

# Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor  
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

## 1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Cook-Abele House

And/Or Common Name: Enter common name of property

## 2. Location

Street & Number: 1032 N. A Street

City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201

Parcel Number: 25132.2701

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public <input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure			<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

## 4. Owner of Property

Name: Elizabeth Williams

Street & Number: 1032 N. A Street

City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201

Telephone Number/E-mail: 509-743-6290 elizabethcedillowilliams@gmail.com

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds Spokane County Courthouse

Street Number: 1116 West Broadway

City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99260

County: Spokane

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title: Non-contributing resource in Nettleton's Addition National Register Historic District

Date: 3/22/2006 ☒Federal ☐State ☐County ☐Local

Depository for Survey Records: WISAARD

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

### Condition

☐excellent

☐good

☒fair

☐deteriorated

☐ruins

☐unexposed

### Check One

☐unaltered

☒altered

### Check One

☒original site

☐moved & date \_\_\_\_\_

*Narrative statement of description is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 8. Spokane Register Criteria and Statement of Significance

**Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places criteria: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the Spokane Register listing:**

- ☒A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane history.
- ☒B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory history.
- ☐E Property represents the culture and heritage of the city of Spokane in ways not adequately addressed in the other criteria, as in its visual prominence, reference to intangible heritage, or any range of cultural practices.

*Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

*Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: >1 acre

Verbal Boundary Description: *The property's legal description is Lots 1 and 2 of Block 20 in Nettleton's Second Addition. The property is bounded by W. Gardner Ave on the north, N. A St. on the west, Gardner-Dean Alley on the south, and the neighboring house at 2819 W. Gardner Ave. on the east.*

Verbal Boundary Justification: Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Logan Camporeale (Historic Preservation Specialist, Spokane City/County HP Office)

Street, City, State, Zip Code: 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA, 99201

Telephone Number: 509-625-6634

E-mail Address: [lcamporeale@spokanecity.org](mailto:lcamporeale@spokanecity.org)

Date Final Nomination Heard:

## 12. Additional Documentation

*Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**13. Signature of Owner(s)**

Wingabellth C. Williams

**14. For Official Use Only:**

Date nomination application filed: 2/1/2024

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: 5/15/2024

Landmarks Commission decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of City Council hearing: June 24, 2024

City Council decision: Approved

**I hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places based upon the action of the Spokane City Council as set forth above.**

Megan Duvall

**Megan Duvall**  
**City/County Historic Preservation Officer**  
City/County Historic Preservation Office  
Third Floor – City Hall  
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.  
Spokane, WA 99201

5/15/24

**Date**

Attest:

Leri A. B. S.

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

[Signature]

Assistant City Attorney



## SECTION 7: DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Cook-Abele house is a French Eclectic 2.5 story house at the corner of West Gardner Avenue and North "A" Street in Spokane's West Central Neighborhood. The house was constructed for Elizabeth "Bess" Abele Cook and her family in 1905 as the family's primary residence. Although the house's integrity has been impacted through exterior modifications like replacement windows and siding, it still conveys sufficient historic character to relate the house to its time of original construction and certainly to relate the house to its midcentury significance as a property associated with the out-migration housing program. The primary character defining features that remain include the deep cornice returns, gabled thru-the-cornice dormers, a steeply pitched roof with varied roof line, eaves that flare upward at the roof-wall junction, and projecting bays.

The builder is unknown but the architect of the house, Julian Francis Abele, is among the most significant Black architects in the history of the United States and the most significant and accomplished Beaux Arts architect regardless of skin color. The significance of the house under categories A, B, and C allow for a less rigid treatment of the architectural significance and integrity.



**Cook-Abele House, corner of West Gardner Avenue and North "A" Street**  
12/15/2023 by Logan Camporeale, SHPO

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The Cook-Abele House was constructed in 1905. It is located at 1032 North "A" Street within Spokane's Nettleton's Addition National Register Historic District. The district is part of the larger West Central Neighborhood located northwest of Spokane's downtown. The house is approximately 1.5 miles from downtown as the crow flies and it is generally a walkable neighborhood. From before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the late 1920s or early 1930s the neighborhood was served by an electric railroad. The railroad provided access to downtown and beyond and it passed directly in front of the house on North "A" Street.



**Cook-Abele House context, corner of West Gardner Avenue and North "A" Street**  
5/1/2024 by Logan Camporeale, SHPO

The tall 2.5 story Cook-Abele house is designed in the French Eclectic style characterized by its deep cornice returns, gabled thru-the-cornice dormers, a steeply pitched roof with varied roof line, eaves that flare upward at the roof-wall junction, and projecting bays. Additional detailing worthy of note includes the trellised rear porch privacy screen, the eyebrow dormer on the east elevation, and the wrought iron supports for the front porch overhang.



The house is approximately fifty feet wide north to south and approximately thirty-two feet long east to west. The primary façade is west facing with the front door on the north end. The façade is punctuated by a gabled through-the-cornice dormer situated above a projecting bay window. The rear or east elevation is arranged in much the same configuration with the secondary entrance on the north end and a projecting bay on the south end. The east elevation is absent the gable dormer, but an eyebrow shaped roof dormer was added (along with a hipped roof dormer that was added in the midcentury). A pair of chimneys rise from the roof, one on the southwest corner and one on the northeast corner. A third entryway on the north elevation was added in the mid-century to provide private access to the upstairs apartment units.

The French Eclectic style is not typical in Spokane with only a handful of extant examples, most of which were constructed more than a decade later than the Cook-Abele House. Other Spokane examples include the symmetrical two-story house at 808 West Rockwood Boulevard which was constructed in 1937 and the modest one-story Brooke House (SRHP 2021) which was constructed in 1921.

According to Virginia McAlester in *A Field Guide to American Houses*, the French Eclectic style did not become popular until 1915 and really not until the end of World War I. The Cook-Abele House is constructed in 1905, a full decade before McAlester says the style came into prominence. However, McAlester says that earlier examples, while rare, tend to be inspired by the earlier Beaux Arts tradition. While the Cook-Abele House does not have the telltale signs of the more pretentious Beaux Arts style, it was designed by an architect who was deeply inspired by the Beaux Arts tradition. Julian Abele had been trained in the Beaux Arts and we can expect that he would have been ahead of the curve of its popularity. Abele's passion for the Beaux Arts is expressed in a reserved but refined fashion on the French Eclectic Cook-Abele House. The house was likely his first house design and he was just beginning to experiment with applying the 18<sup>th</sup> century French arts to a residential house.<sup>1</sup>

McAlester points to many character defining elements of French Eclectic style houses that were incorporated in the design of the Cook-Abele House including: a tall steeply pitched roof, shallow eaves, upward flared eaves, stucco wall cladding, through-the-cornice gables, and arched elements.

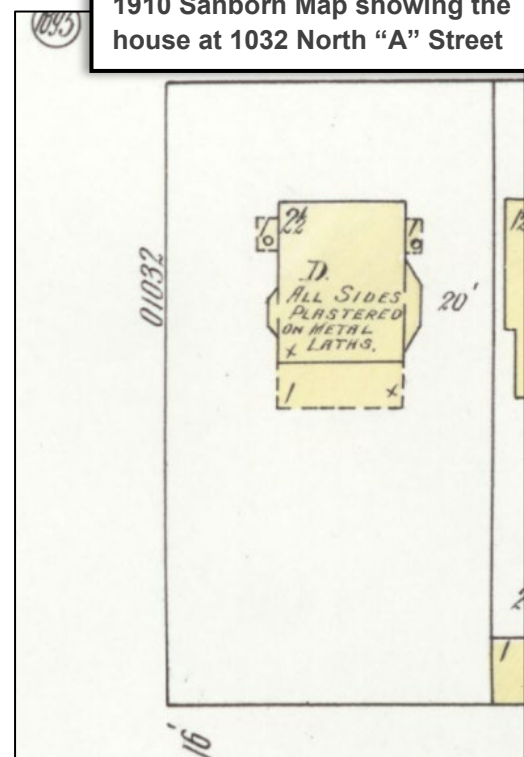
The house is situated at the southeast corner of the intersection on the lot 1032 North "A" Street. The house is 32 feet east to west and 150 feet north to south. The lot size at more than a quarter of an acre is large for a house in the core of the city. The primary façade faces to the west and fronts along North "A" Street. The façade is asymmetrical which is the most common form among the French Eclectic style.

There are no outbuildings on the site but there is one carport near the east property line. The south half of the property, or backyard, is fenced with a six-foot wood fence that stretches south to the alley. The north half of the property, or front yard, is fenced with a 42" cyclone fence.

### ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

The Cook-Abele House is not without modifications. In fact, many preservationists may consider its integrity to be sufficiently degraded to make it ineligible for listing on the historic register. Despite that, the author of this nomination argues that the house retains the necessary integrity to convey its historic appearance and in turn offers the opportunity to tell the important Cook-Abele story.

1910 Sanborn Map showing the house at 1032 North "A" Street



<sup>1</sup> Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), pages 387-395.

The Cook-Abele House is not shown on the 1902 Sanborn Maps since it was not constructed until 1905. The earliest available snapshot of the floor plan is from the 1910 Sanborn Map. That map shows the house is 2.5 stories with a rectangular footprint, protruding bay windows on the east elevation and west façade with the east bay larger in size, a full-length one-story porch on the south elevation, and two entryways (the primary on the west façade and the secondary on the east elevation). The 1910 Sanborn Map also notes that the house was “plastered on metal lathes” on all four sides.

The Cook-Abele House mostly retains its historic exterior form as is shown in the 1910 Sanborn Map except for four primary exceptions: addition of a hipped roof dormer on the east elevation, modification of the eyebrow-shaped front porch roof on the primary façade, enclosure of the east half of the rear porch, and addition of a third entryway on the north elevation. The addition of the hipped roof dormer, the porch enclosure, and new entryway were almost certainly part of the mid-century modification to the building which changed the building from a single-family house to a triplex. The eyebrow-shaped porch roof was modified much later in 2007-08.<sup>2</sup>

While the changes to form have been limited, a number of additional exterior changes to details and historic materials further diminish the integrity of the house. Those material changes are primarily siding and windows.

The historic stucco over metal lathe siding was covered with replacement horizontal siding in approximately 2010. The historic siding remains under the replacement siding and it appears to be in decent condition in the places where it is exposed. The owners in 2024 are considering removal of the inappropriate replacement siding to reveal the historic stucco.<sup>3</sup>

The other major material change was the removal and replacement of most historic windows in the house. The house originally featured wood multi-light windows in various configurations. The most notable windows were on the primary façade’s five-part projecting bay window. Those five



**Cook-Abele House comparison over the decades: mid-century (top), 1990s (middle) and 2024 bottom). Property Record Card and SHPO Photo**



<sup>2</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Spokane Washington, Volume 1* [map], 1902, 50 feet to 1 inch, sheet 9.

<sup>3</sup> The year of the siding change was determined using Google Streetview historic images. The change happened between the August 2009 and August 2010 images.





**Historic stucco siding revealed beneath replacement horizontal siding**  
SHPO Photo

windows appear to have been configured as twelve-lite casement windows. At some point in the mid-century many of the windows were replaced with metal replacement units, but three of those five windows are extant. More recently the house was fitted almost entirely with vinyl windows. The window openings mostly appear to remain at their historic size.

There are five instances of historic windows or historic doors that are retained from the original exterior design, four of which are fenestrated doors and only one of which is a historic window. First, the front door on the primary façade includes a six-lite window in the top third of the door. Second through fourth, there are three doors

on the south elevation that are 70 percent windows in an eighteen-lite arrangement. However, one of those doors is currently not visible from the exterior due to the enclosed east half of the rear porch. The owners in 2024 are considering removal of the enclosed porch to expose this door again. Fifth and finally, the only true historic window that remains is a distinct eyebrow shaped roof dormer on the east elevation.

The interior of the nearly 3,000 square foot house is in the midst of a substantial rehabilitation project that began in 2023 and continues at the time this nomination was prepared in 2024. Most of the current work is focused on undoing modifications to the interior that were completed in the 1940s to accommodate a multi-family use. Despite the mid-century modifications, the first floor still retains good integrity in a number of interior spaces including the front entryway, dining room, and living room. The second and third stories retain sparse historic details like door trim but the floorplans have been modified substantially.

The house is full of hints, clues, and ghost lines that help to piece together the original floor plan of the kitchen and the upper floors.



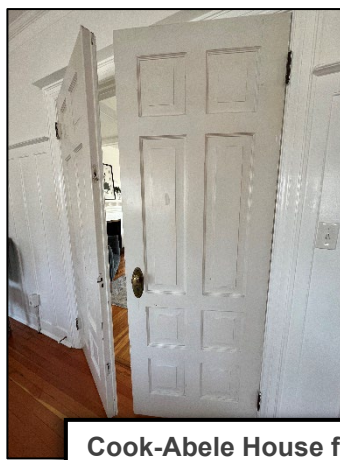
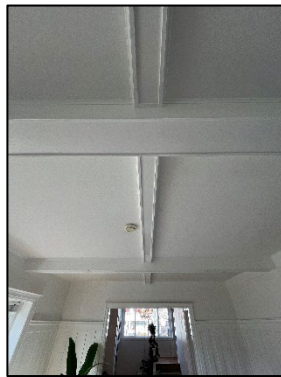
**Eyebrow roof dormer on the east elevation from the interior and exterior**  
SHPO Photo

## CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

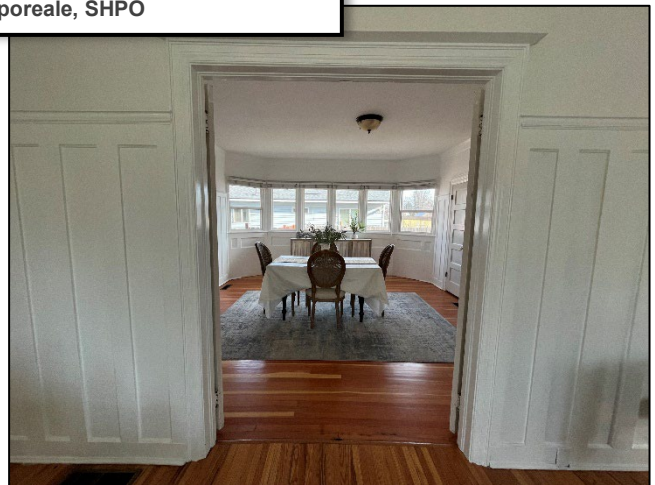
**Basement:** The house features a full basement, half of which is finished living space. The basement can be accessed from the interior near the kitchen on the first floor and from an exterior staircase that leads down to the basement on the east elevation. The west half of the basement is finished. It includes a small living room, bedroom, and bathroom. The east half of the basement is unfinished. It includes the laundry room, storage space, and mechanical room.

**First Floor:** The first floor includes the entry and living room on the west side, with the dining room, kitchen, enclosed porch, and a bathroom on the east side. The first floor retains most of its historic floor plan. The only changes to the first-floor plan are on the north side of the first floor where the staircase to the second floor was modified and the kitchen was reduced in size to accommodate a bathroom.

The first floor also retains more historic details than the upper floors. The fireplace with a dentiled mantel anchors the living room while the projecting bay opens the space to the exterior. Two heavily fenestrated doors bookend the fireplace and provide access to a porch on the south elevation. A third matching fenestrated door provides access to the enclosed porch from the dining room. Two historic closets are located on the south wall of the kitchen. The walls in the living and dining room are clad with a paneled wainscoting. A pair of paneled double doors with historic hardware separate the living room from the dining room. The first floor retains its historic wood floors that were refinished and repaired in 2023.

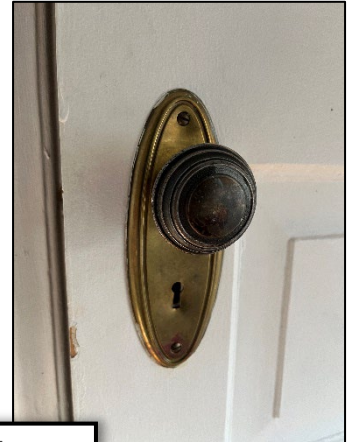
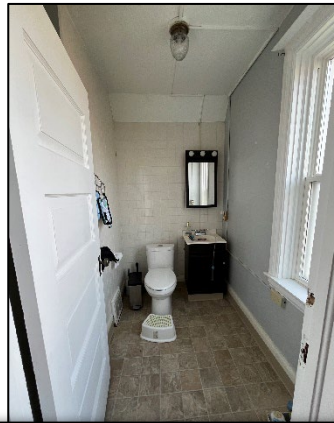


Cook-Abele House first floor interior  
12/15/2023 by Logan Camporeale, SHPO

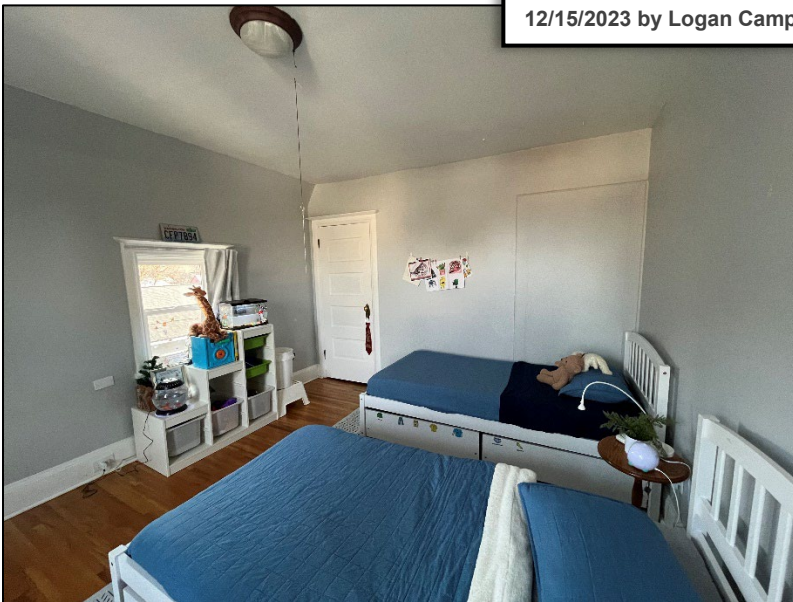




**Second Floor:** The second floor includes a bedroom and a bathroom on the north side, a larger bedroom with a connected nursery on the south end, and a spa room located centrally on the west side. The floor plan of the second floor has been significantly altered. The staircase arrangement was modified when the north elevation entrance was added. What was likely an open staircase was enclosed to the top where it connects with a hallway that provides access to the north side rooms.



Cook-Abele House second floor interior  
12/15/2023 by Logan Camporeale, SHPO

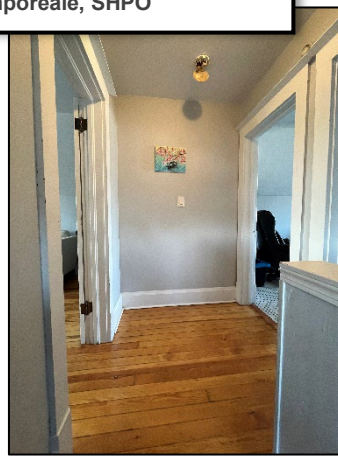




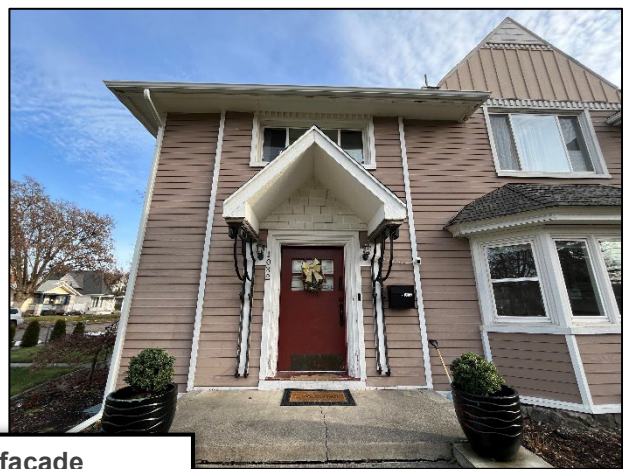
**Third Floor:** The third floor, which is accessed from a stairway on the second floor, is reminiscent of the house's time as a triplex in that it is essentially a full unit on one floor. It includes a kitchen with a dining area and a bathroom on the north end. A bedroom with a spectacular southern view is located on the south end. In the stairway is a distinct alcove that stretches up to and is illuminated by the historic eyebrow window on the east elevation.



**Cook-Abele House third floor interior**  
12/15/2023 by Logan Camporeale, SHPO



**West-facing primary facade:**



**Cook-Abele House façade**  
12/15/2023 by Logan Camporeale, SHPO



**North elevation:**



**East elevation:**



**South elevation:**



## SECTION 8: NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Categories for Listing:** A, B, and C  
**Areas of Significance:** Architecture/Architect, Military, Social/Humanitarian  
**Period of Significance:** 1905-1943  
**Built Date:** 1905  
**Architect:** Julian Francis Abele  
**Builder:** Unknown



Cook-Abele House, from the southwest  
Spokane County Real Property Record Card, April  
1959, Washington State Digital Archives

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cook-Abele House is a residential property in Spokane's core that is closely associated with one of the preeminent architects in the United States, Julian Francis Abele (pronounced Able). Abele was one of the country's most educated architects at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and University of Pennsylvania in the Beaux Arts style in which he designed hundreds of buildings, almost all of which are on the East Coast. The one geographic exception is the modest vernacular house designed for his sister, Elizabeth Cook, with minimal Beaux Arts details located in Spokane, Washington, the Cook-Abele House.

Constructed in 1905 on property purchased by the Cooks in 1902, the Cook-Abele House has a period of significance from the time of construction to the end of World War II. The period of significance starts in 1905 when the Cook-Abele House was constructed based on Julian Abele's design, and the period of significance ends in 1943 when the house was converted into a tri-plex using the WWII home front housing initiative.



The Cook-Abele House is significant under three categories as established in Spokane Municipal Code 17D.100.020. The house is significant under Category C due to its association with architect Julian Abele. It is significant under Category B due to its association with Elizabeth Cook and her husband John Cook III. The house is also significant under Category A due to its association with home front housing initiatives during the WWII period.

The Cook-Abele House is exceptionally significant under Category C in the area of architecture as the work of master architect Julian Francis Abele. Abele has over 200 attributions nationwide including the Widener Memorial Library at Harvard University (1912–15) and Philadelphia's Central Library (1917–27). He was also the primary designer of the west campus of Duke University (1924–54). At least twenty-five of Abele's attributions have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, ranking him among the most represented architects on the National Register. The Cook-Abele House, designed for his sister, was among his earliest designs and it is likely the only example of his work in Washington State (or anywhere west of the Mississippi River).

The house is also significant under Category B due to its association with Elizabeth Cook, Julian's sister, and with Julian's brother-in-law, John F. Cook III. Elizabeth Cook was an accomplished artist who exhibited her hand-crafted windows and innovative ropework at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. John F. Cook III also rises to the level of significance for a Category B nomination. Cook was from a prominent and wealthy Black family with roots in the nation's capital. Cook moved out west to northern Idaho in the 1890s where he was elected mayor of the town of Bonner's Ferry (previously known as Bonnersport) as the town's first Black resident. A graduate of Howard University, he was the town's pharmacist and postmaster.

Additionally, and unrelated to Abele, the Cook-Abele House is eligible under Category A in the areas of military and social/humanitarian significance due to its association with home front initiatives during the World War II period. Spokane's population ballooned during the early 1940s as war workers flooded to Spokane to work in wartime factories and related industries. Demand for housing skyrocketed for the first time since the first decade of the 20th century. Spokane's Black population grew from 644 in 1940 to 2,134 in 1960 and eclipsed 1% of the city's population for the first time since the 1900 census. The federal government developed and initiated the innovative out-migration housing program which encouraged folks to move out of their houses in the city's core and to then convert their vacated house into multi-family units for war workers. The work was paid for by the government and special zoning exceptions were allowed for these units to be placed in single family zones. As part of that program, the Cook-Abele House was converted to multi-family in 1943.

## SPOKANE HISTORIC CONTEXT: FROM TRIBAL LANDS TO BUSTLING CITY

The City of Spokane sits on the traditional lands of the Spokane Tribe. They have inhabited these lands since time immemorial. They hunted, fished, harvested, raised horses, traded, and made their homes in Spokane and surrounding areas. Regional tribes used the land around the confluence of the Spokane River and Hangman Creek, less than a mile from the Cook-Abele House, as one of their largest seasonal gathering places during salmon season.

The Spokane's way of life was abruptly altered when white people began arriving in the region in the early 1800s. The North West Company, a Montreal based fur trading operation, built the Spokane House trading post at the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane River in 1810, marking the beginning of white settlement in the region. Settlement was initially slow, but by the late 1850s increasing numbers of white people were encroaching on tribal lands in pursuit of newly discovered gold in the Columbia River and its tributaries.

In the 1850s, the United States Army initiated a punitive campaign against a confederation of regional tribes, including the Spokanes, after the army was embarrassed by the tribes at the Battle of Steptoe Butte. The punitive campaign, under the leadership of General George Wright, engaged with and defeated the allied tribes at the Battle of Four Lakes and the Battle of Spokane Plains. After arriving at the Spokane River near present day Spokane Falls Community College, Wright's men proceeded east on the river destroying tribal food caches, taking tribal members captive, and ultimately slaughtering over 800 horses belonging to a confederation of the Plateau Indians, in an attempt to defeat the tribes by depleting their resources, an all-out war tactic.

The fighting ended in September 1858 with surrender of the tribe under the guise of a peace treaty. Instead of brokering peace diplomatically, General Wright murdered Sub-chief Qualchan and at least three fellow warriors on the shore of Hangman Creek. After the defeat of the Spokanes and surrounding tribes, the government began negotiating with and ultimately forcing the tribes onto reservations. In 1872, an executive order instructed the Spokane Tribe to move to the original Colville Indian Reservation. The removal of the Spokanes and other regional tribes opened up the townsite of Spokane to homesteaders, and soon after settlers began arriving.<sup>4</sup>

The powerful Spokane River and its large waterfalls made an ideal location for a mill and ultimately a townsite. As the city grew and technology developed, the city's proximity to a waterfall allowed for easy access to hydroelectric power. The electricity produced from the river provided Spokane with a robust electrical system to homes, businesses, and the overhead power lines that criss-crossed the city powering a fleet of electric streetcars.

The City of Spokane grew quickly. In 1880, just a year before incorporation, there were only 350 white people living in the town of Spokan Falls. By the time of the next census in 1890, Spokane residents had dropped the "Falls" from their town's name (and added an "e") and the city's population had increased to 19,922 people. This rapid influx amounted to growth of over 5,500% in just one decade. The city's pace of exponential growth experienced a minor setback in August of 1889 when approximately thirty blocks of downtown Spokane were burned to the ground in a fast-moving fire. This left much of the city's core a blank slate from which a freshly constructed downtown of primarily brick masonry buildings rose from the ashes.<sup>5</sup>

Not discouraged from the fire, Spokane's rapid growth continued. The burgeoning mining, railroad, timber, and agriculture industries attracted tens of thousands of people who flocked to the Inland Northwest seeking new jobs and greater opportunities. By 1900, the number of Spokanites had grown to 36,848, most of which were working-class laborers, single women, and itinerant workers. That number continued to grow and when the 1910 census was taken, a decade after the turn of the century, 104,402 Spokane residents were counted. This influx of population brought the labor force and professionals necessary to grow regional business but it required quick construction of housing accommodations.

Population growth remained mostly stagnant in Spokane from 1910-1940, only adding approximately 18,000 residents. However, Spokane experienced a boom in the build up to World War II due to important war-time industries that were based here. Americans from other regions of the country, many of whom were Black, flocked to Spokane to fill the new job opportunities, sparking another population boom, bringing some 30,000 new residents during the 1940s and increasing the total population to 161,721. This influx in residents demanded more housing, some of which was created in Spokane's West Central Neighborhood.<sup>6</sup>

## NETTLETON'S ADDITION HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Nettleton's Addition Historic District is located in the West Central Neighborhood northwest of Downtown Spokane. The district sits on a plateau above the big bend in the Spokane River near the confluence with Hangman Creek. It was historically adjacent to a railroad yard on the south, but that has since been removed and a planned community and multi-use trail now borders to the south.

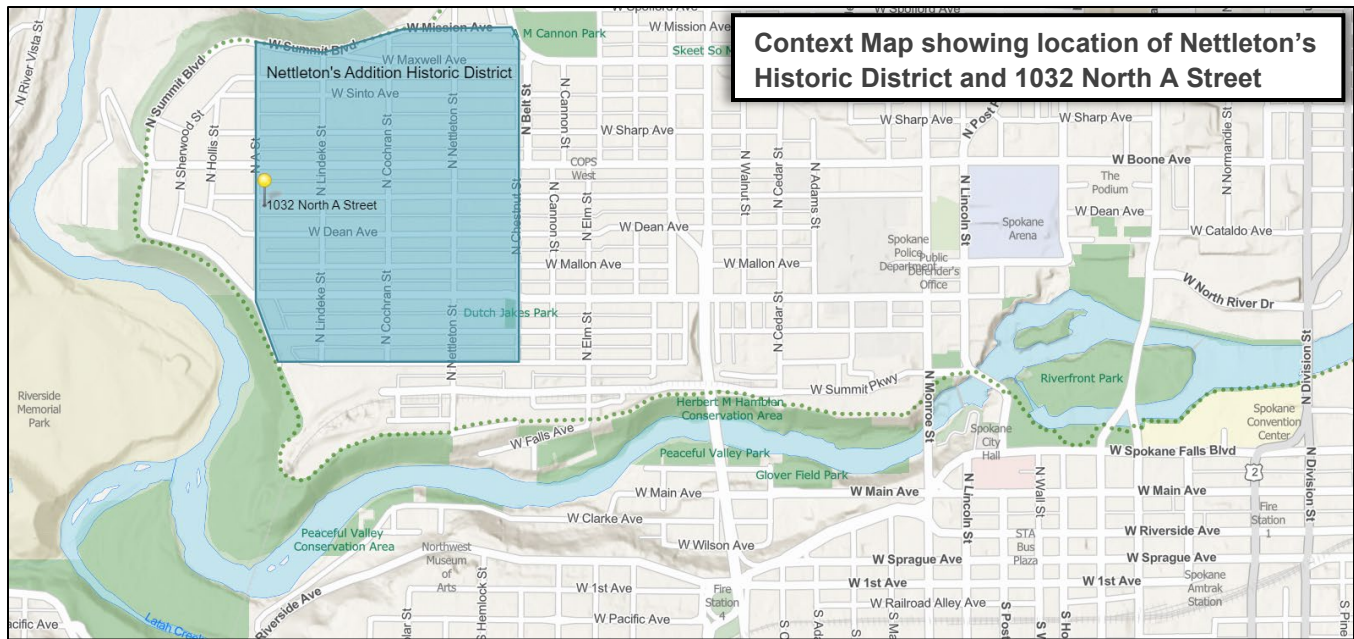
The historic district is a 38-block residential neighborhood composed of two subdivisions, Nettleton's First and Nettleton's Second Additions, both of which were platted in 1887. The district is roughly the shape of a rectangle, oriented north-to-south, that is bounded by West Mission Avenue/Summit Boulevard on the north, North "A" Street on the west, Bridge Avenue on the south, and Chestnut Street on the east. The district does not

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<sup>4</sup> Warren Seyler, Ben Adkisson, *Spokane Tribal Wars of 1858*, directed by Trask McFarland (2017; Wellpinit, WA: VariusMedia), <https://youtu.be/-uN2juBAKlc>.

<sup>5</sup> Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting and Research Division, "Decennial Census Counts of Population for the State, Counties, Cities and Towns," (Excel spreadsheet, Olympia, 2017), page 4.

<sup>6</sup> Washington State Office of Financial Management, "Decennial Census Counts of Population for the State, Counties, Cities and Towns," page 4.



include the eight southernmost blocks in Nettleton's Addition, much of which has been (or is planned to be) redeveloped from rail yard to residential.

Nettleton's Addition was developed during Spokane's period of greatest growth by speculative investors who saw its potential to be one of Spokane's early streetcar suburbs. The neighborhood filled in with modest houses owned and inhabited by Spokane's growing middle class.

Diana Painter, the author of the *Nettleton's Addition Historic District National Register Nomination*, suggests that the defining characteristic of the district is its cohesiveness. She explains that "the relative consistency of the dwellings... the regularity of the platting pattern and siting of the structures within the lot provides a regular rhythm and scale to the street." Painter claims that a combination of factors contributed to that alignment including the planned and uniform nature of the development, the experience of the developers, the consistency of the building forms, the complementary mix of architectural styles many of which were from Chamberlin pattern plan books, and the short 10-15 year development period.<sup>7</sup>

Julian Abele biographer Dreck Spurlock Wilson asserts that the lots purchased by Elizabeth Cook in Nettleton's Addition were "over a mile away from her nearest white neighbor." It is unclear what prompts that assertion from Wilson and it seems questionable at face value. Any racial segregation that existed in those days tended to be economic rather than racial. There is good evidence that Black Spokanites lived throughout the city at that time. Nettleton's Addition was also just over a mile from downtown Spokane, making it unlikely that there were no white residents between downtown and Nettleton's. A review of 1900 census records bears out that suspicion. The resident of the house at 1027 North "A" Street, which was directly across the street from the Cook-Abele House, was Victor Wolff who was a first generation white American of German descent. Furthermore, the 1900 census enumerator in the neighborhood listed everyone who lived between the 2500 block and 2800 block of Dean and Gardner Avenues as "white."<sup>8</sup>

## BLACK HOUSING SITUATION IN 1900 SPOKANE

Spokane's earliest non-Native settlers included small numbers of Black residents. People like Reverend Peter Barrow and Spokane Police Officer Walter Lawson who were influential in early Spokane. As mentioned earlier,

<sup>7</sup> Diana Painter, "Nettleton's Addition Historic District National Register Nomination," (NPS Form, Washington, 2006), section 8, page 28.

<sup>8</sup> Dreck Spurlock Wilson, *Julian Abele: Architect and the Beaux Arts*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), page 46; 1900 United States Census for Spokane, Enumeration District 69, Sheets 23-25.

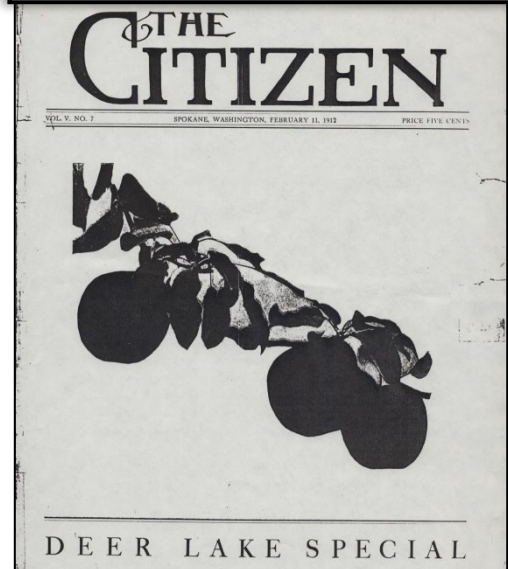
the residential segregation that existed in those early days was economic rather than racial, and Spokane's Black residents could live where they could afford. A *Seattle Republican* newspaper article from 1902 subtitled "Spokane and its Afro-American Colony" highlighted the excellent employment situation for Black Spokanites. And a 1908 article from the same paper featured the stately houses of three Black Spokanites, describing Charles A. Neville's place as "one of the neatest in the city." Notably, the houses were located throughout Spokane: one in West Central, one near Corbin Park, and one in the Chief Garry Neighborhood.<sup>9</sup>

Black Spokanites made up about one percent of the city's total population from 1890-1920, growing from 190 to 727 residents. In an era before the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s and the proliferation of housing segregation policies and tools, Black Spokanites could live mostly anywhere in Spokane. According to Carl Maxey, Spokane's famous civil rights attorney and championship boxer, "the original 300" Black Spokanites "lived all over Spokane. The dominant number lived in the East Side, but, by far, it couldn't be said that there was just one area." Maxey also remarked that the geographic diversity of Spokane's Black population from 1890-1920 was different than other cities that had clearly defined Black neighborhoods.<sup>10</sup>

Early Black Spokanites had a thriving community. In 1890, the first Black church was founded in Spokane and a second was founded in 1901. The churches, Calvary Baptist and Bethel A.M.E., continue to operate today. In 1908 Charles Parker partnered with Charles Barrow, the son of Spokane pioneer and former slave Peter B. Barrow Sr., to found Spokane's first Black-owned newspaper, *The Citizen*, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Charles Parker served as the paper's editor from 1908 to 1913 when the paper ceased printing. After the newspaper stopped publishing, the business continued as X-Ray printing, a Black-owned print shop in the early 1910s. In 1909, the leaders of Spokane's Black community planned a centennial celebration for President Abraham Lincoln's 100th Birthday. That same year, Black Spokanites founded the Nonpartisan Colored Improvement Club, which was likely the first non-religious and non-partisan organization in Spokane dedicated to advocating for the rights of Black Spokanites. In 1916, Black Spokanites celebrated the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation with a parade of over 400 Black residents who were led by Spokane's only Black police officer, Walter Lawson. Early Black Spokanites were police officers, architects, patent holders, botanists, newspaper publishers, pastors, investors, farmers, barbers, and community organizers. And, they lived all over town.<sup>11</sup>

The situation for Black Spokanites at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century was attractive to Black individuals and families who considered relocating to the city. Spokane had the largest Black population of any city in Washington State. Black families who migrated to the American West from big eastern cities, like the Cooks and Abeles, were accustomed to living in a large and vital Black community. An established Black community is almost certainly what attracted Elizabeth Abele Cook to Spokane from Bonners Ferry. In the 1890s there were over 30,000 Black residents in her native Philadelphia which must have made Spokane's regionally significant Black population of 300 feel tiny. But, at the same time, a hundred times bigger than the Black community in Bonners Ferry.

Front page of an edition of *The Citizen*, Spokane's Black Newspaper  
Spokane Public Library



<sup>9</sup> "Sparkles from Spokane: Spokane and its Afro-American Colony," *Seattle Republican*, 3/28/1902, page 1; "A Group of Beautiful Homes of Negroes in the Northwest," *Seattle Republican*, 10/16/1908, page 8.

<sup>10</sup> Jim Kershner, "Breaking Down The Barriers: Segregation Is An Ugly, Not-So-Well-Known Part Of Spokane's History," *Spokesman-Review*, 5/18/1997.

<sup>11</sup> Dwayne Mack, *Black Spokane* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), page 7; "Split in New Club," *Spokane Chronicle*, 4/2/1909, page 20; "Colored Folk in Freedom Day Fete," *Spokesman-Review*, 9/23/1916, page 10.



The relative freedom in housing experienced by early Black Spokanites did not last into the mid-century. The release of the film *Birth of a Nation* which first screened in Spokane in 1915, and the subsequent rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Spokane in the early 1920s, had an impact on how many white Spokanites perceived their Black neighbors. The Spokane Chapter of the Ku Klux Klan was organized in 1921 with elected officers, membership dues, and over 100 members. One year later, in 1922, the Washington State Ku Klux Klan was founded. The upstart Klan in Washington State mostly relied on political influence more than overt violence to achieve their goals. But, the local Klan participated in many of the same tactics as the national Klan. They hosted cross burnings on prominent hills on the outskirts of town including on Five Mile Prairie and Little Baldy. They held large initiation ceremonies in downtown fraternal halls, and their members were elected to political office.

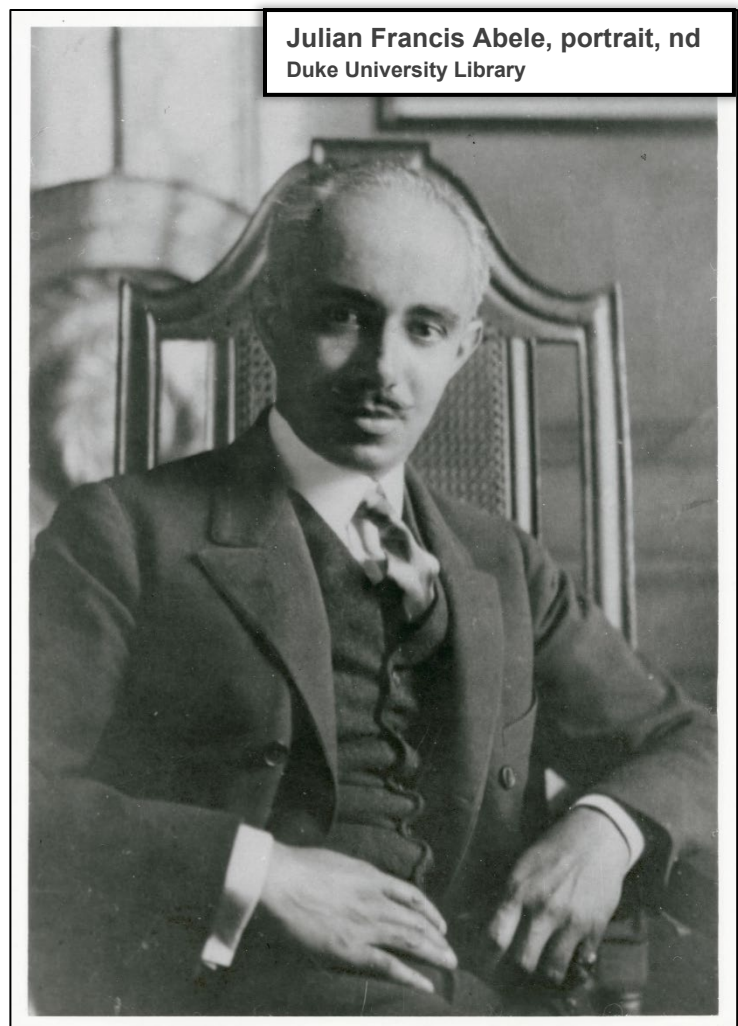
### JULIAN FRANCIS ABELE<sup>12</sup>

Julian Francis Abele was born April 21, 1881 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was born to a well-known Black Presbyterian family whose ancestors had been active in the abolitionist movement. His family was well-to-do belonging to the upper class of Olde Philadelphians.<sup>13</sup>

Julian was the second youngest of ten siblings who survived past infancy. His elder brothers and sisters were educated and accomplished. They counted a physician, artist, blacksmith, and electrical engineer amongst their ranks.

Abele attended the Institute for Colored Youth, a preparatory school that many of his older siblings attended. After preparatory school, Julian pursued formal training in architecture ultimately receiving a three-part architectural education. First, in 1897 he received a certificate of Architectural Drawing from the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art. He followed up in 1902 with a bachelor's degree in architecture through study in the Beaux Arts at the University of Pennsylvania. He concluded with a Certificate of Architectural Drawing from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. According to Abele biographer Dreck Spurlock Wilson, in 1903 Julian Francis Abele was "the most formally educated architect in all of America."<sup>14</sup>

Wilson reminds the reader that Abele was the first Black graduate from these programs and that he achieved his education despite prejudice and racism that was so pronounced as to bar him from walking in his own graduation at the



Julian Francis Abele, portrait, nd  
Duke University Library

<sup>12</sup> Only a short biography of Julian Abele is provided in this nomination as a comprehensive biography of Julian was published in 2019. The author of this nomination strongly encourages all those interested in Abele to read Dreck Spurlock Wilson's *Julian Abele: Architect and the Beaux Arts*. This nomination would not have been possible without Wilson's authoritative work on Abele's life and legacy.

<sup>13</sup> Dreck Spurlock Wilson, *Julian Abele: Architect and the Beaux Arts*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), page ix.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, *Julian Abele*, page x.

University of Pennsylvania in 1902. Abele's experience with race must have been complicated, he graduated from a traditionally white program, but could not participate in the graduation ceremony; he designed 32 buildings for Duke University, but never stepped on the campus due to racism; and he was a master architect but he remained in the shadows of his employer throughout his career. He was constantly breaking barriers despite being ensnared in a racist world. Wilson encourages all to visit Abele's designs and to "contemplate the obstacles he had to overcome to reach such professional plateau from which he could create such beauty."<sup>15</sup>

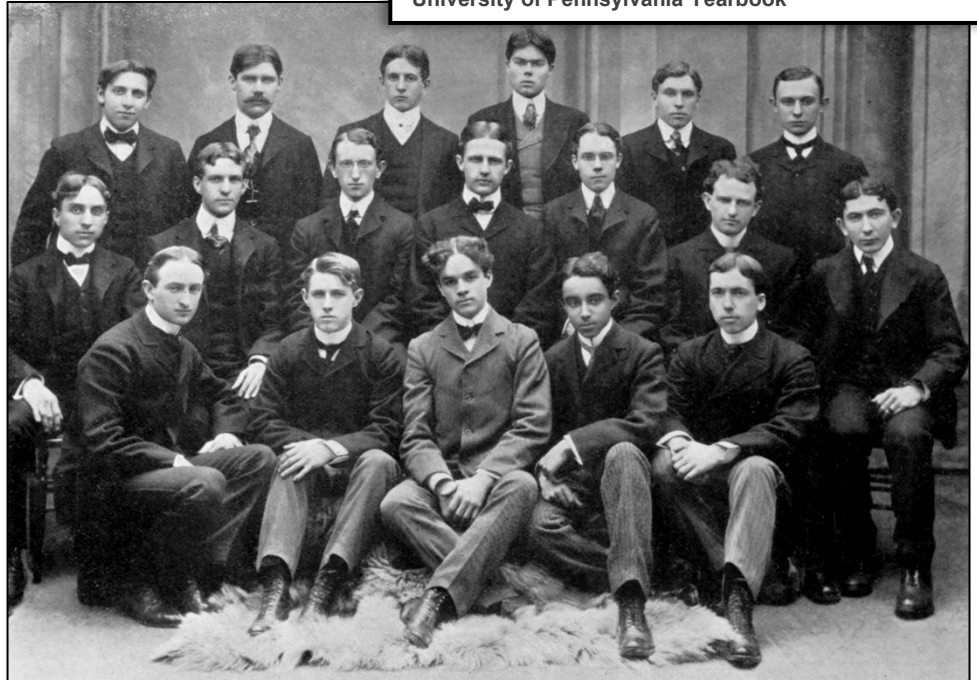
Wilson also delves into the specifics of Julian's complexion and how that would have impacted his career. Wilson describes Julian's complexion as "beige like a Castilian perpetually young looking. Julian's homogenized features were equal part Caucasian and Negro." Wilson explains that his complexion was advantageous to Julian ancestrally and contemporarily. Ancestrally, the Abele's lighter complexion brought them into advantageous marriages, more affluent neighborhoods, and into association with the majority white culture. Those circumstances birthed Julian into a beneficial situation in comparison with darker skinned Black Philadelphians. Contemporarily, Julian's lighter complexion may have made it easier for a big all-white architectural firm to hire its first non-white worker.<sup>16</sup>

The vast majority of Abele's attributions are a product of his employment at the Office of Horace Trumbauer. Trumbauer was a non-designing businessman-architect which means that he was not trained as an architect and really was not much of a sketch artist. Some accounts suggest that he was never seen drawing. He was a businessman who bragged that he "hired his brains."<sup>17</sup>

Abele was hired by Trumbauer in 1906 to be he his lead designer, or his "hired brains." He was the first non-white employee of the firm. Wilson posits that Trumbauer's willingness to hire Julian had less to do with an ideological progressiveness on race but rather a shrewd business sense that led him to recognize that "he could hire superiorly talented professionals, pay them less than competitors and keep them in employ longer because they were cemented in place by prejudices." Whether or not that was his intent, that is how it worked out for Julian. He spent almost his entire career working exclusively for Trumbauer.<sup>18</sup>

Nonetheless, the pair were a dynamic duo. According to Wilson, "Trumbauer provided the ego and Abele the architecture." The pair worked symbiotically bringing complimentary skills to the table. Wilson asserts that "all things being equal which they weren't, Trumbauer should have made Abele a partner." Even after the businessman died in 1938, Julian remained loyal to his employer. On his application to join the American Institute

**Julian Francis Abele (fourth from left in first row) with the University of Pennsylvania Architecture students in 1900**  
University of Pennsylvania Yearbook



<sup>15</sup> Wilson, *Julian Abele*, page xiii.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, *Julian Abele*, page 7, page 55.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, *Julian Abele*, page 57-59.

<sup>18</sup> Wilson, *Julian Abele*, page 57-59.

of Architects, Julian did not include any of his work with Trumbauer as professional experience despite three decades in his employ. Wilson quotes University of Pennsylvania Archivist Frances Dallet to describe Julian's loyalty, "there was no up-staging of Trumbauer in death as there never had been in life."<sup>19</sup>

Julian died in 1942 at the age of 68 years old. At the time of his death his architectural accomplishments remained obscured by Trumbauer's larger-than-life profile. His legacy remained under appreciated and poorly recognized as Trumbauer historians improperly reassigned Abele's designs to Trumbauer's portfolio. It is not until Wilson's decades of research, numerous presentations, and ultimate publication of his book that Abele's legacy began to shine in a way that a practitioner of the Beaux Arts would have appreciated. Wilson summarizes succinctly: "Julian Francis Abele was and remains the greatest *beaux arts architecte* America has never known."<sup>20</sup>

Abele has over 200 attributions nationwide including the Widener Memorial Library at Harvard University (1912–15) and Philadelphia's Central Library (1917–27). He was also the primary designer of the west campus of Duke University (1924–54). At least twenty-five of Abele's attributions have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, ranking him among the most represented architects on the National Register of Historic Places. The Cook-Abele House, designed for his sister, was among his earliest designs and it is likely the only example of his work in Washington State (or anywhere west of the Mississippi River).

### ELIZABETH "BESS" ABELE COOK

Elizabeth, or Bess, was Julian's oldest sibling and one of two sisters. She was born to the same parents in 1865, sixteen years before Julian. She, like Julian, was educated at Philadelphia's Institute for Colored Youth from which she graduated in 1882. And she, like Julian and foreshadowing him, was interested in design. Her particular interest was in windows, both the design and construction of leaded glass windows.

In 1893, Chicago World's Fair organizers sent her to represent Pennsylvania in two of the fair's exhibition spaces: the Pennsylvania Building and the Woman's Building. Her leaded and stained-glass transom windows were incorporated into the interior design of both buildings. She was also allotted exhibit space in the "process room" of the Woman's Building where she taught crowds of fair visitors her window construction process from sketch to finished product. A newspaper described Elizabeth's windows as "beautiful" and "much admired."<sup>21</sup>



**The Pennsylvania Building (above) and  
Woman's Building (below) at the 1893  
Chicago World's Fair**

Northern Illinois University Digital Library & Wikipedia



<sup>19</sup> Wilson, *Julian Abele*, page 85, page 137.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, *Julian Abele*, pages 57-59, page 142.

<sup>21</sup> "Our State at the Fair: What Pennsylvania has to Show at Chicago," *The Times*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 5/28/1893, page 17.





**The New Century Club in Philadelphia with transom windows featuring grille work likely done by Elizabeth Cook**  
Library of Congress HABS survey

She also designed an additional window detailing element that was exhibited at the fair. Elizabeth fashioned knotted rope arrangements in a design that was similar to wrought iron grille work which was often used as an additional detail covering in front of windows. The coverings were an invention of her own and were intended to be a substitute for wrought iron grill work. A newspaper classified Elizabeth as one of “Philadelphia’s rising young artists” and described her rope work window detailing as “entirely unique of its kind” and worthy of the jury’s attention for an award at the fair.<sup>22</sup>

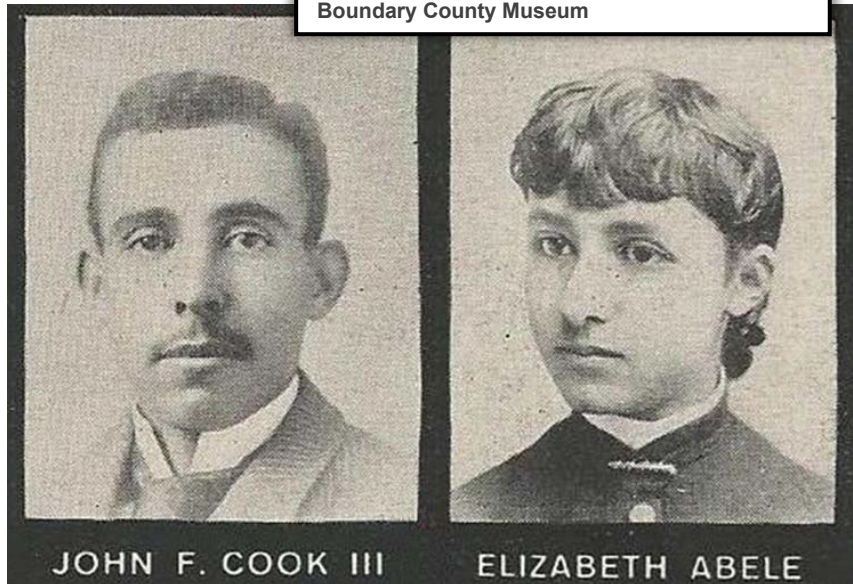
Her knotted window artwork was also included in the design of the women’s New Century Club in Philadelphia, one of the first women’s clubs in the country which constructed its first building in 1893. The building was demolished in 1973 but the photographs taken before demolition appear to show the grille work in the transom windows.<sup>23</sup>

Elizabeth’s involvement in the City Beautiful Movement inspired Chicago World’s Fair also foreshadowed Julian’s interest in the Beaux Arts. She, in many ways, was laying the path for her little brother.

## ABELES IN SPOKANE

The Abele family’s connection to the Inland Northwest originated with the union between Julian’s eldest sibling, Elizabeth “Bess” Abele Cook, and John F. Cook III. John F. Cook III was the third in a line of John Cooks who belonged to a prominent Black Presbyterian family in the nation’s capital. Cook’s father was considered to be among the wealthiest Black individuals in the country. John and Bess married in Washington D.C. in 1894 and the couple moved west to Bonners Ferry, Idaho (then known as Bonnerport). Cook, a graduate of Howard University, was a pharmacist and civic leader in the growing border town. He was elected mayor of Bonnerport in 1895 and he was

**John Francis Cook III and Elizabeth “Bess” Abele, portrait, circa 1900**  
Boundary County Museum



<sup>22</sup> “Furs at the Big Fair, Knotted Rope Work,” The Times, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 10/15/1892, page 21.

<sup>23</sup> Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator, Minerva Parker Nichols, and Susan McCown, Eisenman, George A, photographer. New Century Club, 124 South Twelfth Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, PA. Philadelphia County Philadelphia Pennsylvania, 1933. Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/pa1021/>.



repeatedly appointed as the city's postmaster. Newspapers in his native District of Columbia and around the nation noted how Cook's rise to leadership in the Idaho city was particularly remarkable as he was the first Black man in the town.<sup>24</sup>

Elizabeth gave birth to two daughters (Elizabeth in Washington DC in 1896 and Maria in Washington State in 1898), and then a son (John Cook IV in 1899 in Spokane). It is interesting that none of their children were born in Idaho. Bess and Julian's mother, Adelaide Jones Abele, visited Bonners Ferry and Spokane in 1898, likely to support her daughter during the birth of her granddaughter Maria. When John Cook IV is born in 1899, it seems that Bess may have been living in Spokane while her husband remained in Bonners Ferry and visited his family in Spokane on occasion.<sup>25</sup>

Bess seemed to spend more time in Spokane than she ever did in Bonner's Ferry, potentially because there was an established Black community in Spokane that offered socializing opportunities and community support systems that were not present in Bonners Ferry. Or potentially because her marriage was toxic. Or maybe a combination of both.<sup>26</sup>

In November of 1899, soon after the death of her brother, Bess headed back to Philadelphia with her three children in tow to visit her family. It was not a short trip, it appears she remained there until July of 1901 (Elizabeth and the kids show on the census enumerated June 1900 in Bonners Ferry, but newspaper records suggest that they were still back east and so Cook may have reported for the whole household despite his wife and kids being away). Cook appears to have visited Bess and the children once during their time away but the couple likely spent the better part of 18 months apart. Despite the adage "distance makes the heart grow fonder," the time separated did not seem to get them back on track. Less than six months after her return to Idaho, in January of 1902, Bonners Ferry newspapers reported that Bess had been "very ill" with "nervous prostration." That was an old medical term that roughly translates to an anxiety disorder or panic attack. The report notes that she was beginning to feel better.<sup>27</sup>

In April of 1902, the family purchased property in Nettleton's Addition of Spokane with the intent to build a house for Bess and the children to live in. The property was adjacent to the Parker family house, the residence of John Byron Parker his wife Adella Parker, and their children including Charles Parker. The Parkers, like the Cooks and Abeles, were lighter complexion, often listed by census takers as "Mulatto." The catalyst of the Parker-Cook friendship is not clear, but they appear to have been close friends. John Byron Parker like the Cooks was from the east coast, born in New York and raised in Ohio, so that may have been an important commonality.

The house was not built immediately, but Bess and the children continued to visit Spokane regularly. In the summer of 1902, they spent four weeks in Spokane, staying at the Parker house for some of the time. While in town, Bess attended social gatherings with prominent early Spokane Black families like the Parkers, Lawsons, and Hagans.

Bess' desire for distance between her and her husband is confusing considering turn-of-the-century marital expectations.

Mrs. J. F. Cook entertained at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Parker, in honor of her brother, Mr. Fred Cook, Monday evening, January 17th. Those present were: Miss Viola Parker, Miss Anna Durant, Miss Candace Parker, Miss Maud Lucas, Miss Edith Payne, Miss Maggie Payne, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. S. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. M. Woodey, Mr. and rs. L. O. Johnson, Mr. Julian Abel, Mr. Harry Parker, Mr. Leo Porter, Mr. Dolph Pierce, Mr. Will Payne, Mr. Fred Cook, Mr. Gat

Newspaper article showing Julian in Spokane, note the misspelling.  
Seattle Republican, 1/20/1905

<sup>24</sup> "Former Washingtonian Elected Mayor," *Evening Star*, Washington District of Columbia, 4/20/1895, page 2.

<sup>25</sup> 1900 United States Census for Bonners Ferry, Enumeration District 59, Sheet 1; "Mrs. J.F. Cook," *Kootenai Herald*, Bonners Ferry, Idaho, 3/26/1898, page 1.

<sup>26</sup> "Mr. J.F. Cook," *Kootenai Herald*, Bonners Ferry, Idaho, 7/1/1899, page 1.

<sup>27</sup> "Mrs. J.F. Cook," *Kootenai Herald*, Bonners Ferry, Idaho, 11/25/1899, page 1; 1900 United States Census for Bonners Ferry, Enumeration District 59, Sheet 1; "Mrs. J.F. Cook," *Kootenai Herald*, Bonners Ferry, Idaho, 7/19/1901, page 1; "Mrs. J.F. Cook," *Kootenai Herald*, Bonners Ferry, Idaho, 1/10/1902, page 1.

But it all makes sense in July of 1903 when Bess sends a letter back home to her siblings telling them that her marriage had fully collapsed and that her husband had been physically abusing her. Abele's biographer suggests that Bess' siblings were surprised by the letter as they had not seen her and Cook since their 1894 wedding in Philadelphia. However, newspaper records suggest that Bess had visited Philadelphia in 1901-02 and at least one family member had come to visit out west. The letter may not have been a surprise, but an inevitable correspondence they had been awaiting.<sup>28</sup>

Julian Abele, Bess' second youngest sibling at 22 years old, was sent west by the family to help Bess navigate her rough marriage. However, it seems, by the time he arrived in Spokane in late 1903 his brother-in-law and sister had rekindled their marriage and were expecting their fourth child. Julian Cook was born in April of 1904 and was named after his uncle.<sup>29</sup>

Julian appears to have stayed with Elizabeth, but where exactly they stayed in Spokane is not clear. While they lived together between late 1903 and early 1905, Julian prepared architectural plans for a French Eclectic style house to be constructed for his sister on the lot that Elizabeth and John purchased in 1902. Julian showed up in the social section of the Spokane focus section in Seattle's Black newspaper the *Seattle Republican* in January of 1905. He attended a party hosted by his sister at the Parker House, one lot south of the Cook's lot. The house Julian designed for Elizabeth was likely under construction during the party.<sup>30</sup>

## THE COOK-ABELE HOUSE

The Cook-Abele house was likely completed sometime in mid-1905. In March of 1905 Elizabeth was issued a permit to have the house connected to the city's sewer system and in April of 1905 they connected to the water system. Elizabeth, Julian, and kids likely moved in right away as evidenced by their appearance in the 1906 Spokane Polk City Directory with Elizabeth (but not her husband John) listed at 1032 North A Street, with no occupation provided for her. Julian is not listed in the 1906 Spokane Polk, or any other year.

There is no building permit record for construction of the house at 1032 North A Street to confirm that Julian was in fact the architect or to give clarity on who constructed the house. However, there are at least three pieces of evidence to suggest that Julian was the architect.

First and foremost, we know that Julian was in Spokane via multiple sources including newspapers and oral histories. Furthermore, Wilson confirmed that he interviewed Julian's great-niece (Josephine Faulkner-Webster) in the 1980s and she stated that her mother, Julian's niece Elizabeth, recalled being a nine-year-old girl and watching Julian sketch the plans for their future house at 1032 North A Street while they were living in Spokane together.

Second, and equally compelling, is Julian's assertion on his 1942 application for membership in the American Institute of Architects that he

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, *Julian Abele*, page 45.

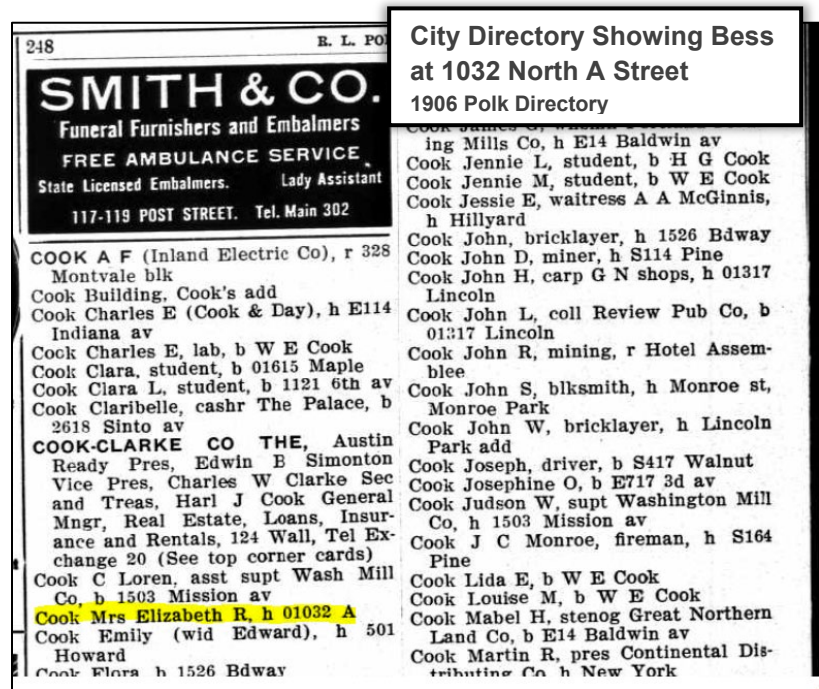
<sup>29</sup> Julian Cook Birth Certificate, Washington State Digital Archives, 4/10/1904.

<sup>30</sup> *Seattle Republican*, 1/20/1905, page 7.

had professional practice in Spokane, Washington. This is almost certainly a reference to his design of the house at 1032 North A Street.<sup>31</sup>

Third, the design of the house is unusual for Spokane in 1905. It would be difficult to find similar examples from the same period. This suggests an outside influence, and influence who was inspired by the Beaux Arts and who was breaking ground on the French Eclectic style.

The Abele presence at the house was short-lived. In January of 1906, Julian and Elizabeth along with her children boarded a train for Philadelphia to return home. John F. Cook III was forced to sell the house in 1910 to settle his divorce with Bess. Elizabeth and the children continued to live with Julian in Philadelphia until all her children were grown and Julian finally married.



## THE GRIMMERS AND THE WORLD WAR II OUT MIGRATION PROGRAM

The house changed hands multiple times after the Cooks relinquished ownership. An additional notable family, the Grimmers, resided in the house from the late 1910s through the early 1930s. John Melville "Mel" Grimmer was an early white resident of Spokane. Born in far eastern Canada in 1843, he arrived in the Inland Northwest in 1880 and settled in Spokane in 1881 when the town's population was approximately 350 people. His wife, Mary Caroline Grimmer (nee Hadley), was born in Maine in 1855 and she married Mel in California in the 1860s and she too was among Spokane's early white residents.

Mr. Grimmer was engaged in railroad businesses ranging from bridge building to transfer services. The latter was his primary business in Spokane under the auspices of the Grimmer Transfer Company. Transfer services was an early 1900s term for transporting passengers or goods from the train line to their final destination.

The Grimmers were both active members of the Spokane County Pioneer Society and the Masons, with Mary belonging to the Mason woman's auxiliary. The couple had four children, three girls and two boys. They entertained regularly at the home including hosting the pioneer society for parties. Mary died in 1924 in her late sixties and Mel died in 1926 at 82 years old.

One of the couple's daughters, Hazel Seymour, continued to live in the house after her parent's death. But, by the early 1930s, the house was being used as a rental. A rental advertisement from 1933 describes the house as a six room "English stucco" house with "carpets, curtains, and drapes."<sup>32</sup>

In 1943, as World War II was accelerating, owner Louis Weis altered the Cook-Abele House from a single-family house to a multifamily residence. The conversion was prompted and financed by the government lease out-migration housing program.

Converting large houses into several apartments was a common occurrence during the middle third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in many places. If you've lived in one of those types of apartments in Spokane, chances are you lived in an apartment that housed residents of Spokane working in the World War II production efforts in this area.

<sup>31</sup> Julian Abele's Application to the American Institute of Architects, AIA Archives, 3/27/1942.

<sup>32</sup> "\$30, 1032 N A St," Spokesman-Review, 10/22/1933, page 6.



**Building permit for 1032 N A Street showing the  
conversion to multifamily for war housing**  
City of Spokane Permit Archive

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**  
**BUILDING DIVISION**

Permit No. 73429

Number N 1032 Street "A" 12/18 19 43

Owner Louis Weis Address N 1032 "A" St.

Builder B. H. Sheldon Address S 174 Post

Architect Address

Class of Building Frame Class of Work Alter Value \$ 5000

Use: Residence to Apartments (3)  
Government Lease 2-additional

NATIONAL PRINTING CO.

Spokane had a significantly expanded population and housing shortage for war workers during most of World War II. Although not mentioned as an important war production center in broad overviews of the topic, Spokane experienced the full effect of the great migration of war workers to where they were needed, and the *Spokesman-Review* covered the effort to house everyone. The Trentwood aluminum mill, Mead aluminum reduction plant, and the magnesium plant in Mead were the officially recognized war industries that needed workers. A federal war worker housing program went through several iterations. The programs provided new housing, temporary housing and the reworking of existing buildings to provide small apartments

for war workers and their families. This last category of work has had a long-lasting impact on Spokane's older residential neighborhoods, as it included the creation of apartments, or even more apartments, in larger older residences.<sup>33</sup>

The Spokane program, initially under the direction of lumber executive Ray Beil, was established in late 1942. The goal at that time was to create 3,000 additional units. The owners of over 100 large single-family homes and some commercial buildings applied for assistance from the program during its first 40 days of operation. At the same time, the program helped war workers and their families find housing in Spokane and its environs, as far away as Cheney, Medical Lake and Coeur d'Alene. Another aspect of the war housing effort was the federal government's rent control program established in 1942. Soon after the program was put in place, over 25,000 landlords in Spokane registered with the Rent Control Office.<sup>34</sup>

The privately financed portion of the program, implemented in the spring of 1943, provided help with plans for creating small apartments and applying to local banks for loans, as well as access to building materials when much of that material was directed to other war demands. Public funding through the Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC) got involved with the program leasing available properties for several years: making necessary alterations to accommodate war workers and families; managing and renting the properties for the duration of the war; and then returning them to owners. The agency concentrated on houses, mixed use buildings with residential use on upper floors, and small apartment buildings.<sup>35</sup>

A newspaper ad in May 1943 warned readers that "Spokane is in Trouble! Big Trouble!" because of the acute shortage of housing for war workers. The need for this housing did not lessen through the early years of the war. A local campaign encouraged Spokaneites to "Share your Home" in September of 1943 by renting a spare bedroom to a boarder. News stories about the program during the later war years emphasized the number of units made available and the number of families that had been helped in finding housing. In Spokane, 936 applications for the home conversion program were handled, resulting in some 1400 apartments. As of November 1943, the

<sup>33</sup> "Housing Center Aids Thousands," *Spokesman Review*, 11/3/1943, page 14.

<sup>34</sup> "A. E. Victor Head of Conversions," SR 20 Dec 1942, p. . "What Rent Control Means," Leaflet, Office of Price Administration Fact, circa June 1942. Box 89, Superintendent's Correspondence, Education Dept. Records, OSA, accessed at the Oregon State Archives exhibit webpage, A Place of Their Own: Civilian Housing and Rent Control. <https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/exhibits/ww2/Pages/services-housing.aspx>. "Get 25,322 Landlords To Register Property," SR 17 December 1942, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> "Beil Appeals for more Homes," SR 25 April 1943, p. 38.

program housed 456 families in single-family houses; 826 families in apartments; 136 families in light housekeeping apartments; 1145 families in single rooms or room and board. By that time, 2563 families had been helped through over 40,000 phone calls. While the federal government paid the salaries of the handful of employees, volunteers were important for the success of the program and members of the American Association of University Women and Red Cross were important for the effort.<sup>36</sup>

While much of the remodeling work for the conversions was on the interior, some projects affected the exterior of the houses as well. That is the case with the Cook-Abele House. A new entry with staircase was added to the north elevation. That staircase provided access to the second and floor units via a separate entry than the first-floor unit. The house also had a fire escape added to the south elevation and the east half of the back porch enclosed. All these exterior changes were likely prompted by war housing efforts.

A promotional booklet from 1944 noted that "Housing is Drafted for War," and that overall, more than 250,000 apartments had been created in older houses. While the publication emphasized the need for housing for returning servicemen and their families once the war was won, it posited new construction would provide that housing. The closure of the Spokane Housing Center was announced in October 1945 even as the office was busy helping veterans and others find housing in the city.<sup>37</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Cook-Abele House is a uniquely significant Spokane residence that provides an opportunity to tell a wide range of stories from prominent Black families to a nationally significant Black architect to World War II housing initiatives.

The house is the only Spokane property that gives an opportunity to tell the story of Elizabeth Cook and her husband John Cook III. Elizabeth descended from a prominent Black Philadelphia family that fostered her interest in the arts and led her to exhibit her innovative artwork at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. And John descended from a prominent Black Washington D.C. family that propelled him through pharmacy school at Howard University and ultimately into political leadership in a small north Idaho town. Their important and



<sup>36</sup> "Spokane is in Trouble! Big Trouble!" Spokesman-Review, 5/15/1943, page 17; "Start Share Your Home Drive," Spokesman-Review, 9/2/1943 page 6 and 4/18/1943 page 46; "Housing Center Aids Thousands," Spokesman-Review, 11/3/1943, page 14; "Make New Homes from the Old," Spokesman-Review, 10/3/1943 page 61; "Housing Center has Located Homes for 3,300 war Workers," Spokesman-Review, 1/30/1944, page 80.

<sup>37</sup> "Housing for War and the Job Ahead," Informational Booklet, National Housing Agency, April 1944, p. 3. Folder 20, Box 34, Defense Council Records, OSA, accessed at the Oregon State Archives exhibit webpage, A Place of Their Own: Civilian Housing and Rent Control, <https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/exhibits/ww2/Pages/services-housing.aspx>; "Housing Center Closes Offices," Spokesman-Review, 6/19/1945, page 23.

compelling stories and their connection to the Inland Northwest are encapsulated in the Cook-Abele House in a way that is not true of any other local properties.

The house is the only Spokane property that gives an opportunity to tell the story of renowned Black architect Julian Francis Abele. The house's connection to a nationally significant architect is notable because it was designed and constructed in a period when Spokane did not have much architectural work on residential properties completed by architects who were not based in Spokane. Furthermore, it is the first property (and possibly the only property) in Spokane designed by a Black architect who was formally trained in architecture. It is the only the property on the west coast (or even west of the Mississippi River) that is meaningfully associated with Abele.

The house's association with World War II housing initiatives gives it additional significance albeit not as unique as the previous two associations. The out-migration housing program was an important tool that facilitated Spokane's rapid population growth in the 1940s and allowed for robust war time industry to flourish in the region. The house's association with the out-migration housing program also helps to alleviate some concerns about integrity while imparting significance on some of the changes that facilitated the transition to multi-family housing.

The Cook-Abele House is significant under three categories as established in Spokane Municipal Code 17D.100.020. The house is significant under Category C due to its association with architect Julian Abele. It is significant under category B due to its association with Elizabeth Cook and her husband John Cook III. The house is also significant under Category A due to its association with home front housing initiatives during the WWII period.



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All newspapers that were germane to this nomination are cited in the footnotes.

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**SECTION 12: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**



Cook-Abele House from the southwest, date unknown. Photo courtesy of Dreck Spurlock Wilson.



Cook-Abele House from the northeast, date unknown. Photo courtesy of Dreck Spurlock Wilson.






Cook-Abele House from the north, date unknown but likely after 1943. Photo courtesy of Dreck Spurlock Wilson.



Julian Francis Abele portrait from his 25<sup>th</sup> graduation reunion from University of Pennsylvania.

<p>Julian Francis Abele, 718 South Twenty-first Street, Philadelphia.</p> <p><i>"Willing and Able."</i></p> <p>Entered class Freshman year from Brown Preparatory School; member of Architectural Society Sophomore, Junior and Senior years, President of same Senior year; won first prize in competition for Library Tablet, first prize in competition for Conklin Memorial Gateway, Haverford College, Junior year; first mention Beaux Arts Society; won Arthur Spayd Brooke Memorial Prize and T-Square Club Prize Membership Senior year; member RECORD Committee.</p>	<p>Architecture</p> 
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Julian Francis Abele yearbook entry from the 1902 University of Pennsylvania Yearbook.





Cook-Abele House context from the west, 5/1/2024. Photo taken by Logan Camporeale SHPO.



Cook-Abele House context from the west, 5/1/2024. Photo taken by Logan Camporeale SHPO.





Cook-Abele House front door, 12/15/2023. Photo taken by Logan Camporeale SHPO.



Cook-Abele House wrought iron details on front porch roof, 12/15/2023. Photos taken by Logan Camporeale SHPO.





Cook-Abele House wrought iron details on front porch roof, 12/15/2023. Photo taken by Logan Camporeale SHPO.



Cook-Abele House rear porch foundation and brick floor where the porch is enclosed on the east end, 12/15/2023. Photo taken by Logan Camporeale SHPO.



Cook-Abele House bay window on east elevation, 12/15/2023. Photo taken by Logan Camporeale SHPO.