

# 616-624 Ludington Street

**Before**



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**United States Department of the Interior**  
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**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Escanaba Central Historic District

Name of Property

Delta Co., Michigan

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Sanborn maps reveal this building appears to date between 1893 and 1899 when a building with its footprint was constructed and addressed as 612-614 Ludington. The upstairs was a hall, because the building plan notes that the wall dividing the storefronts at 612 and 614 were on the first floor only. In 1899, 612 housed a Grocery and 614 a Boots and Shoes store. While 614 retained Boots and Shoes in 1906, the eastern half was occupied by a Tailor. In 1913, 612 was occupied by an Office Supplies store and 614 by a Clothing store, with Office Supplies continuing through the east half of the building in the 1921 edition, while 614 is again designated as Tailor. While the 1929 edition labels both storefronts as Stores, the 1929-50 Updates edition places a Printing concern in 614.

The 1893-95 city directory (DCGS 2012b) reveals that the American Express Co. had an office in this building, and in 1902 H.W. Coburn Drugs Books Cigars Candies was located here. By 1924-25 through 1929, Delta Printing Co. was in 612 and Harriman Electric Co. was in 614, with the UP Fair Association also present by 1929; In 1937 Delta Printing Co, continued in 612, while the National Reemployment Service was in 614; Delta Printing continues 1941, with 614 Vacant. 1948 reveals Delta Printing and Skaug Bros real estate in 612, with 614, identified as the Pavlick Building, housing Pavlik's Gift Shop and L&R Sport Shop. 612 still houses Delta Printing Co. as well as EG Electric Co. contractors in 1953, while 614 still has Pavlick's Gift Shop and Lawrence Pavlick building contractor. Both AEG Electric Co. and Pavlick's Gift Shop continue through 1953.

**616. Gus Asp Building (1893-99).**

This is a brick, rectangular plan, flat-roofed, single story, one-part commercial block. The façade's three bays are defined by a recessed center entry and flanking fixed glass display windows now partially sheathed in wood panels. The textures of the façade wall planes are emphasized by employing alternating bands of six courses of rusticated brick and two courses of polished brick. A series of seven metal paterae occur in masonry that would have anchored the original storefront cornice. This small building is distinguished by its exuberant cornice composed of an arched brick corbel table. Even moreso, its character is defined by the presence of streamline-inspired signage consisting of a full-width horizontal metal banner. Its projecting central segment and each of its curved ends are emphasized by strips of horizontal neon. Painted numbers on the central section provide the address, "616," and the lateral sections are lettered "TOBACCOS" and "SOUVENIRS." Above these lateral identifiers are base-mounted neon letters, "GUS" and "ASP." A projecting metal sign in the form of an arrow pointing down to the entrance is mounted on the projecting central segment of the façade signage perpendicular to the façade. In neon on both faces it flashes alternately "GUS ASP" and "JUST ASK." The streamline moderne marquis and neon signage appear to date to 1930s, apparently soon after Asp bought the building in 1933 (and continued in ownership until retirement in 1968) (EHDC 2012: 19).

Sanborn maps reveal this building was constructed between 1893 and 1899, and although Vacant in 1899, by 1906 it housed a Ladies' Tailor. One source relates that the Royal Theatre was opened by the Ed Spechts in this building (Dunathan 1963: 124), which appears to be confirmed by Sanborn maps that indicate a theater was present in 1913. Sanborn also reveals that by 1921 it is listed as an Office, which appears to be associated with the Stack Lumber Co., identified at this address in 1924-25 and 1929 city directories, with the Helena Land & Lumber Co. and J.K. Stack Co. The 1937 city directory notes for the first time Gus C Asp news dealer, an occupancy that continues through the 1963 edition.

The Stack Lumber Co. was incorporated in 1913 with a capital stock of \$1,500,000 (Iron Age 1913: 1198). In 1915 a trade journal reported that this company had let the "largest single contract ever awarded in the

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northwestern states” to harvest 80,000 acres of hardwood in Mackinac and Luce counties, the “first big attack upon the enormous hardwood resources of the Upper Peninsula” (MMFR 1915: 27). It noted that big pine operations had been common in the past, “but even then, there were few that rivaled the contract just given in the extent of operations.” The company continued in operation at least into the 1950s, as indicated by records relating to a land exchange with the State of Michigan (MNRC 1949: 428). In 1933, Gust Asp, the son of Danish immigrants, bought the building and operated it as a cigar store and news stand until he retired in 1968. In recognition of his reputation for being knowledgeable about the area, he coined the slogan “Just Ask, Gust Asp” (EHDC 2012), still illuminated on the store’s original neon sign today.

In 1867, John King Stack opened the Stack Wholesale Liquor and Tobacco Company (which he sold in 1896) and later a saloon, both on Ludington Street. In 1890 he was one of the principal organizers of the Escanaba Street Railway Co. that provided trolley transportation around the city and eventually to Gladstone (this firm later was the Escanaba Power and Traction Co. and was in operation until May of 1932). The Stack Lumber Co. was organized in 1913 as successor to the Escanaba Lumber Co. with John K. Stack as President and John K. Stack, Jr. as Vice President. At incorporation, John K. Stack owned all the preferred stock after investing \$500,000 into the business, which owned 90,000 acres of land and 55 miles of standard gauge railroad, and a hardwood flooring factory, with plans to build a new saw mill, planning mill and chemical factory (Lumber World Review 1913: 42). The company eventually had saw mills at Masonville, Manistique, Pike Lake and Little Lake. The company manufactured lumber, lath, shingles, cedar products and maple, birch and beech flooring. (Jones 2012a). Stack was with many other significant Escanaba enterprises. He was President of the Escanaba National Bank, President of the Escanaba Paper Company (he was a principal developer of the water power of the Escanaba River which led to what is now the NuPage Corporation Escanaba Paper Mill. He was a director of the Delta Title, Land and Loan Company. He was involved in The Escanaba and Gladstone Transportation Co. whose ships served communities on both Little and Big Bay de Noque. He served as Mayor of Escanaba for three consecutive terms. Progressive in private life also, his home reputedly was the first in Escanaba to have electricity. John King Stack died September 1, 1920 (Jones 2012a).

The Helena Lumber Co. was organized by Stack’s son, John K. Stack Jr., ca. 1929 as successor to Stack Lumber Co. to harvest timber holdings in which he had speculatively invested soon after the onset of the Great Depression (Jones 2012b). Forest fires and the general economy resulted in a short-lived venture. Stack was elected Auditor General for the State Michigan in 1933, and was re-elected shortly before his death in 1935 (New York Times 1935; Political Graveyard 2012).

See 701 Ludington for another building related to Stack, the Stack Block.

**624. Delta Hotel (1914, 1962, 1994)**

Listed in the National Register on April 9, 1998, the following text is excerpted from the SHPO. The five-story brick and masonry Delta Hotel is a simplified Neoclassical commercial building which rises sixty-six feet in height. The two main facades exhibit a three-part composition typical of many commercial buildings of the late 19th and early 20th century: a rusticated treatment of the ground level, a relatively simple main section and an attic segment. Horizontal banded brickwork above the building’s brick foot wraps the first floor between and above slightly inset window and door openings. The horizontal banding pattern is repeated in paired piers at the corners from the ground to fourth floors. A decorative masonry belt course resembling a classical cornice extends across the main facades below the fifth-floor windows. The paired piers at the corners between the fourth and fifth levels also display friezes of classical inspiration. Paneled brickwork outlined in header bricks on the fifth

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floor above the cornice creates a rectangular pattern that is replicated between all windows on that floor.

The upper section features a slightly lighter colored brick parapet that was added in 1988 to replace the deteriorating main cornice. The building's brickwork at the top of the fifth floor on the two main facades is corbelled outward to the base of the parapet, which is formed by rows of somewhat smaller brick. A C-shaped addition was constructed in 1962-63 as part of the original building's conversion from hotel to nursing home use, measures 25 feet by 140 feet and is faced in a lighter, sand-colored brick.

The interior featured a floor plan largely intact today, including the standard lobby, dining room, grill and bar. The bar became a coffee shop during Prohibition (returning to original function when a brewpub opened in the building in the 1990s) (EHDC 2012: 19). The original hotel building retains many original interior features including intricate wooden panels and window frames, manufactured by Escanaba's Stegath Lumber Company, and decorative ceiling plasterwork.

Sanborn maps reveal construction between 1906 and 1913 with the 1913 edition stating Fire Proof and "To Be Occupied About December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915. It indicates an Office in the southwest corner on Ludington, a Bar in the southeast corner behind which was a Grill Room, a Dining room occupying a majority of the first floor behind/north of the Office, and a Kitchen occupying the eastern bay back from the Grill Room and parallel to the Dining Room. The 1921 edition reveals the southwest bay to be occupied by the Lobby and that the hotel had 72 guest rooms. The 1929 and 1929 Updates editions reveal no changes to the documentation. When the Bishop Noa Home was added in 1960, it was placed on the lot previously addressed as 618 Ludington.

Opening in January, 1914, the Delta was Escanaba's preeminent hotel over the next several decades. The hotel was built during a boom period in Escanaba's history that saw the population of this major iron ore-exporting port and railroad and industrial community centrally located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula region rise by one-half, from 9500 to 14,500, in the years between 1900 and 1913. Financed by a stockholders' corporation in which local businesspeople apparently played a leading part, the Delta Hotel was a prominent and highly visible symbol of the city's progress and progressivism.

After the hotel had closed, it was sold in the early 1960s to the Catholic Diocese of Marquette, which located the Bishop Noa Home for Senior Citizens there after constructing the five-story light sand-colored brick bays adjacent to the original reddish brown brick building. The Most Reverend Thomas L. Noa became the eighth Bishop of Marquette in August 1947 (SJSPC 2012a) and served until 1968 (Diocese of Marquette 2012).

The 1962-1963 addition that nearly doubled the building's size is comprised of adjacent bays that are architecturally distinct in form, style and color. The addition is the unique in Escanaba as an example of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century international style architecture. It is significant in its own right, even if not totally compatible architecturally with the original hotel building. It also represents a use and function significant in the entire building's history and downtown Escanaba, as the CBD began its decline and evolved from predominantly retail and professional to more of a service related emphasis.

A garage building erected at the rear of the original hotel building for the apartment tenants added in 1994. An enclosed metal-clad "hallway" connects this garage to the main structure, eliminating the original alleyway. Since 1996, the building has housed Hereford & Hops Steakhouse and Brewpub (first floor) and Delta Apartments (top four floors).

# Historic Photos

## 616-624 Ludington Street

