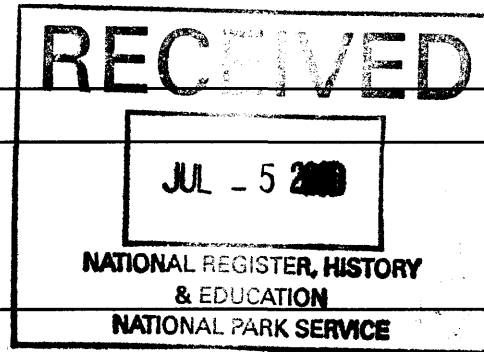


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

873

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: Wick-Seiler Residence

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 729 11th Ave

vicinity: n/a

city/town: Helena

state: Montana code: MT county: Lewis & 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.

Mark F. Baumber
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/22/2000
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)

Boe
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall 8.2.00

5. Classification

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

Materials:

foundation: stone
walls: brick, stucco
roof: wood
other:

Narrative Description

Setting

The Wick-Seiler Residence is situated on a prominent corner along a wide residential thoroughfare lined with ash trees. Eleventh Avenue today serves as the main artery (old Hwy 12) through Helena, and this home on the southwest corner of 11th and Raleigh, complemented by the Cooper House across the street on the northwest corner, serves as the portal to a corridor of period homes. The cross streets branch into other late nineteenth century neighborhoods.

The Wick-Seiler Residence is the largest on the block, and sits facing 11th Avenue. The street slopes gently downhill west to Davis Street and then angles uphill in a northwesterly direction two blocks to the intersection of 11th and Rodney Street. Single-family homes and several duplexes characterize the neighborhood on either side of 11th Avenue, most of them built in the late 1880s.

On its visible corner lot the Wick-Seiler Residence blends into the 1880s milieu, but its distinctive architecture is unique to the block. It as an outstanding example of the Italianate style as it was translated into the vernacular on the western frontier. Built in 1888 or 1889 by local contractor/brick mason Joseph F. Evans, the style was already out of vogue elsewhere, but still occasionally employed in Helena and other towns in Montana. Evans, likely working with pattern book plans, built this home after he completed the small one-story cottage next door at 516 North Raleigh.

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Physical Description

The Wick-Seiler Residence is a two-story, stucco-clad brick residence with a low, hipped, shake-shingled roof. It has a one-story kitchen on the south with an enclosed shed-roofed rear porch. There are brick porched entrances on both the east and north facades. The overall form is massive, asymmetrically blocky and right-angled in keeping with the style. At the roofline there is a plain cornice band below the wide boxed eaves. Dentils accent the cornice on the two-story portion of the residence. The primary windows are tall, arched one-over-one and double hung, both paired and singly placed. Delicate stenciled and arched insets, a vernacular touch characteristic of most middle class Helena homes of this period, adorn the windows. Decorative brick crowns and sills, now covered in stucco but still attractively accented in contrasting paint, highlight the windows. The basic square plan of the main residence is offset by a square one-story bay with four windows on the north facade and a two-story projection of the south half of the east facade. Two hip roof porches, with solid brick balustrades and heavy square wooden support posts, fill the northwest and east recesses created by these extensions. Each porch has a small pediment with king's post Stick-style detailing. Poured concrete flooring and steps leading to the entries is pigmented to complement the red brick. Paneled entry doors with nine lights appear to be original as do the paneled twelve-light French style storm doors. The home is painted in a historic color scheme of gray-green with sand and dark green trim. Original low wrought iron fencing marks the 11th Avenue boundary, wraps around the corner of 11th and Raleigh, and extends half the length of the Raleigh Street yard. Cedar plank fencing encloses the remaining rear side yard off the kitchen. Mature landscaping includes three ash trees along the 11th Avenue side, a lilac hedge separating the property from its 11th Avenue neighbor and a white lilac tree at the Raleigh Street entrance planted nearly a century ago and prized by Elizabeth Wick Seiler.

The primary facade faces north onto 11th Avenue and is accessed through a gate in the wrought iron fence. Several steps and a curving sidewalk lead to the porched main entry at the northwest corner. Two symmetrically placed single windows on the second story bay balance the asymmetrical first floor with its square bay and offset entry. Although the hipped roofs of the porch and bay conjoin, each is distinct creating further asymmetry with their uneven rooflines. Shrubbery hides a north-facing window on the first floor rear where a bathroom addition off the kitchen projects several feet beyond the main body of the house. This window is exactly like the other historic windows with brick crown and sill, but it does not have a stenciled inset.

The east elevation facing Raleigh Street has a secondary entry accessed though a second gate in the wrought iron fence with a short sidewalk leading to the porch steps. The entry opens onto the porch from the two-story projection, thus this doorway like the other entry faces 11th Avenue. There are paired windows centered on the first and second story of the east facade's projection. A single window looks out upon the porch on the first floor. Above the porch, a small casement window has been added and another single window shortened, although its crown, inset and sill remain intact. On the one-story kitchen, the original tall window has been replaced with a small modern casement window. There is also a back entry at the southeast corner, added when the back porch was enclosed prior to 1930.

The two-story section of the south elevation is flat and planar with no windows. A cellar door set against the wall at a 45 degree angle opens onto steps leading to the basement. A band of fixed multi-light windows illuminates the enclosed one-story back porch. Prior to this addition, a rear door provided entry to the kitchen on the south side.

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The west elevation is hidden from most views. A chimney bisects the otherwise planar surface. There is no fenestration on the north half, but on the south half there is one pair of windows on the second story and a single window on the first floor. Another window, placed at a higher distance than the others on the first floor, looks out from the northwest corner of the kitchen (pantry).

A two-car garage with access onto Raleigh Street was built in 1932. It is clad in clapboard and has a gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. Cedar shake shingles cover the gable ends. The doors at the east elevation are trifold, with a single panel on each side and two fold-out panels in each of the two central doors. The garage is nestled between 729 11th Avenue and 516 N. Raleigh. Maps show that historically an outbuilding has always occupied that space. Painted to match the main house, its presence adds to the ambiance of the property and is a contributing element.

The Wick-Seiler Residence appears on the 1890 and 1892 Sanborn maps nearly in its present configuration. The one-story kitchen is original to the house, although it may have been slightly modified to accommodate a bathroom and a back porch (later enclosed) added before 1908. ¹

The most extensive changes occurred in 1932 and 1933 when the upstairs was converted to an apartment for Harry and Bernice Seiler Mitchell. New interior walls, hardwood flooring and a bathroom were added on the second floor in 1932. The bathroom necessitated the addition of a small casement window. A second upstairs window seems to have been shortened to accommodate a kitchen sink (although the building permit notes the actual addition of two windows). In 1933, the two brick porches and the wood frame garage were constructed, replacing previous structures. The home was also stuccoed at this time. All of the historic modifications are sympathetic to the original style. They represent the only major changes made to the original construction. Except for replacement of the east-facing kitchen window and the addition of removable aluminum storm windows on the second story, the home appears today as it did after the 1932 and 1933 remodeling.

The interior retains its original ground floor plan with a side entrance hall and parlor to the left. The Raleigh Street entrance opens into the dining room. A small bedroom off the dining room now functions as a den. Except for the kitchen, the first floor retains the original wide routed baseboards, decorative woodwork, bulls-eye rosettes and narrow-plank hardwood flooring characteristic of Helena's early homes. Ten-foot ceilings and picture moldings preserve its nineteenth century character. Despite the 1930s remodel, the second story also retains much of its original character with some of the 1880s woodwork intact and high ceilings throughout. Current owners have removed layers of wallpaper in nearly every room, and restored the walls to the original plaster.

Integrity

The Wick-Seiler Residence retains almost all its historic integrity and is a primary element of the historic Hoback and Cannon Addition. The original design elements, configuration and details survive intact with the exception of minor

¹ The Seiler children, Bernice and Arthur, recall that the kitchen and bath were as they are now when their parents moved into the house c. 1909. Personal communication with Art Seiler, Jr. and Bernice Seiler Mitchell, December 1990.

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upper story window modifications and the application of stucco over the original brick. Enclosure of the back porch, remodeling of the two porches, and addition of the garage occurred within the historic period. The original features and craftsmanship as well as the setting and feeling on the property within the surrounding neighborhood well reflect the late 1880s when the Hoback and Cannon Addition stood at the edge of Helena's expanding residential neighborhoods.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Exploration & Settlement,
Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1888-1933

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1888-1889, 1932, 1933

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Joseph F. Evans

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Wick-Seiler Residence stands on a prominent corner at Raleigh and 11th Avenue, along a historic residential corridor within a potential historic district. The late nineteenth-century neighborhood developed on the heels of dwindling placer gold operations and gives tangible evidence of the city's expansion and maturation in the wake of the Northern Pacific Railroad. The attractive residential thoroughfare serves as a gateway to Helena's historic downtown and symbolizes the burgeoning middle class during this period of heady optimism.

The tall Italianate style home, a grand example of the style fashionable in the 1880s, stands out as an anchor to the block of single and double family dwellings dating to that decade. It is the only example of the style in the immediate neighborhood. Owned for sixty years by a prominent and prosperous family of German immigrants who put down solid roots in their new community, the home gains added significance for these associations. Industrious, hard-working early settlers such as John Wick, who came West on the heels of the gold rush, and his son-in-law Arthur Seiler, who came in the wake of the railroad, formed the backbone of Helena's colorful middle class melting pot that populated these neighborhoods. They and their children represent Helena's strong European ties and the many self-made immigrants who helped shape the Helena community after the gold rush and into the present era. For these reasons, the home is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places according to Criterion A and C.

Historical Significance

Early Helena

Helena, Montana sprang from the discovery of placer gold in 1864 along a small creek the discoverers dubbed Last Chance Gulch. At the time of this discovery, placer gold finds had dwindled at the two previous mining centers of Bannack and Virginia City. Prospectors stormed Last Chance at the first mention of the strike. Soon many Virginia City merchants and service providers followed, eager to cash in on the teeming new gold camp at Last Chance. The settlement, named Helena, grew rapidly and miners' claims covered all the areas that today are part of the state's capital city. After mining played out during the 1870s and 1880s, developers and speculators platted and subdivided the former claims to accommodate the growing population as the town matured into a commercial, political and social center.

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In the spring of 1866, Richard Hoback arrived in Helena from Minnesota. He traveled with his wife and small son in a train of 300 wagons over the route later followed by the Great Northern Railway. Hoback acquired forty acres just outside the city, an area known as the California Bar, and began a fairly lucrative placer mining operation. In one five day period, Hoback and a partner extracted \$216 in gold dust. By 1880, the gold played out and Hoback, in partnership with prominent Helena businessman C.W. Cannon, platted his California Bar claims and began to develop the lots.

The tracks of the Northern Pacific Railroad arrived in 1883, linking remote Montana Territory and Helena, designated territorial capital in 1875, with the "States." This great milestone ushered in a period of expansion and optimism, characterized by the construction of handsome commercial blocks, elegant homes for the socially elite, multi-family apartment buildings, boarding houses as well as affordable single-family dwellings. The Hoback and Cannon Addition east of downtown was central to the construction boom and developed rapidly to provide much-needed, attractive housing for Helena's middle income residents.

Helena's East Side Neighborhood/Hoback and Cannon Addition

The Hoback and Cannon Addition, one of several east side suburbs platted in the 1880s, includes 16 blocks (Blocks 601-616) bounded roughly by North Davis Street on the northwest, Beattie and Hoback streets on the west and east and 12th and 8th Avenues on the north and south. The Sanborn-Perris Map Company did not map the area until 1888, and by this time few undeveloped lots remained in the addition. Traces of mining activity lingered, however, at the north end labeled "gravel beds" and "old placer mine" on the 1888 map. 11th was on the fringe, and 8th Avenue served as the major thoroughfare with the trolley running along it from downtown. The Hoback and Cannon Addition was also within short walking distance of the important commercial area that developed along Rodney Street. This secondary commercial corridor between Broadway and 6th Avenue boasted hotels, restaurants, saloons and shops that served the adjacent territorial capitol and county government complex. The 16 blocks of the Hoback and Cannon Addition included some 80 dwellings in 1888, as well as numerous outbuildings and stables. These original dwellings and associated outbuildings form the nucleus of a potential historic district eligible for listing in the National Register.

Within the immediate neighborhood is the Register-listed House of the Good Shepherd Historic District at 9th Avenue and Hoback. This sisters who ran this Catholic institution offered a safe haven for "wayward girls." The property included a convent and dormitory by 1888. In 1892, a chapel had been added to the convent and St. Helena's Catholic Church across the street catered to Helena's German residents, many of whom lived in this general area. This was the town's only Catholic church offering mass in the German language. By 1893, the German Lutheran Church at 9th Avenue and Rodney and the First Scandinavian Church at Hoback and Butte were within short walking distance. All these buildings still stand.

The earliest homes of the Hoback and Cannon Addition reflect the stylistic influence fashionable during the 1880s and into the 1890s. These dwellings today are little changed and readily convey the nineteenth century character of the neighborhood. Vernacular Queen Anne, French Empire and Italianate-inspired architecture enliven the streetscapes. A mix of both single and multi-family dwellings, large homes and more modest cottages reflect the variable incomes, family sizes and housing choices necessary to accommodate a diverse and growing middle income population. Although the homes are not pretentious, they reflect the prosperity of Helena's economic peak.

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One of the few undeveloped Hoback and Cannon lots in 1888 was the north half of corner Lot 1 in Block 607. Between 1880 and 1885, this lot had changed hands half a dozen times for a price varying from \$200 to \$400. The buying and selling of this property readily demonstrates the speculation occurring in the neighborhood, culminating in its re-purchase for \$250 by original owners Hoback and Cannon in 1885.

By 1888 a small one-story residence on the south end of Lot 1 (516 North Raleigh) housed builder/contractor Joseph F. Evans. While Evans was in residence there between 1888 and 1889, he built the home at 729 11th Avenue that appears for the first time on the 1890 Sanborn map. In 1890, Evans purchased both the finished house at 729 11th Avenue and the Raleigh Street residence from Hoback and Cannon for \$2,000. He likely paid a reduced price, perhaps in exchange for his skills as builder/contractor of the two homes. (A smaller model home a block away at Hoback and 11th Avenue was advertised on September 21, 1889 in the Helena Journal for \$3,800). Evans continued to live next door at 516 N. Raleigh, renting 729 11th Avenue to physician James C. Thompson and realtor John W. Thompson until 1893 when Evans briefly lived at 729 11th Avenue. The Silver Panic of 1893 undoubtedly cost Evans his livelihood in Montana; Helena would not see much building again until the end of the decade. He left Helena and eventually settled in Lafayette, Indiana. Evans presumably let the house to tenants for several years in his absence. Then in 1898, John and Philipia "Mina" Wick purchased the home from Evans for \$2,600, a low price reflecting the depressed economy of the late 1890s.

Wick-Seiler Family History

John Wick was born in Bavaria in 1854, came to the United States at the age of 20 and first settled in Minnesota. In 1876, like many other merchants and service providers seeking opportunity, he came to the territorial capital at Helena to practice his trade as blacksmith and wagon maker. First employed by the firm of Weisenhorn and Brown, in 1879 he married and began his own shop in partnership with Emil Bruno. Wick and Bruno set up business in an older frame building on the site of the present Gold Block. Three years later, fire destroyed the business. Wick was one of many Helena businessmen to experience firsthand financial devastation brought on by such a disaster. However, the experience heightened Wick's resolve and commitment to his new community. He became interested in commercial real estate and actively served community interests as an alderman of the First Ward. By 1888, John Wick had redefined his career. In various partnerships and at various locations, Wick became one of Helena's best-known saloonkeepers.

Philipia Offenbaker, or Mina as she was always called, was born in Frankfort, Germany in 1860 and came to Helena at 18 in 1878. She married John Wick in 1879. The couple held onto their German heritage, and attended the German Lutheran Church, which John helped lay the cornerstone for. John's success in the saloon business allowed them to purchase a substantial residence in the Hoback and Cannon Addition. The Wicks moved into the home at 729 11th Avenue in 1898 with their three children: John, Jr. (19), Elizabeth (17) and Christian (13). After 1900, Wick moved his business permanently to 15 West 6th Avenue (Power Block) and he further prospered, operating under various names including The Rathskellar until his death in 1908.

On September 12, 1901, Elizabeth Wick and Arthur Seiler were married in the bay window of the Wicks' parlor at 729 11th Avenue. (That day was Elizabeth's 20th birthday.) The couple remained in the neighborhood and upon the death of John Wick, Elizabeth's mother Mina moved next door to 516 N. Raleigh while the Seilers moved into 729 11th Avenue with their two small children, Bernice and Arthur, Jr.

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During the last years of the Wicks' residency at 729 11th Avenue between 1901 and 1908, the Cooper family lived across the street at 730 11th Avenue. Future film legend Gary Cooper was a playmate of the Wicks' granddaughter, Bernice. Bernice Seiler Mitchell recalled Mrs. Cooper and her mother in the Wicks' yard talking one day. Both repeatedly warned the children not to climb the fence. Young Gary ignored the warning and nearly impaled himself on one of the wrought iron pickets. Gary was injured, but survived, as did the fence that still surrounds the house.³

Arthur Seiler, Sr. was born in Baden Baden, Germany in 1873. He came to Helena at the age of 15 in 1888. According to family lore, the youngster came west to work for an uncle who had a shop in Helena. Upon his arrival, Seiler discovered that his uncle had disappeared and he was left without means. He also spoke little English. That Helena's German enclave was closeknit is evident in that the young German immigrant found employment with the Reinig Coffee House, Herrmann & Company, and finally Salade and Hepperdiezel. These prosperous German-speaking proprietors each in turn took young Seiler under their wings. By 1894, he had begun his career as a candymaker under Frank Hepperdiezel. Seiler learned his craft and by 1904, had established his own confectionery at 13 West 6th Avenue, next door to his father-in-law's business. By 1908, he had moved the confectionery to 23 West 6th Avenue.

Arthur Seiler's confectionery was widely renowned as were his candy-making skills. His confectionery delights were long remembered, and far-flung customers requested orders of his famous cream-filled toffee long after he retired.⁴ Seiler operated his own business until circa 1912. After that time, he was much sought after, employed as candymaker at other establishments in Helena including Gamer's and O'Connor's Drugs. The Seilers' daughter, Bernice, married Harry M. Mitchell in 1926. Mitchell ran a successful Helena furniture store for many years. Arthur and Elizabeth purchased Harry's Bozeman business upon his marriage. Between 1927 and 1931, the Seilers moved to Bozeman to operate The Bungalow confectionery while their son, Arthur Jr., began college at MSU. (He later went on to graduate from MIT.) The Seilers rented 729 11th Avenue to tenants in the interim. They returned to Helena after the death of Mina Wick on April 5, 1931. Two weeks later on April 23, Elizabeth's brother Christopher passed away.

After the Seilers returned to Helena in the early 1930s, the family home was converted to a duplex to accommodate Bernice and Harry Mitchell. Two storage rooms upstairs were finished as a dining room and kitchen, and a bath was added for the couple. The elder Seilers lived downstairs. When earthquakes rocked the valley in October, 1935, unlike many Helena homes, 729 11th Avenue suffered little damage. Bernice Mitchell, however, recalled that she was on her way downstairs when the house began to sway. The hanging light fixture in the downstairs hall swung so hard it hit the ceiling. In the aftermath of this event, many Helena homes received coats of stucco to hide unsightly cracks. Seiler was ahead of step with this trend, having already stuccoed his home in 1933, following fashion and not necessity.⁵

Seiler, like his in-laws, steadfastly retained his German roots and remained fluent in his native language, serving as a longtime editor of the local German language newspaper.⁶ He also was an accomplished musician, giving informal Christmas concerts each year on the zither. In 1957, the Seilers moved back to the house next door at 516 N. Raleigh. They sold 729 11th Avenue to Burt C. Jensen. Arthur Seiler, Sr. died in 1968 at age 94. Elizabeth Wick Seiler died in 1975 at age 93.

3 Communication with Bernice Mitchell and Art Seiler, Jr., December 3, 1990.

4 Helena Independent, 9/7/68

5 Conversation with Arthur Seiler, Jr. and Bernice Seiler Mitchell, December, 1990

6 (Fred Nagele interview, August 14, 1999).

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After several other owners, Mark and Ellen Baumler purchased 729 11th Avenue in 1988. In 1989, the home was recognized as an Official Montana Centennial Site. The Seiler children, Bernice Seiler Mitchell (now 97) and local entrepreneur Arthur Seiler, Jr. (91), continue to live active, productive lives in Helena. They have returned several times to visit the family home and entertained the Baumlers with their special memories.

Architectural Significance

The Wick-Seiler Residence retains its original configuration and a high level of historic integrity both inside and outside. It is a fine example of the Italianate style as it was employed in Helena and is the only example of the style on the block. Joseph F. Evans was not an architect, but his pattern book adaptation shows an understanding of elegance achieved through restrained simplicity, a common thread found throughout middle income Helena homes of the 1880s. The stylistic characteristics include a low-pitched hip roof, wide overhanging eaves, denticulate cornice, and tall windows with decorative segmental arched crowns. The lack of brackets at the eaves and the addition of stenciled wood insets at the window tops are excellent examples of vernacular adaptation employed by the builder.

Modifications in the 1930s, sensitive to the original design elements, also reflect period trends. The brick porches with their heavy square wooden supports, added in 1933, are reminiscent of the Craftsman style popular at the time. Addition of the king's post pediments reflect Tudor half-timbering, very stylish during the 1930s. The stucco, applied when the porches were rebuilt, is also indicative of 1930s fashion. The home appears today exactly as it did in 1933 following these changes. On its highly visible corner of 11th Avenue, the Wick-Seiler Residence with its nineteenth century neighbors provides a charming entry into Helena's inner historic streetscapes

Wick-Seiler Residence
Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, Montana
County and State

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: less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	12	5159860	421300

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 30, T10N, R3W, MPM.

Verbal Boundary Description

The Wick-Seiler Residence is located on the north half (90 feet) of lot 1, Block 607, Hoback and Cannon Addition to the Helena Townsite.

Boundary Justification

The north half, or 90 feet, of this lot has always been associated with this house.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ellen Bauml

organization:

street & number: 729 11th Avenue

city or town: Helena state: MT

date: January 2000

telephone: 406-449-3065

zip code: 59601

Property Owner

name/title: Mark & Ellen Bauml

street & number: 729 11th Avenue

city or town: Helena state: MT

telephone: 406-449-3065

zip code: 59601

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