimbal Brothers Department Store. Levi Strauss, a name still familiar, settled in San Francisco in 1853. His denim jeans made Levis a household word.

Jewish Settlement in Montana

A rich gold discovery along Grasshopper Creek in 1862 led to the founding of Bannack, Montana's first boomtown. Virginia City sprang up with the discovery at Alder Gulch in 1863, and Helena's founding was similar at Last Chance in 1864. Jews were among the first businessmen to mine the miners, setting up some of the first shops at all three of these gold camps. By the mid-1860s, some report as many as 30,000 people living in the greater Alder Gulch area.⁴ The largest ethnic groups in Virginia City during this early period included African Americans, Chinese, and Jews. Jewish people were active participants in the earliest community.

Jewish immigrants left their marks in Virginia City, a National Historic Landmark (NHL), in several ways. Dry goods merchant Solomen Content, for example, built the town's most impressive commercial building, Content's Corner—a primary resource in the Virginia City NHL—in 1864. Another Jewish merchant, G. Goldberg, left his name stenciled over the doorway of his Wallace Street dry goods store. During the turbulent first years, the vigilantes that organized included at least two Jews.⁵ Ben Ezekiel, born to Jewish parents in Tiverton, England, served as one of two "sentries" during the Nevada City trial of George Ives. Ezekiel went on to serve in public office and law enforcement, as chief clerk of the House during several legislative sessions, and as a legislator from Madison County in the 1874. Samuel Schwab, born in Rimpar, Bavaria, rode the first stage from Salt Lake City to Bannack bringing goods to peddle to the miners. He, like Ezekiel, was also active in the early community and listed in the roster as a vigilante.⁶ Louis Hershfield ran a Virginia City dry goods business and established one of Virginia City's first banks.⁸

As the placer gold dwindled in 1865 and 1866, many Virginia City residents moved on to Helena. These included Solomen Content,

² H.A. Meek, *The Synagogue* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1955) 194-195.

³ William Toll in Ava A. Kahn, ed., *Jewish Life in the American West* (Berkeley, California: Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 2002) 83.

⁴ Malone, Roeder and Lang, re. ed. *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1991) 67.

⁵ Historian Merrill Burlingame supplied a list of vigilantes, dated March 29, 1979, which resides in the vertical files under "Vigilante Membership" in the MHS Research Center library. Both Samuel Schwab and Ben Ezekiel appear on that list. Ezekiel's obituary appears in the *Helena Weekly Herald*, April 30, 1885.

⁶ Julie L. Coleman. *Golden Opportunities: A Biographical History of Montana's Jewish Communities* (Helena: Falcon Press, 1994) 22. Birney Hoffman, *Vigilantes* (Philadelphia, 1929), 209, describes Ezekiel's role in Ives' hanging.

⁸ Coleman, 14.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 5

the Goldbergs, Lewis Hershfield, David and Moses Morris, Marcus Lissner, Louis Kaufman, and Samuel Schwab. Others like Ben Ezekiel came to Helena later in 1875 when it became the new territorial capital and all territorial officials transferred there.

A consecrated Hebrew burial ground, where at least some Jewish residents were buried, is the single cultural remnant Jews left in Virginia City. The burial ground is evidence that a Hebrew society or association had necessarily formed very early in Virginia City and was in place to establish the cemetery. Although these burial records have not come to light, Virginia City's first plat map, drawn in 1868, clearly shows that a Hebrew cemetery for burial of Jewish residents had been formally established.⁹ No headstones, depressions, or other evidence remains today on the barren site to indicate this early use. Longtime Virginia City residents, however, recall that broken pieces of headstones were once scattered across the ridge top.

While Helena's earliest population was largely comprised of former Virginia City residents including Jews, other substantial communities of immigrant Jews developed later in two other Montana cities: the industrial mining town of Butte and the railroad town of Billings. The Hebrew Benevolent Association of Butte organized before the formal congregation as was the case in Helena. Butte's Association held its first Holy Day services in 1881; its first congregation organized in 1897.¹⁰ Jews attracted to Butte, however, were necessarily different from those who settled in Helena. Because of the mining industry and the very different character of Butte, Jews of this community came from a wider range of European countries to work the mines, peddle goods, and establish businesses. Unlike Helena where most of the Jews came from Prussia or Germany and practiced Reform Judaism, Butte's Jews reflected a much wider geographic diversity and thus religious practices differed among them. Its Jewish community split into three congregations: Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative.

Billings also supported a large Jewish population of a distinct character. Founded in the 1880s to serve the railroad, Billings attracted Jews who arrived by train to peddle goods or trade in hides and furs. Billings Jews were economically poorer than those in Helena and Butte; they did not usually have family and extended family as did many Jews in Helena and Butte; and Billings Jews experienced more prejudice than Jews in Helena or Butte. Where the Montana Club in Helena, for example, welcomed Jewish members, later into the twentieth century, neither the Highlands Golf Club nor the Billings Junior League allowed Jewish members.¹¹ Establishment of the B'nai B'rith Lodge No. 815 in 1917 was the first step in the organization of the Billings Jewish community.

The Jewish Community in Helena

Helena's population in 1864 and 1865 mirrored that of Virginia City's with miners, merchants, service-providers, saloonkeepers, freighters, gamblers, and prostitutes forming a noisy, boisterous community. As the major Montana placers had begun to dwindle, the population leap-frogged first from Bannack to Virginia City and finally to the new camp at Helena. The Montana Territorial Legislature met in Virginia City in 1868 and passed a bill to relocate the territorial capital to Helena. Although Governor Green Clay Smith vetoed the bill, this attempt illustrates the sunset of the one gold camp and the emergence of another that eventually would become the territorial, and later, state capital.

Lewis Hershfield opened a Helena branch of his Virginia City bank in 1865 and later his brother, Aaron, joined the business; Marcus Lissner operated the International Hotel from 1869; Samuel Schwab and his partner, son-in-law Edward Zimmerman, ran the Cosmopolitan Hotel; Jacob Feldberg, Israel Israel, and Herman Gans each had retail clothing businesses; the Morris brothers established a crockery and mercantile business in the mid-1860s; the Sands brothers had one of the first mercantiles; and Louis Kaufman invested his Alder Gulch mining profits in the Helena Meat Market. From the town's first formative years, Helena's Jews contributed in major ways to the local economy.

On December 9, 1866, Jewish businessmen formally established the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Helena, Montana.¹² The minutes indicate that the organization had been active prior to this date, but state that this was the "1st regular meeting." Hebrew Benevolent Societies were common in communities across the United States where there were substantial Jewish residents. These early societies

⁹ MHS map collection, reprinted in Marilyn Grant, *Main Street Guide to Virginia City* (Helena: MHS press 1998) 13.

¹⁰ Coleman, 44.

¹¹ Coleman, 7.

¹² Research Center, Montana Historical Society Archives, "Minute Book of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, 1866-1872," SC 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 6

had specific functions. Although there are no formal documents recording its founding or function in Virginia City, the early presence of a formally established burial ground as shown in the Virginia City plat map is ample evidence that an organized Hebrew Benevolent Society or cemetery association existed there. Likewise in Helena as elsewhere on the remote frontier, Jews were drawn together by business interests and religion, and they behaved like their counterparts in much more cosmopolitan places.¹³ This had been true in the short-lived Virginia City community and it was also true in Helena.

Members of Helena's Hebrew Benevolent Society, like members in other places across the West, maintained Jewish holidays; conducted prescribed rituals; offered financial assistance to the needy; and saw to the medical care and burial of victims of accidents, disease, and violence.¹⁴ This group brought Jews together and encouraged charitable actions. The minutes of the second meeting, January 3, 1867, show that relief efforts had already begun. On January 3, 1867, the Minute Book indicates that the society gave \$93 to an unnamed needy member of the community and added an article to the by-laws stating that "all donations given by the [relief] committees should be reported without giving the names of the persons relieved." R. Lande, Sol Poznansky, E. Berta, A. Rosenthal, L. Gans, A. Wolff, S. Levy, J. Bloomingdale, and B. Ellis are noted in the minutes of the first two meetings as serving as officers, trustees, and/or on the relief committee. The Society's minutes show former citizens of Virginia City including G. Goldberg and Marcus Lissner as members, and on December 3, 1869, Moses Morris became president. Although Helena's Jews had no synagogue and no rabbi, the Benevolent Society bound this ethno-religious group together.

Helena's population was approximately 3,000 in 1870.¹⁵ Although the fledgling town lost significant numbers when placer mining was finished toward the end of the 1860s, Helena was still the largest urban area in the territory, surpassing Virginia City whose population had shrunk to 867. Men in the mining camp at Last Chance outnumbered women three to one, and residents came from all over the world and every state. The most significant ethnic groups in the earliest community were Chinese and Jews.

Helena endured a series of devastating fires between 1869 and 1874. Fires were always the bane of mining camps since first generation buildings were usually constructed of wood and built close together. When one caught fire, like a row of dominoes, each ignited its neighbor, devastating entire blocks in a single fiery episode. After these conflagrations it was the Jewish community that helped keep the fledgling mining camp solvent. Many Jewish merchants and businessmen had ties to a financial network that reached well beyond the Montana frontier, allowing access to financial resources to rebuild, sometimes again and again.¹⁶ Marcus Lissner lost his acclaimed but uninsured International Hotel in 1869, 1874, and 1879—so many times that it became known as "the Phoenix." Each time he rebuilt. Like other Helena Jews, he also financially helped many others get started in business. One Jew was a hero. Diminutive clothing merchant Jacob Feldberg—when told by the firemen that he was too little to help fight the fire—jumped rooftops to save his 5th Avenue neighborhood from incineration. For his heroic acts he received the nickname, "Helena's Paul Revere."

In 1867, Jews owned seventeen of Helena's twenty dry goods stores. By 1877, twenty percent of Helena's Board of Trade was Jewish.¹⁷ In 1881, Abram Sands, a Jew, was elected president of the organization. Jews served in public offices (Marcus Lissner was elected to the city council six times), maintained some of Helena's most beautiful homes, and were well respected by the gentile community. Jews were lawyers, judges, bankers, merchants, service providers, and business partners with non-Jews. Louis Hershfield was the Merchant's National Bank president; his vice president was A. J. Davidson, a prominent gentile businessman. Louis Kaufman partnered with gentile Louis Stadler to form one of Montana's largest cattle operations. The prestigious Montana Club, founded in 1885, counted prosperous, well-educated Jews like clothier Herman Gans among its elite members. Many of Helena's Jews, like other citizens, were also Masons and this affiliation drew Jews and gentiles together in fraternal brotherhood.

¹³ Kahn, 40.

¹⁴ Kahn, 100.

¹⁵ Bureau of Census, *Ninth Census of the United States 1870, Montana Territory, Lewis and Clark County*, microfilm, and *Madison County*, microfilm, housed in the MHS Research Center.

¹⁶ Delores Morrow, "Jewish Merchants and the Commercial Emporium of Montana," in *Montana and the West*, ed. Rex Myers and Harry W. Fritz (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing company, 1984) 17-36.

¹⁷ Paula Petrik, *No Step Backward: Women and Family on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier, Helena, Montana, 1865-1900* (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1987) 9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 7

By the end of the 1880s, the Jewish population remained organized and Rabbi Samuel Schulmann came to Helena to lead the congregation. Rabbi Schulman brought with him German Reform Judaism, which fit well with Helena's many Jews of German extraction. Under Rabbi Schulman, the Temple Emanu El was dedicated in 1891. Listed on the National Register on July 11, 2002, it was the first Jewish synagogue between St. Paul, Minnesota and Portland, Oregon.¹⁸

Rabbi Schulman left in 1892. The Jewish population peaked in 1900 at 138 adults, then rapidly declined due largely to lack of job opportunities and temple closed in the 1930s.¹⁹ On April 20, 2001, Morris and Silverman family descendants Joe Schwartz and Sidney Silverman Lindauer came from California to celebrate the temple's 100th anniversary. This gesture demonstrated a depth of family ties to Helena that transcends time and place. Lindauer, granddaughter of Moses Morris and Morris Silverman, who deeply cherished her Helena roots and her Jewish ancestry, passed away in California at 100 in April, 2005.²⁰ Both sets of grandparents and her parents are buried in the Home of Peace.

Helena's Early Cemeteries

Helena established cemeteries as the need arose. The first recorded death was that of Dr. L. Rodney Pococke who succumbed to tuberculosis in the spring of 1865. With his death the mining camp had need of a burial ground.²¹ Although no written record has come to light describing the exact location of Dr. Pococke's burial, the funeral was conducted with great formality and fanfare by the deceased's fellow Masons, the first formal gathering of the order in Helena.²² Presumably he was buried where, within several months of his demise, a cemetery was formally established on high ground overlooking the gulch. After Pococke, Helena's earliest interments in the City Cemetery were Argyle Parkinson, infant son of William and Jeannette Parkinson, who died May 1, 1865; Emanuel Blum, a Jew, who died May 5, 1865; and ten-year-old Anna Davenport who died in September of 1865 from measles contracted aboard the steamship *St. John* en route to Fort Benton. Davenport and Parkinson family members confirmed in reminiscences that their loved ones were buried in the City Cemetery "where the High School is today." (The first Helena High School once stood just north of today's Central School.) Emanuel Blum was interred in the City Cemetery of necessity because there was no Hebrew burial ground at this early date.²³ There were two other deaths in June of 1865—that of Harry Slater and John Keene. Keene murdered Slater and Keene was hanged. Slater's place of interment is unrecorded, but Keene was buried up the hill from the hangman's tree above today's Beattie and Hillsdale streets. A property owner digging a foundation unearthed Keene's corpse in 1900.²⁴

By 1870, Helena had three more cemeteries, two of them serving specific religious groups and the third, Benton Avenue Cemetery (NR listed July 24, 2003, Ref #03000689), served protestant and non-sectarian families. Construction of Central School in 1875 precipitated removal of many of the graves in the City Cemetery to Benton Avenue.

Records kept by the Catholic Church show burials in the Catholic Cemetery on Oakes (today the site of Robinson Park) as early as 1868. An earlier Catholic cemetery, located in the area south of the State Capitol Building, was soon abandoned in favor of the Oakes Street location. The Home of Peace, established in 1867, served Jewish families.

Benton Avenue, the Catholic Cemetery on Oakes, and the Home of Peace were well outside the original townsite; the "in town" cemetery (known as City Cemetery before the mid-1870s), is clearly marked on Helena's first maps. It generally served a more diverse population, being the place of interment for Jews, Catholics, and perhaps Chinese in the first several years before there were alternative burial grounds.²⁵

¹⁸ National Register Nomination, Temple Emanu El, housed at the State Historic Preservation Office, 1410 8th Avenue, Helena. MT.

¹⁹ *The Westmont Word*, vol. IX, no. 26, February 25, 1981; *Helena Independent Record*, March 15, 1980, p. 7.

²⁰ Syndey Silverman Lindauer obituary, <http://www.cnpa.com/CalPub/summer05/obits.htm>, accessed 10/20/05.

²¹ *Virginia City Montana Post*, March 8, 1865.

²² Campbell, *QLCG*, V.I, 13

²³ Unpublished memoirs of Sallie Davenport Davidson, SC606, MHS Research Library Archives; *Montana News Inserts*, "Captain William Parkinson's Wife Made Trip to Virginia City..." 4/18/40. Minute Book of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, December 5, 1867.

²⁴ *Helena Daily Independent*, April 20, 1900.

²⁵ Records are housed in the MHS cemetery records for Lewis and Clark County compiled by Charleen Spalding; the Home of Peace appears as "Hebrew Burial Ground" on a GLO map drawn by B. F. Marsh, surveyor, dated 1868. Housed at the Dept. of Environmental Quality, Helena. The City Cemetery, marked "cemetery grounds" appears on a plat map drawn by A.C. Wheaton in 1868, MHS map collection.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 8

As Helena became the territorial capital in 1875, city improvements included the building of Central School, the first graded school in Montana Territory, on the site of the City Cemetery. This entailed removal of the graves interfering with the construction site. There were consequently many reinterments at Benton Avenue, and thereafter Benton became the place for protestant, Masonic, and indigent burials until the opening of Forestvale Cemetery (NR listed February 21, 1990, Ref #90000145) just after statehood in 1890. Building of Helena High School north of Central School between 1890 and 1893 entailed further reinterments, these to both Benton Avenue and Forestvale. Reinterments from Benton Avenue continued in the first half of the twentieth century as families wishing to be buried in the newer Forestvale transferred the remains of their loved ones from Benton Avenue.

Two other cemeteries were formally established in Helena after 1890. The Oddfellows Cemetery east across the road from Forestvale opened in 1895. The old Catholic Cemetery on Oakes was eventually abandoned in favor of the new Resurrection Cemetery on Montana Avenue that opened in August 1907. Interments continued sporadically at the Oakes Street location until the 1910s. Among the seventeen hundred graves in the old Catholic cemetery, only some two hundred were removed and reinterred. Houses and Robinson Park, created in 1972, spread over the former Catholic burial grounds today.

Thus Helena thus has an interesting and active interment and reinterment history. Other cemeteries from the earliest period were abandoned or the land developed for other purposes. Although modern encroachments—Capital High School and the practice football field—have somewhat impacted the original setting, only the Jewish Home of Peace has remained active from the 1860s to the present day.

The Home of Peace

The Jewish Home of Peace adjacent present-day Capital High School is the oldest active cemetery in Helena and the community's only active ethnic burial ground. Minutes of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, whose purpose was in part to establish and maintain Hebrew burial grounds, first mentions a cemetery on July 11, 1867 when the secretary wrote, "Moved seconded & carried that a committee be appointed to find a good piece of ground for a cemetery." On September 15 of that year, the Society decided "a committee of three be appointed to let a contract for building a house and fence for a burying ground" to cost no more than \$500 around the grounds. G. Goldberg, formerly of Virginia City, was one of three committee members. This fence today surrounds the property. Emanuel Blum, who was born in 1841 and died on May 5, 1865, was the first burial. His remains were originally buried in the City Cemetery where Central School is today. Association minutes of December, 5, 1867 read, "... and have the body of E. Blum removed to the Jewish Cemetery." The architectural plan of the cemetery, drawn in 1931, shows the location of Emanuel Blum's grave, along with the other earliest interments noted below, lying at a diagonal line running to the southwest underneath the chain link fence and beyond.

By January of 1868 the cemetery had been surveyed and around this time the second burial occurred. H. L. Schlessinger, born in Kempton, Prussia had died in October of 1867. Notes at the back of the Minute Book indicate that his was the second burial and that his remains had been removed from the City Cemetery.

Ludwig Aub in May and W. Simon in December of 1868 were the third and fourth burials and the first burials that were not reinterments. A situation then arose that demonstrates how the Association grappled with questions of religious propriety without counsel of a rabbi. President A. Wolff called a special meeting on January 26, 1869, to discuss the burial of Mary Goldman. The youngster had died earlier in the day of an unspecified illness. Two articles in the Helena *Herald* provide details of her death on January 28 and burial on February 4, 1869. According to the paper, Mary was not Jewish by birth but by adoption and choice. Her age is not given, but she is described as "in her girlhood years." Her place of burial and the lack of a rabbi to resolve the question is presumably why there was more than a weeks' delay in burial. Hers was called the largest funeral in Montana to date. Four horses draped and plumed in black drew the hearse. Thirty single and double carriages and buggies, the teams of many of them also plumed in black, followed. Forty horsemen drew up the rear.

The Minute Book details the first burials and activities of the Society, referred to as the Hebrew Benevolent *Association* from December 12, 1867 onwards, but throughout the records into the twentieth century, the members refer to it as both "society" and "association" interchangeably in the written records. The Minute Book spans the period from December 3, 1866, through September 5, 1872. The first entry, December 3, 1866, indicates that a constitution and by-laws had already been drawn up for the organization, but

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 9

a committee of E. Berta, J. Bloomingdale, and A. Wolff was appointed to revise them. A constitution and by-laws were then prepared according to the minutes of December 5, 1867. These documents are not known to be extant. The final pages of the ledger list the first ten burials in the Home of Peace (see Appendix I). Various persons served in the office of Association secretary, recording the minutes in fairly legible handwriting in a lined ledger book. The information is not limited to cemetery business, but includes plans and committee appointments regarding fund raising for the Association, the observance of religious holidays, acquisition of religious items, and discussions of plans to build a synagogue.

On January 7, 1869 (record mistakenly is dated 1898, but follows the December, 1868, entry) the minutes record a motion made and seconded to appoint a committee of three to arrange for the incorporation of the Hebrew Cemetery. However, the Association did not formally purchase the grounds until 1875.²⁶

On September 21, 1879, many of the previous members of the Hebrew Benevolent Association and potential new members met at the Oddfellows Hall to form a new organization, the United Hebrew Association.²⁷ This was an extension of the earlier charitable group. Charter members included A. Sands, William J. Auerbach, Henry Klein, P. Loeb, Jacob Feldberg, S. Marks, Morris Silverman, Moses Morris, Dave Morris, and Sam Levine. The group elected the following new members: Leopold Marks, Moritz Sands, Sol Poznansky, Emil Lavenberg, Julius Silverman, Max Sklower, Adolph Birkenfeldt, and Jacob Schwab. Ten of these eighteen men were later buried in the Home of Peace.

The men drew up a new constitution that set forth cemetery policies and burial procedures. The constitution is included at the beginning of the second record book which spans the period 1879 to 1943. The constitution sheds light on burial practices. Section 2 of Article IX, for example, gives the Association the option to defray funeral costs when at least three members of the group so request. Section 3 allows burial plots free of charge to members and their families. Section 6 of Article XI states:

The price of burial plots of this society shall be not less than Ten dollars and not more than Fifty to be designated by the Board of Trustees, but may be furnished free of charge to poor and indigent Israelites.

As the second generation of Jewish pioneers came of age, the Helena congregation reached a peak in the 1890s, but after 1900, educational opportunities and employment took many of this second generation away from Montana. The closeknit population began to dwindle. Into the twentieth century, the ledger book records families moving away from Helena. The final dues entry for Sol Poznansky, longtime Association member whose child is buried in the Home of Peace, notes: "Moved to Los Angeles." Longtime members of the Jewish community began to pass away and were buried in the cemetery many of them helped to found. Jacob Feldberg, Marcus Lissner, David Morris, Samuel Schwab, and others who faithfully paid their Association dues end in the ledger with a single notation: "died." Although some children and grandchildren moved away from Montana, they sometimes returned to be buried in the Home of Peace alongside family members. Essie Morris Silverman, for example, and her husband Moz—both children of early Helena residents—moved to Spokane, Washington, but are buried in the Silverman plot at the Home of Peace.

In 1903, the First Jewish Benevolent and Cemetery Association filed Articles of Incorporation and made improvements to the cemetery and grounds.²⁸ The old pump house in use since the last quarter of the previous century, was tinned and painted and a sign painted on the front gate in 1904. The cemetery well that provided water for the trees and grounds began to dry up in 1905 and bids were taken to sink it deeper "for the water needed." Shoepfer and Roser got the bid. Also in 1905 the pump house received a new tin roof and the association placed a stone on the grave of Joe Genzberger who died in 1900. The Association commissioned local stonecutter Thomas Kain to cut the marble headstone for \$20.50. Although this headstone no longer exists, it suggests that the Kain Brothers, longtime local quarrymen and tombstone cutters, likely made other stones for the Home of Peace. In 1906, new coils were put in the electric pump and in the winter of 1907-1908, the association paid \$30 to have five inches of cinders spread over "the main roadway leading into the cemetery."

Cemetery Association members sometimes dealt with legal matters. The minutes note that in a letter to the Association in 1907, H. Cohn objected to the selling of the lot in which a child of his was buried. In 1908, the matter was resolved when the remains were

²⁶ Lewis and Clark County Deed Book 17, p. 549, on microfilm at the MHS Research Center.

²⁷ Montana Historical Society Research Center Archives, Home of Peace Cemetery, MC 38, Volume I.

²⁸ Montana Historical Society Research Center Archives, SC 144, Box 1, folder 1-7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 10

moved to Missoula. Many early graves, however, remained unmarked as they still are today. In 1914, for example, Association minutes note that plot 98 included three children whose graves were not marked and in plot 95 one child's grave was unmarked.

On September 2, 1908, Moses Morris, the signator on the 1875 document, signed over the original cemetery deed to the First Jewish Benevolent and Cemetery Association. Two years later in 1910, that organization merged with the Congregation Emanu El. The combining of these two entities is indicative of the diminishing number of Helena Jews. Also in 1910, the group planted the trees that today line the driveway and ordered a tombstone for the grave of Bertha Levy who died in April of the previous year. This tombstone is one of those piled near the water tower; Levy's name and the inscription, "Born in France," are clearly legible.

Around this time the stonework for the front and back gates was completed. Alice Gans gave \$1,000 in 1911 for the perpetual care of the graves of Morris Sands, Leopold Marks, and Herman Gans. This money likely paid for the stone entry and gates.

The Association hired John Ammacker as sexton in 1912. He remained as caretaker in the employ of the Association until the end of 1917. During this period the waning of the Jewish population is in further evidence. As marriages between Jews and Gentiles among Helena families became more frequent, the once stringent cemetery rules began to relax. Minutes of May 28, 1916 record that A. Ornstein proposed emending the article of the constitution stating that only persons of the Jewish faith be buried in the Jewish cemetery. Ornstein proposed that this rule be relaxed to include Gentile spouses and their unmarried children. The response of the Board of Trustees, who were empowered to emend the article, was to agree to not only permit burials of non Jews and non Jewesses linked in legal marriage and their unmarried children, but also to allow non Jewish funerals.

On November 8, 1921, water concerns came to a head. The Association had long grappled with the old pumping station, and finally the worn-out mechanism in the antiquated pump house could no longer be replaced. The Association applied for permission to construct a water pipe line, tapping into the line near the Fairgrounds to bring water into the cemetery. The State of Montana, Department of Agriculture, granted permission and the Association thence forward contracted for city water.

In 1931, George Grossberg took on the presidency of the Association and caretaking of the Home of Peace. Besides Grossberg, other officers of the First Jewish Benevolent and Cemetery Association were Jacob Miller, secretary, and three surviving board members: Herman Fligelman, Herman Tonn, and David Gans. Isaac Boyer and Julius Holzman had passed away in 1925 and 1929, respectively. The charter had expired, and the surviving officers filed a quit claim deed in 1932 transferring the cemetery from the First Jewish Benevolent and Cemetery Association to the Home of Peace Cemetery Association.²⁹

In 1933 the Temple Emanu El passed out of the hands of the Congregation Emanu El. The congregation continued to diminish, but remained viable. Belle Winestine, secretary pro tem of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Temple Emanu El, recorded the final minutes on June 30, 1943. At this time, the ladies organization assumed temporary responsibility for the Home of Peace Cemetery Association business, but the cemetery association became inactive.

In 1975, the Association was again active. Helena School District leased an unused 2.5 acre parcel of the cemetery property northwest of Capital High School for use as a practice football field. The lease continues to the present time. Although the School District has expressed a desire to purchase the acreage since 1975 when its lease began, negotiations have fallen short because of legal issues and the likelihood that the property contains unmarked graves. The Home of Peace Cemetery Association, headed by Phil Grossberg, continues to maintain the cemetery grounds.³⁰

Jewish Cemeteries in Montana

The first Hebrew cemeteries established in Montana were in Virginia City and in Helena. The Virginia City cemetery was in use by 1868 when the plat map was drawn, but its precise founding date is unknown. Helena's Home of Peace was established in 1867. These are the two oldest Hebrew burial grounds; of the two, only the Home of Peace remains in use today.

Butte's B'nai Israel Cemetery was formally established in 1885, but the earliest recorded grave, that of David Mendelsohn, dates to 1880.³¹ There are between 500 and 1,000 graves in this cemetery.

²⁹ Lewis and Clark County Deed Book 108, p. 155, Clerk and Recorder's Office, City-County Building, Helena, MT.

³⁰ Helena *Independent Record*, July 20, 2000.

³¹ B'nai Israel Cemetery records, http://www.mtech.edu/silverbow/bnai_israel.htm accessed October 10, 2005.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 11

A Jewish cemetery located south of Great Falls dates to the late nineteenth century. There are fewer than twelve graves. In 1916 the cemetery merged with the Great Falls Hebrew Association. Although the last burial was in 1940, some Great Falls residents currently plan to be buried there.

The Congregation Beth Aaron established the Beth Aaron Cemetery in Billings in 1918. There are 95 graves and 225 additional plots.³²

The Importance of Masonry in Montana and Jews as Masons

Masonry is an important thread in the history of Montana that began with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The explorers left little tangible evidence of the time they spent in Montana, but among features named by the Expedition are three rivers in Madison County. The Wisdom, Philosophy and Philanthropy rivers are named for Masonic ritual. Meriwether Lewis, likely the first Mason to set foot in the region, left this evidence of his Masonic affiliation.

Half a century later in September of 1862, Captain James Fisk's wagon train camped on the western edge of the Rocky Mountains. Nathaniel Langford, George Gere and Richard Charlton - the only Masons in the company - climbed to the summit of Mullan Pass where they opened and closed an informal lodge of Master Masons. This meeting of the three Masons, according to Masonic tradition and as an alternative to other theories, is one of three events represented in the vigilante ultimatum "3-7-77" that symbolizes Montana's turbulent early history and survives today as part of the insignia of the Montana Highway Patrol. The second event was the funeral of William Bell whose death of mountain fever on November 12, 1862, was the first natural death at Bannack. His funeral brought 76 Masons together for the first formal fraternal gathering. Bell himself was the 77th Mason. The third momentous event was the forming of the vigilance committee, or Vigilantes, at Virginia City on December 22, 1863. This came in the wake of the murder trial and conviction of George Ives. The next day 7 men, all reputedly Masons, organized the Vigilantes and adopted the "3-7-77" signature. Not all Vigilantes were Masons and although this theory has been often challenged, Masons undeniably played a very important role in laying the strong foundation upon which the state of Montana rests.

Contrary to popular belief, many Jews became Masons. Although Masonry was closed to Jews in Russia and Germany, elsewhere many Jews became members of the fraternal organization. Across the United States, Jews were Masons. Masonic beliefs, although Christian in theory, blended well with the tenets of the Jewish faith. Masonic teachings glorify King Solomon and the spiritual and physical builders of his temple, but more importantly, Freemasonry emphasizes the universality of all people.³³ This is what drew Jews to the order. In addition, Freemasonry offered Jews the opportunity to mingle with Gentile citizens. Paul M. Bessel of Alexandria, Virginia, explains Jewish membership in Masonic lodges this way:

The fundamental tenets of Freemasonry and Judaism are similar. We should promote the great goals of the dignity of all people through the free will of men who demonstrate their strength of character. This is what Masonry, Judaism, and the United States stand for, and this helps me understand why my father was proud of his heritage as a Jew, a Mason, and an American.³⁴

That Jews were Mason is also true in Montana where most communities had Masonic lodges very early in their histories. Almost all of the Jewish pioneers of the early communities were Masons.³⁵

The Home of Peace includes many Jews who were Masons of high degrees. Sol Gerzberger and Herman "Sol" Hepner were 33rd Degree Masons; David Pizer, Meyer Jake Fish, Herman Fligelman, and Ellis Blumenthal were all 32nd Degree Masons. Moses

³² International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, Cemetery Project website, <http://www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/northamerica/montana.html>, accessed October 10, 2005.

³³ William Toll (in Kahn, see n. 3 above) p. 83-84.

³⁴ Paul Bessel, "Judaism and Freemasonry," http://www.freemason.org/cfo/july_august_2001/juda.htm accessed March 13, 2006.

³⁵ Coleman, p. 48.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 12

Morris served as Grand Master (1892-1893) as did Sol Hepner (1903-1904). Other Masons buried in the Home of Peace include Louis Kaufman, Leopold Marks, Isaac Boyer, Emanuel Fischl, and Joseph and Herman Gans. Jewish women likewise belonged to the companion organization, Eastern Star, and Josephine Hepner served as Worthy Matron for the organization, a high honor.

Conclusion

The Home of Peace has a special place among Montana's other Jewish cemeteries because those who rest there represent Montana's first Jewish population. Many Jews came to Montana with first gold rushes and moved on from Bannack and Virginia City to Helena where they settled, started businesses, and raised families. The Home of Peace appropriately dignifies these early settlers who showed their faith and optimism in Helena's future, investing time and money in the new community and advocating its stability. They stayed to make a difference in this, their adopted home.

The many pioneers buried in the home of Peace include Ben Ezekiel who was active in territorial and local Virginia City government before he came to Helena and went into the clothing business with Jacob Feldberg. Hotel proprietor Samuel Schwab, banker Louis Hershfield, Virginia City businessman Solomen Content, dry goods merchant Moses Morris, clothier Herman Gans, and cattleman Louis Kaufman are just a few of the many Jews whose diverse contributions and optimistic ventures helped establish Helena as a permanent community.

The Jewish community was closeknit and family; the Home of Peace mirrors these close relationships. Families cluster together with other extended family members usually buried in the next plots or close by. The cemetery is much like a neighborhood, with households bound together by the stone curbing. Most of those buried in the Home of Peace were either first generation pioneers or second and third generations of those first families. For example Marcus Lissner, proprietor of the International Hotel, raised a family of many children. The last living child, Yetta Lissner, was born in Helena and died in 1975 at 97. She lived in her father's house on State Street her entire life. She is buried with her parents and siblings in the Lissner family plot. Hattie Jacobs, whose tombstone is the oldest marker in the cemetery, was the first member of the Jacobs family to die in Helena; one by one, her parents and brothers came to rest with her.

The Home of Peace is the oldest active Jewish Cemetery in Montana and one of very few cultural remnants of a vital population. The meticulous records its association members kept many decades are an unusual legacy that documents the charitable acts and practices of Helena Jews. The cemetery a significant landmark memorializing an ethno-religious group who forged new lives on the western frontier and helped lay the cornerstones upon which Montana's capital city rests.

Appendix I: The First Ten Burials in the Home of Peace. Locations shown on the Cemetery Plan Map

Burial #1

Emanuel Blum, born 1841, died May 5, 1865. He was buried in the City Cemetery where Central School is today and moved. Association minutes of December, 5, 1867 read, "... and have the body of E. Blum removed to the Jewish Cemetery."

Burial #2

H. L. Schlessinger, born Kempten, Prussia, died in October 1867. Although the Home of Peace seems to have been established at the time of his death, notes at the back of the Minute Book indicate initial burial in the City Cemetery. No obituary has come to light.

Burial #3

Ludwig Aub, died May, 1868. He was a wealthy banker, born in Bavaria, who emigrated to the US in 1849. He took a low level position with Seligman & Co. in New York City and worked his way up to cashier. He came to Helena and formed a partnership in the banking business with F. Bohm. Age unknown, but his death was called "untimely." *Helena Weekly Herald*, May 28, 1868. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 13

services took place at Bohm's assay office at 11:45 in the morning. Upon conclusion fifteen minutes later, the procession commenced "to the cemetery in the Prickly Pear Valley." The ten pallbearers wore "black and white regalia." Four horses "decked in mourning" drew the hearse."

The procession, which was the largest we ever saw in Helena, consisted of twenty-three double and single carriages, one of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s omnibuses, and thirty-eight horsemen. Altogether, the obsequies of Ludwig D. Aub were perhaps the most imposing ever witnessed in the metropolis.

According to the association minutes, on June 3, 1869, M. Aub donated \$75 and requested that religious services should be held on the anniversary of his brother's death.

Burial #4

W. Simon, died December 13, 1868: "Mr. W. Simon, a Hebrew citizen, fell prostrate in the street, at the corner of Bridge and Main, early this morning, and on being moved to Lissner's block, expired in a few moments. Cause of death—disease of the heart. The funeral of the deceased took place this p.m., and was pretty generally attended by the Hebrews of the city." *Helena Weekly Herald*, December 17, 1868.

Burial #5

Mary Goldman, died January 26, 1869. It is unusual that two articles in the Helena papers note the death and burial (*Helena Herald*, January 28 and February 4, 1869). The Association minutes note that a special meeting was called. The object of the meeting was to consider the propriety of burying the remains of Mary Goldman in the Home of Peace. According to the paper, Mary was not Jewish by birth but by adoption and choice. Her age is not given, but she is described as "in her girlhood years." Her place of burial and the lack of a rabbi to resolve the question is presumably why there was a fairly long delay in burial. Hers was called the largest funeral in Montana to date. Four horses draped and plumed in black drew the hearse. Thirty single and double carriages and buggies, the teams of many of also plumed in black, followed. Forty horsemen drew up the rear.

Burial #6

Mrs. William I. Rosenthal, died July 29, 1869. (Incorrectly entered in cemetery records as *Mr.*)

Burial #7

Marx Grogofsky, died April 4, 1870. No obituary or other information has come to light. Check city directories for his employment/residence

Burial #8

Solomon Content, born 1831, died April 14, 1870. Content was born in Brooklyn, New York. He was one of the early settlers at Virginia City and built Content's Corner in 1863, one of the town's most important gold rush era masonry buildings, still the architectural centerpiece on Wallace Street.

Burial #9

J.O. Cohen, born 1828, died July 17, 1870. The Association minutes of December 1, 1870, indicate that a committee of three was appointed to settle the estate of Major J. O Cohen for a plot in the Jewish Cemetery.

Burial #10

Rosa Sands, born 1863, died October 4, 1870, six-year-old daughter of Abraham Sands. Her flowery, unusually long obituary in the *Helena Herald*, October 5, 1870 gives no specific information but that the physician did his best "to baffle the disease."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 14

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 15

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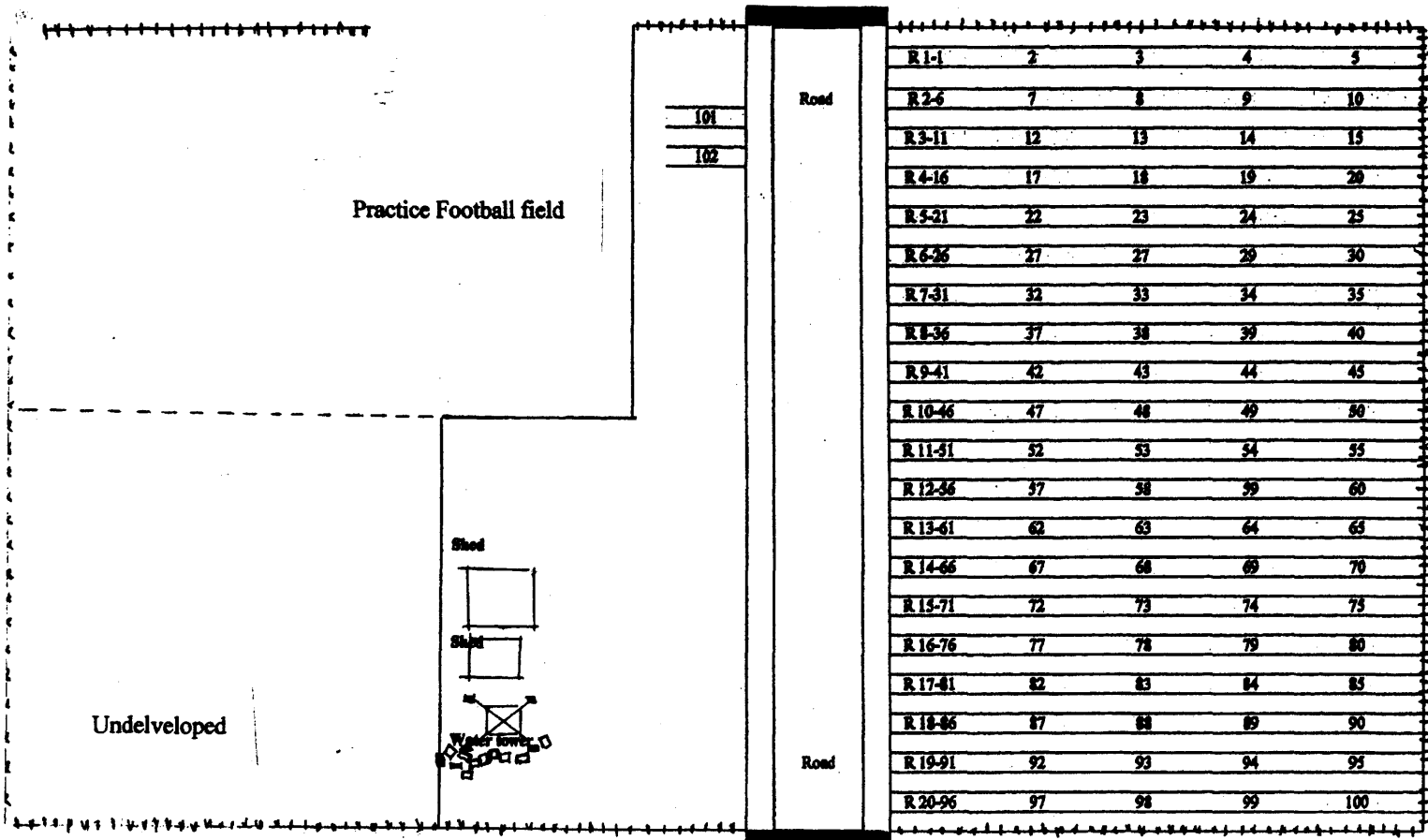
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10

Home of Peace
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

Page 16

**HOME OF PEACE CEMETERY
HELENA, MONTANA**



R-Row (R 1-1 = row 1, plot 1)

Barbed wire fence — x — x — x —
Wrought iron fence — + — + — + — + —
Chain link fence — — — — —

