

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House

other names/site number Nettie J. Asberry Homesite

## 2. Location

street & number 1219 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street

☐

not for publication

city or town Tacoma

☐

vicinity

state Washington code WA county Pierce code 053 zip code 98402

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

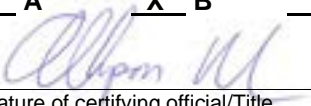
I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national X statewide    local

Applicable National Register Criteria

X A X B    C    D

  
Signature of certifying official/Title

September 16, 2024

Date

WASHINGTON STATE SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

   entered in the National Register

   determined eligible for the National Register

   determined not eligible for the National Register

   removed from the National Register

   other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House

Name of Property

Pierce County, WA

County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	district
	site
	structure
	object
1	<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/single dwelling

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Work in Progress

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

Other: Upright and Wing form

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Brick

walls: Wood

roof: Asphalt

other:

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## Narrative Description

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The Asberry house is located at 1219 South 13th Street in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood. The two-story house is situated at the west end of a large lot at the northeast corner of South 13th and South M Streets. Built in 1887, this house is an example of the L-plan Upright and Wing form, a simple form popular from about 1870 until about 1910 and is one of the few remaining buildings in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood from the Washington Territorial period.<sup>1</sup>

### Site

The two-story house is located at the west end of Hilltop on a 8,125 sq. ft. lot. The front porch is reached by a narrow concrete walk. The landscape wraps around all four sides of the house in a typical residential city lot configuration and is a prominent visual feature. The site consists of a main yard to the east of the house, narrow side and rear yards, and a shallow front yard between the front porch and street sidewalk. The yard is largely grass covered and open. The Asberrys used the east side yard for lawn games, parties, and music and dramatic performances.

An English laurel hedge borders the lot along South 13th and South "M" Streets. Along the alley is a low concrete block fence. At the front of the house, east of the front walk, is a tall rhododendron that appears in historic photographs of the house.<sup>2</sup> At the northwest corner of the yard along S. "M" Street is a large Black Locust tree. Two smaller, volunteer black locust trees have established themselves behind the house with several saplings along the old fence line. A large hazelnut tree is located on a low berm in the northeast corner at the alley.

A 4 ft. by 4 ft. area marked out with partially buried 2x4 planks is located about 10 – 15 ft. from the eastside chimney. This may mark the location of a well. Since sewer service only arrived on S. "M" Street in 1903, a privy would have been located on the property as well, but its location has not been determined.

The parcel on which the house sits was originally just under one acre in size and was initially surveyed independently of any addition.<sup>3</sup> When the new Tacoma street grid was extended into the Hilltop neighborhood, a large portion of the original parcel extended into the proposed street right-of-way for the future S. 13<sup>th</sup> and S. "M" Streets. Beginning about 1906, South 13<sup>th</sup> Street was put through, and a sizeable portion of the parcel was taken by eminent domain, leaving the current trapezoidal parcel. The Asberrys eventually received \$1,200 (or about \$38,600 in today's dollars) in compensation for the lost property.<sup>4</sup>

### Exterior

The house faces south toward South 13th Street. The main section has a one-room wide, two-story gable-front, roughly 22 ft. by 20 ft., with a moderate roof pitch and narrow, projecting eaves with undecorated verges. At a right angle to the main section's east side is a 12 x 22 ft., one and a half story, side-gabled wing. The wing's roof ridge is lower than that of the main section. At the rear of the main section is a 16 x 14 ft., single story, gabled wing with a 16 x 12 ft., roughly enclosed porch on its east side. The cladding is mixed. The gables are clad in an alternating linear pattern of wood shingles. The walls are clad in wood shiplap with some replacement (especially west façade), and with narrow corner boards. The house's foundation is a brick pier and beam system with a brick perimeter.

A front porch with a low, hipped roof and bellcast eaves follows the L of the main section and wing. It is supported by thin, floor-to-ceiling Tuscan columns (hidden now by the later tile flooring) and no balustrade between. The porch floor is one to two feet above the ground with a concrete block foundation. Reached by

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<sup>1</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2013, pg. 138-140

<sup>2</sup> In 1920 Nettie Asberry organized the Tacoma Rhododendron Study Club that held regular meetings and an annual flower show until 1974. "Rhododendron sessions start," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 09/29/1921, pg. 3

<sup>3</sup> Pierce County, Washington Territory, *Deed Book 10*, pg. 387, L.L. Clifford & Ella J. Clifford to Joseph Lewis, 1882

<sup>4</sup> "City News." *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 09/24/1910, pg. 5

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three non-original concrete steps with a metal rail, the porch floor is non-original tile set on about 3 inches of concrete on top of an earlier wood floor.

The main and porch roofs are clad in composition shingles. An exterior brick, single stack chimney is attached to the center of the east end of the wing. This chimney retains its original decorative top. A second chimney, now removed to below the roofline, rose through the main portion of the house at about the middle of the roof ridge.

All window sashes have been replaced except the one in the north end gable. The fenestration has been substantially altered since the 1980s. This will be noted in the following sections.

### **South Elevation**

The front facing gable has an undecorated rake setting of alternating bands of decorative wood shingles. From the pitch of the roof, four ranks of half-cove shingles are followed by three ranks of fish scale shingles and single rank of square shingles. This is followed by three more ranks of half-cove shingles and a rank of square shingles. The last band consists of two ranks of fish scale shingles and single rank of square shingles. The gable features a centered, diamond window with narrow, simple framing.

The second floor has a centered, three-part, non-original vinyl window with horizontal sliding sashes. The framing is narrow, plain molding with no sill. This large window replaces the two separated, narrow double-hung windows originally found here and seen in historic photographs (See Figure 14 on page 26). Forensic demolition has revealed the location and size of these original windows.

The first floor of the front gable has a large, three-part, non-original vinyl window west of the main entry. Its framing is narrow, plain molding with sill. Historic photographs indicate that this was originally a narrower, fixed picture window with transom (See Figure 7 on page 22). Forensic demolition has revealed the location and size of this original window. The main entry to the east has a replacement six-panel, wood front door with a transom window above.

The first floor of the wing features a large, fixed-pane, vinyl window about the same size as that by the front door. Its framing is narrow, plain molding with sill. Historic photos show a centered, narrow, double-hung window comparable in size to the second story windows on the east side of the wing (See Figure 14 on page 26). Forensic demolition has revealed the location and size of this original window.

### **East Elevation**

The east elevation is dominated by the wing. The exterior brick chimney is centered on the façade. The gable has undecorated barge boards and patterned shingling like that in the south gable. On the second floor, a narrow window is located on either side of the chimney. These appear to be their original size, but with double-hung, vinyl sashes. The framing is narrow, plain molding with sill. South of the chimney on the first floor is a modest-sized, fixed, single-pane window with narrow, plain framing and sill. Forensic demolition has revealed the location and size of this original window. To the north of the chimney is a single panel, single leaf door with a small stoop and two concrete steps. Historic photos show narrow, tall, double-hung windows in these locations (See Figure 13 on page 25).

To the north and attached to the kitchen wing is a roughly enclosed, shed-roofed rear porch which extends from the rear wing and is of recent vintage. It has a single panel, single-leaf door with a small stoop at the south end. The porch floor is plywood, and its walls are plexiglass panels set on a rough plywood lower wall. The roof has corrugated polycarbonate panels. This enclosed porch area is largely to protect the basement access trapdoor in its floor.

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## West Elevation

The west elevation is dominated by a pair of large, non-original windows with horizontal sliding vinyl sashes on the first and second floors. The window framing is narrow, plain molding with small sills. On the second floor, the southernmost window is slightly longer than the northern window. On the first floor, the southernmost window is a fixed picture window. The northern first floor window of the main section matches the one above. In the one-story, rear extension is a small, fixed vinyl window with narrow, simple framing. While no historic pictures have been located showing this façade, forensic demolition has revealed the location and size of the original fenestration. On the second floor, there was no window at the southern end and there was a single narrow window in the north end bedroom. On the first floor, there was a single, narrow window at the southern end. At the northern end, evidence suggests a gang of three windows or a Chicago window (fixed center window with smaller, double-hung windows on either side).

## North Elevation

The gable of the main section is clad in wood shiplap with a centered narrow, small double-hung window with (likely original framing). On the first floor, a gabled, one-story kitchen wing extends from the main section about 12 feet. There is one small replacement single-hung window toward the west side.

## Interior

Almost all the interior details of the house have been lost. However, the layout of the rooms remains largely intact. All interior doors and door framing have been replaced. Spaces for transoms above the second-floor doorways are retained. Most rooms retain their original, wide decorative baseboards. Except above the dropped ceilings on the first floor, the original plaster has been removed to the lathe and replaced with drywall. The area above the dropped ceilings has the remains of the original wallpaper. The steep, narrow staircase rises just inside the front door along the west side of the entrance hall. The stair risers and treads appear to be original, but the banister and balusters, including the banister around the stair well on the second floor, are contemporary replacements. The original fir floors remain in good condition throughout the house.

The kitchen is in a one-story wing extending from the rear of the primary gable portion of the house. It has contemporary drywall, and newer cabinets and countertops. The flooring was contemporary vinyl that has been removed to reveal the original fir floor in relatively good condition. In the northeast corner is a small pantry that more recently has been used as the location for washing machine and dryer.

The downstairs bathroom is in a space created from the rear portion of the original entry hall. It includes sink, toilet, and small shower stall with a door into the main living room. The flooring, cladding and fixtures are all contemporary. The upstairs bathroom is in a small 5x8 ft. space that appears to be original at the head of the stairs. With a sink, toilet, and small bathtub/shower, it is clad in drywall and vinyl flooring with contemporary fixtures.

Following the purchase of the house in 2022 by the Tacoma Association of Colored Women's Clubs, forensic deconstruction was undertaken to carefully remove selective contemporary elements, such as drywall, dropped ceilings, kitchen cabinets, in order to expose underlying structural elements for the process of developing a comprehensive Historic Structures Report. A particular focus was finding the locations of the non-original windows.

## Integrity

Over the years the Asberry House has seen several changes, most post 1966 after the Asberry moved out of the dwelling. These include changes windows and doors, and some interior finishes. While some of the window sizes were enlarged, the home retains its original massing, pattern, and overall design, as well as its primary interior configuration. Despite the changes, the dwelling would be recognizable by the Asberry family as their home and it continues to maintain its ability to convey its historic period of significance.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our 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 or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Social History: Civil Rights

Social History: Women's History

### Period of Significance

1902 – 1966

### Significant Dates

1902 (Asberry's purchase)

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Asberry, Nettie J.

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

Wood & Garrett (architect/builder)

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Constructed in 1887, the Nettie and Henry Asberry House in Tacoma, Washington, is historically significant under criteria "A" and "B" as a resource that has a direct and broad connection to the overall history of the Black community in Washington State during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nettie Craig Jones Asberry and Henry Joseph Asberry lived in the nominated home from 1902 until 1966. Together they were a powerful force that helped shape the narrative of the Black community, both locally and statewide.

Their home became the meeting site for organizing various, Black-focused civic, artistic, educational, and social clubs. Among them was the Clover Leaf Art Club, the first all-Black women's club in the state. Organized in 1908, the Club initially organized as way for its members to display their sewing skills at the 1909 Yukon-Alaska-Pacific Exposition in Seattle. At the Exposition, the club won several awards, including a gold medal for best overall exhibit. Seeing a need, in 1917, Nettie played a central role in organizing a statewide organization, the Washington State Federation of Colored Women. She served as its President beginning in 1925. She also helped establish a coalition of local Black women's clubs in Tacoma, the City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, in 1927. The City Federation later became the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Clubs. Countless meetings associated with these various clubs were frequently held at the Asberry house, and the yard became the setting for many of Nettie Asberry's parties, recitals, and other cultural activities.

The house was also the site for organizing the Tacoma chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), one of the earliest chapters in Washington State (first chapter was established in Seattle). In fact, Nettie Asberry would play a pivotal role in early 20th Century civil rights campaigns in Tacoma, and the Pacific Northwest at large. She initially served as NAACP's corresponding secretary and later as its treasurer for more than 30 years.<sup>1</sup> She would also serve many years as the national NAACP's Regional Field Secretary for the Pacific Northwest, helping to organize new chapters in the U.S. and Canada as well as publishing regular reports in its magazine *The Crisis*. In 1943 the NAACP honored her as one of the "First Ladies" of colored America and published a record of her achievements in their magazine.

Her husband, Henry Asberry, was also involved in early civil rights activities, serving as a founding member of the Tacoma NAACP Chapter. A barber by trade, he became a well-known Tacoma businessman, operating both his Tacoma Hotel Barbershop and establishing a shampoo company, the Asberry Tar Shampoo Company. On the side he also actively bought and sold residential real estate lots throughout the city, which would afford the family with some additional income. He was also a member and Grand Master of Puget Sound Lodge No. 3211 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. He was a founding member of Cassia Lodge #5, Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free & Accepted Masons (F & AM). From 1910 to 1911, he served as Grand Master for the State of Washington, Prince Hall, F & AM.

The Asberry House maintains a high level of integrity regarding its location, setting, feeling, and association. However later changes have compromised its integrity of design, workmanship and materials. Post-1966 losses include some changeout of original window sashes and surrounds, and changes in fenestration size. Regardless the home retains its original massing, pattern, overall design, and primary interior configuration. It would be recognizable by the Asberry family as their home.

The period of significance begins in 1902, the year the Asberry's purchased the home, and ends in 1966, the year Nettie Asberry moved out of the house into a retirement home.

<sup>1</sup> Nettie J. Asberry, "Tacoma Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 01/25/1913, pg. 6.

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**Neighborhood Context**

The land on which Tacoma and the nominated house sit has been home to the Puyallup people since time immemorial. The area's wealth of natural resources attracted Euro-Americans to establish settlements here, including Job Carr (1813 – 1887), a Union Army veteran. In 1864 Carr settled on Commencement Bay at what is now the Old Town neighborhood of Tacoma. In 1873 the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) selected this Commencement Bay area as the western terminus for its transcontinental railroad. In 1875 NPRR established a city site, called "New Tacoma", about two miles southeast of Carr's settlement. New Tacoma developed rapidly as a railway and shipping locus, and the two cities were joined in 1884 as "Tacoma".

Early speculators, such as Clinton P. Ferry and George P. Riley, purchased land up the hill from the New Tacoma waterfront. Hilltop was the first largely residential neighborhood to develop outside of Tacoma's early downtown core. The residents during its early development were almost all immigrants to Tacoma whether from other parts of the U.S. or from other countries. As the forest gave way to residences, the Hilltop's homes were soon joined by community institutions such as schools, social clubs, and churches.

The construction of a cable car line up S. 11th Street and down S. 13th Street in 1891 and later a streetcar line on South K Street (now Martin Luther King Way) hastened the pace of the Hilltop's development.<sup>1</sup> The extension of city-wide trolley lines throughout the Hilltop area and Tacoma generally spurred the construction of homes farther from the areas of first expansion and the commercial and industrial center of Tacoma. From 1900 to 1930, Tacoma experienced a huge growth in population with the Hilltop neighborhood absorbing a large share of new residents. Those trends continued during the post-WWII era.

Washington State's Black population grew quite slowly until World War II. Prior to World War II it was quite small, hovering around .5% of total population from 1890 to 1940 with Native American and Asian minorities being considerably larger. In 1900 Tacoma's Black population numbered about 307, and grew slowly, only doubling to about 656 in 1940. While Blacks lived in all parts of the early city, more lived in the developed downtown core and Hilltop neighborhood. Early Black churches, such as Allen AME, founded in 1889 (1406 S. G St., later 1411 S. Yakima), and Olivet (later Bethlehem) Baptist, founded 1890 (1734 S. E St., now Fawcett), formed critical social centers for the community along with early Masonic and Odd Fellows chapters.

Though small, Tacoma's Black community was politically active with Republican clubs, the Afro-American League, and later the NAACP. Tacoma's Black community grew rapidly during WWII to support the war effort and continued in the post-WWII era as timber and aircraft related industries grew up in the South Puget Sound region. While often excluded from newer, post-WWII suburban developments, Tacoma's Black community in Hilltop and other older neighborhoods grew as well, reaching about 7% of the city's population by 1970.

**House Construction and History**

The Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry house, completed in 1887 just before the State was formally admitted into the Union, is an example of the L-plan version of the Upright and Wing house form, a simple form popular from about 1870 until about 1910. It was a building form that followed the expansion of the railroads across the continent. This common form is sometimes called Gable Front-and-Wing, Temple & Wing, Gable Front, or simply Farmhouse. Lumber availability and light balloon framing made these simple, relatively inexpensive houses a common sight in cities as well as rural areas. The Upright and Wing variety is descended from earlier Greek Revival houses. It is characterized by narrow width, usually only one room wide, and one to two stories in height with relatively steep roof pitches and an additional side-gabled wing added at right angles to the gabled front. These houses were often stepped in shape with the roof ridge of the wing somewhat lower than that of the front gable portion. A shed-or hipped roof porch was typically placed within the L made by the two

<sup>1</sup> G. Copass & G. Evsaman "Historic Resources of the Hilltop Neighborhood," National Register of Historic Places, 1994.



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wings. The porches often retained Neoclassical details, such as the simple Tuscan, floor-to-ceiling columns with Doric order.<sup>1</sup> The Asberry house displays all these characteristics.

**1887 to 1894** - Construction of the house at 1219 South 13th Street began on September 5, 1887, and it was completed by November 9, 1887.<sup>2</sup> It was built for William H. & Alida G. Jones by partners Benjamin F. Wood and David Garrett, listed architects/builders. Such billing was typical for the pre-1900 era when the State as a whole had few formally trained architects. Benjamin Franklin Wood (c1832 – 1903) was born in Westfield, NY, but had moved to Minnesota by 1861. He served in the Union Army during the Civil War from its beginning in 1861 until 1866, attaining the rank of sergeant. He was a long-time member of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). His wife, Lucinda, died in 1879. He came to Tacoma in 1883 where he worked as a building contractor. He died in Tacoma in 1903.<sup>3</sup> His partner David Garrett appears to have left Tacoma soon after the house was built, and little information has been found about him.

William H. and Alida G. Jones and their four sons, Harald, Carl, Jaspar, and Herman lived in the house from 1887 until 1894. William was born in 1853 in Oregon, his parents having come from Indiana and Ohio. Alida was born in 1861 in Wisconsin. They married in 1876. William was in the lumber trades, being listed in several censuses as a “sawyer,” a semi-skilled, working-class job. While in Tacoma he worked for the Western Mill Company, located nearby at about Sixth Avenue and S. Pine Street. The Joneses had moved around the Puget Sound region, likely following work. They lived in Tacoma from 1878 until 1880 and then again from 1887 to 1894. They lost the house in October 1894 to William Schultz due to their inability to pay the mortgage with Lombard Investment Company and owed back taxes, a likely effect of the 1893 Depression. By 1910 the Jones family lived in Seattle and finally moved to Centralia, WA, by 1920 where they are both buried.

**1894 to 1901** - William Schultz owned the house from 1894 to 1897, after which it passed to the Worcester Academy in Worcester, MA, from 1898 to 1901. While unclear, Schultz likely had some connection to the Worcester Academy. For these seven years, the house was rented to a variety of individuals. City Directories show no listings for this address for 1894. In 1895 James and Alice Holliston lived in the house. James was a butcher with a shop at 1303 South J Street nearby, while Alice taught art and sold art supplies at 1024 South Yakima Street. In 1897, Myron H. Woolsey lived in the house. Woolsey famously claimed to be Jessie James’ son.<sup>4</sup> In 1901, Carl Busching, a machinist, and his wife Mary and four children resided at 1219. In 1902, Azlie E. Johnston and her sons James R. and Marion R. lived at the house.

In 1901 Worcester Academy sold the house to Worcester realtors Arthur A. Maxwell and Charles E. Gibson. At some point shortly afterwards, Gibson became the sole owner.

**1902 to 1982** - In 1902 Henry and Nettie Asberry bought the house for \$1,500 from Charles E. Gibson and his wife of Middlesex, MA.<sup>5</sup> By 1902 Henry was the well-established proprietor of the Tacoma Hotel Barbershop, one of the most prestigious in town, which he operated from 1892 until his death in 1939.<sup>6</sup> Nettie taught music in her music room in the house and the yard was often used for her students’ recitals and concerts. She would continue to live there until 1966, after which she entered a nursing home where she passed away in 1968 at the age of 103. Members of the family retained ownership of the home for another 15+ years.

Construction and other evidence indicate the Asberrys made upgrades to the house sometime around 1910. Water and sewer service had arrived on S. “M” Street in 1903, and electricity was available to residences in the

<sup>1</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2013, pg. 138-140.

<sup>2</sup> *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 12/20/1887, pg. 1

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin F. Wood. Obituary. *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/21/1903, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Tacoma Times*, 01/30/1947. 08/13/1902, pg. 9

<sup>5</sup> *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/13/1902, pg. 9

<sup>6</sup> The original Tacoma Hotel burned in 1935 but re-opened at another location shortly after.

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neighborhood by about 1906.<sup>1</sup> The city finally put South 13<sup>th</sup> Street through, taking a sizeable portion of the Asberry parcel by eminent domain, for which the Asberrys received \$1,200 (or about \$38,600 in today's dollars) in 1910.<sup>2</sup> The upgrades likely included water, sewer, and electric service as well as the front porch (not shown on the 1896 Sanborn map but appearing on the 1912 map), the brick perimeter foundation, and consolidating two rooms into the music room and adding its external chimney on east end of the wing. An in-house toilet may also have been added at this time.

In 1957 central heating was added with a horizontal furnace in the crawl space beneath the house along with ducts through the house.<sup>3</sup> This was likely the first central heat in the house. Since wood blocks have been added to the brick piers, the house may have been raised to accommodate the furnace. This may also have been when the ceiling in the west side room on the first floor was dropped. More recently, the crawl space below the kitchen was partially excavated to create a very small, CMU lined cellar space for access to the heating unit and space for a water heater.

The installation of the furnace coincided with the arrival of Nettie's relatives Theodore Craig and his wife Ruby, who moved into the house with her.<sup>4</sup> Though she continued to live in the house until 1966, Nettie sold the house to Theodore and Ruby in 1962. The Craigs would continue to live at the house until 1973 after which they moved to Colorado where Theodore died in 1976. The house was likely rented from 1974 to 1978. Ruby put the house under contract to Charles W. and Jeanne W. Hinz in 1979 and completes the sale to them in 1982.

**1983 to 2022** - In February 1983, the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development acquired the house.<sup>5</sup> It is during this period that the house likely underwent major interior renovations, e.g., removal of wall plaster, adding dropped ceilings, replacing interior door frames and doors, and changing the fenestration. In May 1983 Louis C. and Carolyn Torre along with Margaret and Sterling Wilford acquired the house, and likely used it as a rental. In 1986, they sold the house to Jean So and Chheng Leang Chhun. In 1999, Samuel B. Bazaldua bought the house but lost it to Ameriquet Mortgage. In 2004 Keith R. Kepler and Amy E. Parks acquired the house, who in turn sold it to the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women, Inc. in 2022, the current owners of the property.

**Biographies**

**Henry Joseph Asberry (1862 – 1939)**

Little information is currently available on Henry J. Asberry's early years. He was born to Joseph and Sarah Asberry in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1862, the year Union troops liberated the city.<sup>6</sup> No biographical materials mention whether Henry's parents were free or enslaved at his birth. At the outbreak of the Civil War, New Orleans had the largest free Black population in the U.S., so it is possible they were already free. The *United States Civil War and Later Pension Index* does list a pension in 1869 for a "Henry Asberry" from Louisiana who served in the 79th Colored Infantry during the Civil War.<sup>7</sup> This might be Henry's father or other relative.

<sup>1</sup> Kurtis Kingsolver, former Tacoma City Engineer, personal communication, 05/23/2023

<sup>2</sup> "City News." *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 09/24/1910, pg. 5

<sup>3</sup> City of Tacoma Building Permit #A1990 issued December 3, 1957.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore Craig was Sanford Craig's son. Sanford was Violet Craig's nephew, but Nettie's mother helped raise Theodore. Nettie referred to him as her "nephew". Antoinette Broussard, personal communication, 01/08/2024.

<sup>5</sup> A FOIA request (#23-FI-HQ-01820) to HUD did not find any documents related to the Asberry house.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Joseph Asberry, Department of Health, Death Certificates, July 1, 1907 - December 31, 1995, Washington State Archives, Digital Archives, <http://digitalarchives.wa.gov>, 11/25/2021.

<sup>7</sup> 79th Regiment, United States Colored Infantry, Film Number M589 roll 3.

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Henry attended school until the age of 15 with some years at Straight University in New Orleans. Straight was founded by the American Missionary Society of the Congregational Church in 1868 to educate recently freed Blacks. It offered study from the elementary to the college level. Today it is part of Dillard University in New Orleans.<sup>1</sup>

Henry began his barbering career in 1884 at the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans.<sup>2</sup> The St. Charles was the premier hotel in New Orleans for some 135 years, and Henry worked in the hotel's second building, a massive Greek Revival structure near Canal Street. Although it's unknown how long Henry worked there, at the time the St. Charles Hotel was a prestigious hotel, rivalling any similar facility in America. Following the St. Charles, he worked as a barber on the Anchor Line, a steamboat company with riverboats plying the Mississippi River.<sup>3</sup> At some point, Henry operated a barbershop in Hot Springs, Arkansas, for a "few years" but according to newspaper accounts he left because of "...conditions threatening the welfare of an industrious and independent citizen...".<sup>4</sup> It is unclear if this refers to racial animus or some other problem.

By 1888, Henry lived in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he barbered at the Merchants Hotel, the premier hotel in the city at that time.<sup>5</sup> Reportedly while there, he barbered Col. Chauncey Wright Griggs, one the wealthiest men in St. Paul. Later Henry recalled that he heard of Tacoma and its opportunities from Griggs.<sup>6</sup> In 1888, Griggs and two other investors purchased 80,000 acres of timberland near Tacoma from the Northern Pacific Railroad, land that would become the Tacoma & St. Paul Lumber Company. By 1889 the Griggs had moved to Tacoma.

Henry moved to Tacoma in 1890. He first worked for F. Fritz Keeble, the African American proprietor of the Hamman Turkish Baths, located in the basement of the Hotel Gandolfo at the corner of Pacific and South 13th Street.<sup>7</sup> At the time, Keeble was a leading figure in Tacoma's early African American community, and his bathhouse offered a range of services for women and men including barbering. Few houses, apartments, or even hotels had individual baths, and public bathhouses, such the Hamman Turkish Baths provided an important city service.

In 1893 Henry bought an interest in the Tacoma Hotel Barbershop, and by 1895 he had purchased the whole business from his partner Gottlieb Yaeger. He would operate the barbershop for the next 44 years. Since the Tacoma Hotel was the premier hotel in the city until destroyed by fire in 1935, Henry cut and shaved many famous visitors, including Mark Twain, President William Taft, then Vice President Calvin Coolidge, William Rockefeller, and many others. Local businessmen and politicians were a common presence: real estate magnate R. E. Anderson, Gen. J. M. Ashton, U. S. Senators Addison Foster and Wesley L. Jones, as well as his old customer Col. Chauncey W. Griggs along with his son and grandson.<sup>8</sup> Among the services he offered were made-to-order shaving mugs and brushes with the customer's initials. In 1935, a fire destroyed the original Tacoma Hotel building and Henry's barbershop. Some of the mugs and brushes survived the fire and are now in the collection of the Washington State Historical Society. Following the 1935 hotel fire, Henry reopened his barbershop at the new Tacoma Hotel (111 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street), just around the corner from the original Tacoma Hotel location.<sup>9</sup> Henry worked there until just before his death at home in 1939.

<sup>1</sup> Cayton, Horace R. "Negroes in Washington", *Seattle Republican*, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> Short, E. T. "Henry Asberry at the Tacoma Hotel Barbershop," *The Tacoma Times*, April 4, 1934, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Cayton, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> Keeble, F. Fritz. "Tacoma Department", *Portland New Age*, 09/13/1902, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com

<sup>6</sup> Cayton, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> Cayton, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> Short, *op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> "Henry is back at his old stand," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 01/21/1936, pg. 8.

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Henry married Nettie Craig Jones on February 23, 1895. Initially they lived at 1022 South Tacoma Avenue (demolished) through 1896. From 1897 until 1902, they lived at 1012 South 12th Street (demolished). On August 12, 1902, Henry purchased the house at 1219 South 13th Street from Charles Gibson for \$1,500.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to barbering, Henry was involved in local commerce and dabbled in residential real estate investments. Newspaper accounts note that he was actively buying and selling residential parcels. In fact, at the time of his death he had accumulated a considerable amount of property that his wife Nettie inherited.<sup>2</sup> Beginning around 1893, he started to make his own shampoo, a pine tar-based product that he initially just sold in his barbershop. However, by 1903 the operation had expanded and the product, called Asberry's Tar Shampoo, was being carried regionally in drugstores.<sup>3</sup> By 1908, a newspaper accounts note that he had 20 employees, and his business was expanding with an additional 20 employees.<sup>4</sup> Newspaper ads for the shampoo continued until about 1911, suggesting the operation ended about that time.

Henry was a member of the First Christian Church (523 MLK Way, demolished). Along with Nettie, he chaired the Allen AME Red Cross Auxiliary during the Spanish Flu epidemic. He was a member and Grand Master of Puget Sound Lodge No. 3211 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. Henry was also a founding member of Cassia Lodge #5, Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free & Accepted Masons. From 1910 to 1911, he was Grand Master for the State of Washington, Prince Hall, F & A.M.<sup>5, 6</sup>

**Nettie Craig Jones Asberry (1865 – 1968)**

Nettie Craig Jones Asberry was born July 15, 1865, in Leavenworth, Kansas. She was the daughter of William Paine Wallingford (1820 – 1875), a British immigrant farmer and slave-owner, and Violet (c.1830 – 1906)<sup>7</sup>, his former slave. Wallingford had moved his household from Kentucky to Buchanan, Missouri, in 1837. He was married three times and fathered some 17 children, including seven and possibly eight by Violet. Nettie was the youngest of these children, and the only one born free. Since Missouri was a border state, it was exempt from Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. Slavery was abolished in Missouri on January 11, 1865, when Violet was about three months pregnant with Nettie. Violet appears to have immediately left Wallingford and moved to Kansas, a free state, for Nettie's birth where she may have joined her mother Jemina Lawnier Craig (c.1795 – 1896).<sup>8</sup> Upon their freedom, Jemina and Violet adopted the surname "Craig", a possible reference to the Craig plantation in Kentucky they had lived, and where Violet was born in 1835.<sup>9</sup>

Before the official outbreak of the Civil War, Leavenworth, Kansas, was a center of Black emancipation. In 1858, a group of anti-slavery Free Staters there drafted and adopted the Leavenworth Constitution for Kansas during the "Bleeding Kansas" period. The most radical of four proposed state constitutions, it banned slavery and recognized Black's full citizenship, though their civil rights would be limited some years later. During and after the Civil War, many former slaves settled in Leavenworth, and by 1865 some 12,000 lived there.

At the age of eight, Nettie began studying piano, for which she showed remarkable ability. It is unclear how Nettie and her family supported her education and music training. Nettie was able to continue her music studies in the Saturday Classes at the Kansas Conservatory of Music and Elocution in Leavenworth.

<sup>1</sup> *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/12/1902, pg. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Broussard, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> "Marvelous expansion in manufactures," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 10/12/1903, pg. 8.

<sup>4</sup> "Would have to employ 20 or more persons," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 10/09/1908, pg. 1.

<sup>5</sup> "Pioneer barber passes". *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Hairston, John. 05/08/2013. "A historian's wages," *The Quill and the Sword*. Retrieved from [www.quillandsword357.blogspot.com/2013/05/a-historians-wages.html](http://www.quillandsword357.blogspot.com/2013/05/a-historians-wages.html).

<sup>7</sup> Violet's gravestone lists her birth as 1828. Her death certificate lists 1830. The 1870 U.S. Census of 1870, 1880, and 1890 indicate 1825, 1834 and 1835 respectively. (Antoinette Broussard, personal communication, 11/23/2021)

<sup>8</sup> "Centenarian Dead", *The Leavenworth Times*, 12/02/1896.

<sup>9</sup> Broussard, Antoinette. "Nettie Craig Asberry: A pillar of Tacoma's African American Community," *Columbia*, 2005 (Fall), pg. 3-6.

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Organized in 1872, the Conservatory was open to all and had a direct connection to Kansas' early fight for Black emancipation in its teacher and principal Nancy Blunt. She assisted with the underground railroad and was the wife of Major General James G. Blunt, friend of abolitionist John Brown and commander of the Union Army in Kansas during the Civil War. After three years of study, Nettie J. Craig received her "Teacher of Music" doctoral degree from the Kansas Conservatory on June 12, 1883.<sup>1, 2</sup> At this time few women generally and only a few African Americans, mostly men, attended college. Nettie's educational accomplishment at that time was an outstanding achievement.

By 1870 Nettie's mother, Violet Craig, had married Taylor Turner, and by 1881 the family had moved to the African American town of Nicodemus, in Graham County, Kansas (Nicodemus is now a National Historic Site as the only remaining western town established by African Americans after the Civil War). While Nettie initially went to Denver to teach piano, she shortly rejoined her parents and taught school and music in Nicodemus. During this time, she also attended the Kansas Normal School Institute to expand her teaching credentials. However, it does not appear that she received a formal degree.<sup>3, 4</sup>

About 1890, Nettie married Albert J. Jones, whom she met in Graham County, Kansas, and the newlyweds decided to relocate to Seattle.<sup>5</sup> Albert worked as a barber and Nettie taught music. She became the first organist and music director for Seattle's First African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.<sup>6</sup> For unknown reasons, but perhaps related to the financial Panic of 1893, Nettie had returned to her family in Leavenworth, Kansas, by November 1893.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile Albert took a job with the Franklin coal mine in King County, Washington. He was among the 37 miners who died on August 25, 1894, in the Franklin Mine fire, the second worst mining disaster in Washington history. Nettie received money from the fund set up for the widows and orphans of the disaster.<sup>8</sup> Along with several others, she brought a suit against the mine owners, but the court ultimately dismissed them.<sup>9</sup> During this time Nettie remained in Leavenworth.

She returned to Tacoma in February and married Henry Asberry on February 23, 1895.<sup>10</sup> It is unclear how they had met. Initially they lived at 1022 South Tacoma Avenue (demolished) until 1896. From 1897 until 1902, they lived at 1012 South 12th Street (demolished). In 1903 they moved to 1219 South 13th Street. Nettie lived at this address for the next 63 years, only leaving it until her health forced her to move at the age of 101 in 1966.

**Traditional Cultural History**

The Asberry's frequently used their home to strengthen and improve the Black community and their relationship with the broader community. Over the years it became the site for organizational meetings, parties, and extended family events.

<sup>1</sup> *The Leavenworth Times*, 06/13/1883, pg. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Tacoma News Tribune*, 10/26/1975. Nettie received a Ph.D. degree from the conservatory on June 12, 1883. Her diploma was discovered after her passing. Nettie does not appear to have ever used "Dr." or "Ph.D." with her name. The "First Ladies of Colored America" series in the NAACP's magazine *The Crisis* (February 1943, pg. 50) refers to her as receiving a "B. Mus. Degree". The first mention of her receiving a Ph.D. occurs in a 1961 *Tacoma News Tribune* article (07/23/1961. Pg. A8) and is repeated in subsequent articles over the years. Nettie's original diploma is currently lost, but Ms. Antoinette Broussard, a Nettie Asberry relative, had pictures taken of it when it hung the Tacoma African American Museum (1993 – 2005). Her diploma is pictured in the Oct 26, 1975 *Tacoma News Tribune* article.

<sup>3</sup> *Western Cyclone* (Nicodemus), 08/26/1886, pg 3.

<sup>4</sup> *The Fremont Press*, 08/14/1888, pg. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Little information has been found about Albert J. Jones or about the wedding and when or where it occurred.

<sup>6</sup> Broussard, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> *The Leavenworth Standard*, 11/29/1893, pg. 1.

<sup>8</sup> "Franklin Relief Fund Final Report, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 03/03/1895, pg. 5.

<sup>9</sup> "Court and County Notes," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 10/17/1895, pg. 5.

<sup>10</sup> "A meeting and a parting," *Leavenworth Times*, 02/17/1895, pg. 4.

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In decades following the Civil War, a small but growing African American middle class had begun to emerge and regarded its own existence as evidence of racial progress. This black Victorian elite understood its profound duty to "uplift the race" through education and culture by which African Americans would demonstrate cultural parity with whites. The result was a Black civil society of churches, literary and culture clubs, fraternal orders, and newspapers. Nettie Asberry's life in Tacoma exemplifies this historical trend.

When Nettie came to Tacoma, she became the organist and music director for the Allen AME Church. She was dedicated to teaching music, and she would become one of the best-known music teachers in the city.<sup>1</sup> She spoke fluent French and German. She taught hundreds of children of all races to play the piano in her music room at 1219 South 13th Street. She presented classes of 45 or more in recital each year. In 1902 she formed "The Mozart Club" for youth to explore classical music.<sup>2</sup> The music education of young people would remain a lifelong avocation. For example, in 1907 while visiting relatives in Denver, she studied piano with Frederick Schweikher, then Dean of the Denver College of Music.<sup>3</sup>

Nettie Asberry would also play a major role in the women's club movement in Washington State. From the mid-19th Century, the club movement provided American women with an avenue of education and community service. Many women's clubs emerged across the country, reaching a zenith between 1890 and 1920. As part of this development, middle class African American women formed clubs focusing on social, literary, and community service pursuits as well as women's suffrage and race issues. The exclusion of African American clubs from the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), founded in 1890, resulted in the formation of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) in 1896.

While Nettie would begin her work in Tacoma, it would soon expand statewide. In 1908 Nettie organizing the Clover Leaf Art Club in Tacoma, Washington's first Black women's club. She had heard that Seattle would be hosting the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in 1909, and that there would be a women's building. Sensing an opportunity to showcase the talents of the state's African American women, she initially helped organize the Clover Leaf Arts Club to create an exhibit of needlecraft and artwork of Black women from Pierce County.<sup>4</sup> At the Exposition the following year, the club and its members earned medals for their handiwork. Her sister, Martha Townsend, won a silver medal for a Battenberg lace opera coat, while Matilda Baker's paintings and ceramics won a bronze medal. Most importantly, their entire exhibit won the gold medal for best exhibit.<sup>5</sup>

As more Black women's clubs began to form across the state, it became apparent for the need to establish a statewide organization. In 1917, Nettie was a primary organizer of the Washington State Federation of Colored Women's Organizations, affiliated with NACW. The Clover Leaf Art Club became a charter member. She would serve on the Federation's various committees for many years. In 1922, Governor Hart appointed her as the state delegate to the annual meeting of the Federation of Colored Women's Club<sup>6</sup>s of the Northwest. Beginning in 1925, she became the State Federation's president, an office she would hold for many years.<sup>7</sup> In 1927 she helped organized a colored women's club in Vancouver, B.C.<sup>8</sup>

Locally in Tacoma, in 1921 the Clover Leaf Art Club and other associated clubs joined to form an umbrella organization, the City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. The Clover Leaf Art Club continued as a club within the larger organization. After World War II, the city-wide group was renamed the Tacoma City

<sup>1</sup> "Mrs. H. J. Asberry," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 02/04/1906, pg. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 12/14/1902, pg. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Tacoma News Tribune*, 09/28/1907, pg. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Broussard, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Henry, Mary T. "Asberry, Nettie Craig (1865-1968)," HistoryLink.org Essay 8632 (Posted 6/03/2008). Retrieved from [www.historylink.org/File/8632](http://www.historylink.org/File/8632).

<sup>6</sup> "Tacoma woman named delegate by Governor Hart," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/25/1922, pg. 2.

<sup>7</sup> "Colored women chose Tacoma," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/29/1925, pg. 3.

<sup>8</sup> "Vancouver, B.C.," *The Northwest Enterprise*, 06/03/1927, pg. 2.

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Association of Colored Women's Clubs (TCACWC), a name that continues to this day.<sup>1</sup> Nettie served as the president of the Clover Leaf Art Club, and from 1936 to 1948 she served as president of the City Federation. Over the years she held other officer positions as well. In the mid-1950s, the Clover Leaf Art Club was renamed the Asberry Cultural Club in her honor and continues Nettie Asberry's legacy as part of the larger TCACWC.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to her work at the Clover Leaf Club, Asberry was a member of the Progressive Mother's Club of Tacoma and the Tacoma Inter-Racial Council. In 1918 she along with Henry helped organize and chair the Allen AME Red Cross Auxiliary. She was also instrumental in bringing a host of influential African Americans to Tacoma, including sociologist, historian, and author W.E.B. DuBois, entrepreneur Madam C. J. Walker, composer and violinist Clarence C. White, tenor and composer Roland Hayes, author and educator James Weldon Johnson, journalist William Pickens, and suffragette and reformer Mary Burnett Talbert. In 1919 she started the Coleridge Taylor Musical Society, named in honor of the noted Black English composer.<sup>3</sup>

Nettie Asberry was a member of the Mt. Rainier Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star.<sup>4</sup> She was long associated with Allen AME Church, Tacoma's oldest African American congregations. She also served as music director and organist at Bethlehem Baptist Church in the 1920s.<sup>5</sup> From about the early 1940s, however, she was also a member of the Baha'i faith, which was founded in Iran in 1863 and espouses the spiritual unity of all humans.

**Civil Rights.**

Both Nettie and her husband were heavily involved in the Black civil rights movement in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, both in Tacoma and statewide. Nettie and Henry were aware of the vigorous civil rights work of her brother-in-law, attorney William B. Townsend (1854 – 1917), in Kansas and later Colorado. Her sister Martha Townsend would later move to Tacoma following William's death in 1917. The Asberry's frequently used their home to help organize, implement, and promote efforts related to equal treatment of the Black community.

A growing tide of racial discrimination and disenfranchisement followed the end of Reconstruction in 1870, starting in the south but spreading nationwide. White-on-black race riots and lynchings increased. An effective civil rights organization was needed to combat these, and in 1909 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed.

Concerned for their race and community, Nettie and Henry Asberry became two of the founding members of the Tacoma chapter of the NAACP. She submitted the Tacoma application in 1912. When it received its charter in 1913, Tacoma's NAACP chapter became one of the earliest established chapters west of the Rocky Mountains. Initially Nettie served as the chapter's Correspondence Secretary, but she would eventually serve as a chapter officer, primarily treasurer, for more than 30 years.<sup>6</sup> From 1932 to 1949, Nettie organized and led the local chapter's Junior Division for school-age youth, which often met at her home and focused on Black history.<sup>7</sup>

The Tacoma NAACP's first action was to travel to Olympia, to speak against Sen. E. L. French's (Clarke Co.) proposed miscegenation law that subsequently failed in committee.<sup>8</sup> Later that same year, Nettie helped organize a mass meeting in Tacoma on September 19, 1913, of over 200 Black and white citizens and city

<sup>1</sup> "Colored women's clubs form city federation," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 05/29/1921, pg. A8.

<sup>2</sup> Henry, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> "New musical society to make its debut," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 12/14/1919, pg. 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Cayton's Weekly*, 09/22/1917, pg. 3.

<sup>5</sup> "Bethlehem Baptist," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 04/20/1924, pg. 22.

<sup>6</sup> "Colored people meet Sunday," *The News Tribune*, 01/17/1949, pg. 5.

<sup>7</sup> "Colored study club," *The News Tribune*, 09/16/1932, pg. 17.

<sup>8</sup> "Negroes enter kick upon bill barring all miscegenation," *The News Tribune*, 02/04/1913, pg. 3.

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notables to protest President Wilson's racial segregation of Federal workers.<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 1915, she lead a Tacoma effort to ban plays and movies that "excite racial prejudice".<sup>2</sup> In 1916, she helped organized a response to the showing in Tacoma of D. W. Griffiths' movie *Birth of Nation*, which lauded the Ku Klux Klan. Nettie was elected secretary of the effort at a mass meeting held at Allen AME Church. She drafted a letter to protest the movie and its racist message.<sup>3</sup> In 1918 she also led protests regarding the segregation of African American troops at Fort Lewis, and segregated seating in Tacoma's theaters. In 1921, she helped organize the chapter's fund-raising efforts to help the survivors of the Tulsa, OK, race massacre.<sup>4</sup> In 1935 and again in 1937, she helped organize protests of a bill in the state legislature which proposed to outlaw interracial marriage.<sup>5</sup>

From 1915 Nettie served many years as the Regional Field Secretary for the Pacific Northwest for the national NAACP.<sup>6</sup> In this role she helped organize new chapters in Seattle, Spokane, and Portland, OR, and published regular reports in its magazine *The Crisis*. In their February 1943 issue, *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP, they published a brief account of her achievements and listed her as one of the "First Ladies of Colored America," a series that was published over several issues that year.<sup>7</sup> Over the years, she wrote many newspaper articles and spoke on radio programs on civil rights issues as well as being a much sought after speaker across the Pacific Northwest.

During the 1930s and 1940s, especially as President of the Washington Federation of Colored Women's Organizations, Nettie focused on getting Black history taught in Washington's public schools. Taking up Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American History campaign for a "Negro History Week," she spearheaded an effort to get a "Negro History Week" in Washington schools.<sup>8</sup> She helped organize a corps of speakers as well as becoming a frequent and sought-after speaker for numerous groups across the state. She would also arrange radio programs and author numerous articles in the local newspapers on Black history into the 1950s.<sup>9, 10</sup>

She was also active in local and state politics through the Colored Republican Clubs. From 1940 to 1944, she served as Vice-Chair of the Washington Colored Republican State Central Committee.<sup>11</sup>

**Later Life.**

In 1961, Nettie was honored for her music and her volunteer social work by 110 members of the TCACWC.<sup>12</sup> In 1970, Gov. Dan Evans dedicated the new Tacoma Association of Colored Women's Clubs building. Its music room, which houses her library and instruments, is named in her honor.

At the age of 101, she left her beloved home of 63 years at 1219 South 13th Street, moving to a nursing home. She died two years later in 1968 at the age of 103 and is buried with Henry in Tacoma's Oakwood Hill Cemetery.<sup>13</sup> The following year, Mayor A. L. Rasmussen proclaimed May 11, 1969, as Nettie Asberry Day in Tacoma.<sup>14</sup> She has been furthered honored by MultiCare Health System with a bas-relief bust and plaque on

<sup>1</sup> "Open Nation Wide Fight for Negro," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 09/20/1913, pg. 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Urges Council to stop film play," *The News Tribune*, 07/21/1915, pg. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Asberry, N. C. "Grounds on which colored people protest," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/13/1916, pg. 10.

<sup>4</sup> "N.A.A.C.P.," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/12/1921, pg. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Henry, op.cit..

<sup>6</sup> *The Crisis*, September 1915, pg. 245.

<sup>7</sup> "First Ladies of Colored America," *The Crisis*, February 1943, pg. 50.

<sup>8</sup> Nettie J. Asberry, "Negro History Week," *The News Tribune*, 02/08/1930, pg. 6.

<sup>9</sup> "Negro History to be discussed," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 02/15/1930, pg. 7.

<sup>10</sup> "Tacoma schools keep Lincoln Day," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 02/12/1930, pg. 3.

<sup>11</sup> "State Colored GOP meets in Yakima," *The Northwest Enterprise*, 07/05/1940, pg. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Erna Bence, "Dr. Asberry, 96, Founder of NAACP here, to be honored," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 7/23/1961, pg. A-3.

<sup>13</sup> "Nettie Asberry of NAACP dies," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 11/18/1968, pg. 37.

<sup>14</sup> "May 11 is proclaimed Dr. Nettie Asberry Day," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 05/01/1969.



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Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House

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the exterior wall at 410 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and by the Old Town Business District with a sidewalk plaque at 2121 N. 30th Street.

Nettie Asberry's papers are held in Special Collections (Accession No. 1081-002) of the University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA. The Washington State Historical Society holds some additional Asberry artifacts, including the prize-winning Battenberg lace opera coat as well as Henry Asberry's collection of shaving brushes and mugs that survived the Tacoma Hotel fire. In addition, the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Club holds books, music, and other artifacts in its collection.

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**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House
Name of Property
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**9. Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Broussard, Antoinette. "Nettie Craig Asberry: A pillar of Tacoma's African American Community," *Columbia*, 2005 (Fall), pg. 3-6

Copass, G. & Evsaman, G. "Historic Resources of the Hilltop Neighborhood," National Register of Historic Places, 1994.

Taylor, Quintard, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West 1528-1990*, New York: Norton, 1999.

Taylor, Quintard, *A History of Blacks in the Pacific Northwest, 1788-1970*, Thesis (Ph.D.), University of Minnesota, Photocopy of typescript. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1985.

Taylor, Quintard & Moore, ShirleyAnn Wilson (eds.) *African American women confront the West, 1600-2000*, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008.

Numerous Kansas and Colorado newspapers were consulted, including the *Leavenworth Times* and *Western Cyclone* (Nicodemus, KS). Washington newspapers consulted include *Seattle Republican*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, *Tacoma News Tribune*, and *The Tacoma Times*.

Resources of the Northwest Room of the Tacoma Public Library, the University of Washington Libraries, and the Washington State Historical Society were consulted.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
\_\_\_\_ Other State agency  
\_\_\_\_ Federal agency  
☒ Local government  
\_\_\_\_ University  
\_\_\_\_ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre**UTM References** \_\_\_\_\_

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing**Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 47.249840° -122.453936°  
Latitude Longitude3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude Longitude2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude Longitude4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude Longitude**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property occupies the parcel located at the northeast corner of the intersection of South 13<sup>th</sup> Street and South M Street and is bounded by the legal description as recorded in the Auditor's Office of Pierce County, Washington, in Volume 4 of Deeds, page 624, C.A. Ferry & Annie Ferry to Donald MacKay, January 13, 1875. The property is also known as Tax Parcel No. 0320053012 as listed in Assessor-Treasurer's Office of Pierce County, Washington.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the entire city parcel that has been historically and is currently associated with the nominated property where the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry house is located.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title	<u>Marshall McClintock</u>	(Edited by DAHP Staff)
organization	_____	date <u>July 2024</u>
street & number	<u>701 North J Street</u>	telephone <u>(253) 627-9777</u>
city or town	<u>Tacoma</u>	state <u>WA</u> zip code <u>98403</u>
e-mail	<u>marshalm@q.com</u>	

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)



**Google Map**

Asberry House  
1219 S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tacoma, WA



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**Boundary Map**

Asberry House  
1219 S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tacoma, WA

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Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House

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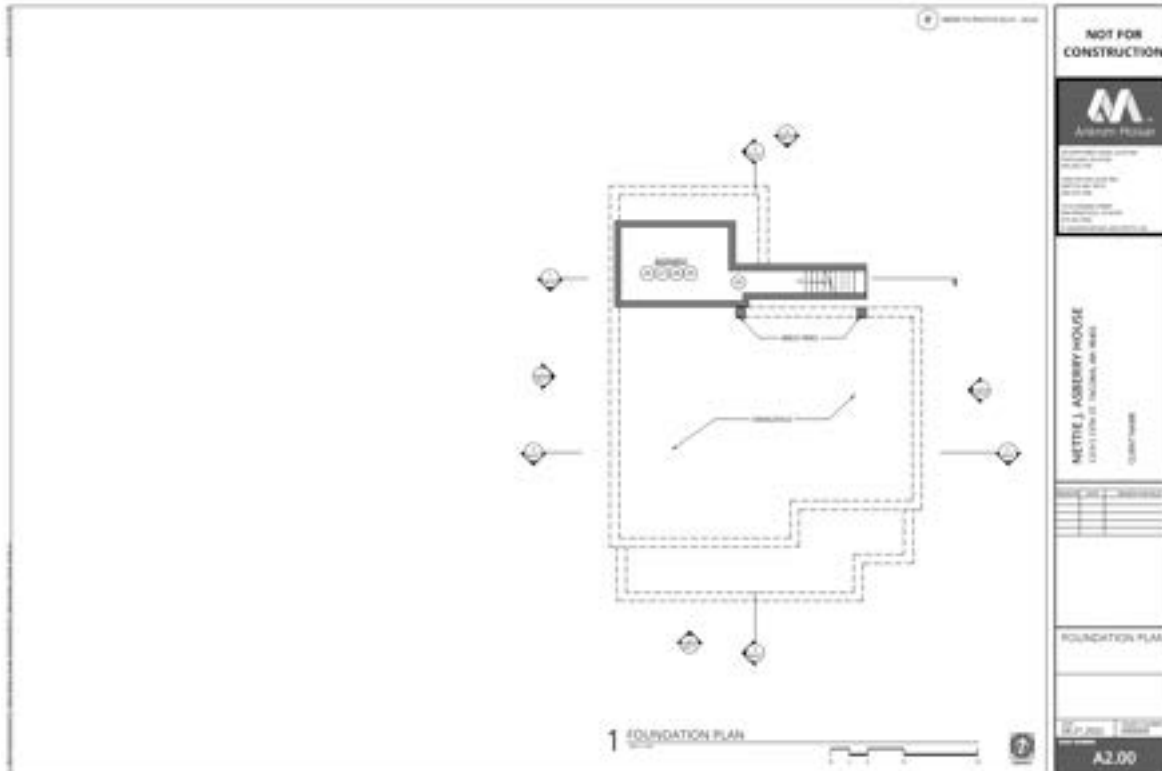
NR Reference Number

<h1>NETTIE J. ASBERRY HOUSE</h1> <p>1219 S 13TH ST, TACOMA, WA 98405</p> <p>EXISTING CONDITIONS</p>		<p>NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION</p>  <p>ANKROM MOISAN</p> <p>ARCHITECTS</p> <p>1219 S 13TH ST, TACOMA, WA 98405</p> <p>TEL: 253.272.1111</p> <p>WWW.ANKROMMOISAN.COM</p>																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																														
 <p>SITE PLAN</p>	 <p>SE - PERSPECTIVE VIEW</p>	<p>NETTIE J. ASBERRY HOUSE</p> <p>1219 S 13TH ST, TACOMA, WA 98405</p> <p>DATE: 08/2022</p> <p>SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"</p>																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																														
 <p>CONTEXT MAP</p>	<p>SHEET INDEX</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>NO.</th> <th>DESCRIPTION</th> <th>DATE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>EXISTING CONDITIONS</td><td>08/2022</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>30</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>31</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>32</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>33</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>34</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>35</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>36</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>37</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>38</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>39</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>40</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>41</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>42</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>43</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>44</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>45</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>46</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>47</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>48</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>49</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>50</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>51</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>52</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>53</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>54</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>55</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>56</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>57</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>58</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>59</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>60</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>61</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>62</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>63</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>64</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>65</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>66</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>67</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>68</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>69</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>70</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>71</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>72</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>73</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>74</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>75</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>76</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>77</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>78</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>79</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>80</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>81</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>82</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>83</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>84</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>85</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>86</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>87</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>88</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>89</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>90</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>91</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>92</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>93</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>94</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>95</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>96</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>97</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>98</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>99</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>100</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>		NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE	1	EXISTING CONDITIONS	08/2022	2			3			4			5			6			7			8			9			10			11			12			13			14			15			16			17			18			19			20			21			22			23			24			25			26			27			28			29			30			31			32			33			34			35			36			37			38			39			40			41			42			43			44			45			46			47			48			49			50			51			52			53			54			55			56			57			58			59			60			61			62			63			64			65			66			67			68			69			70			71			72			73			74			75			76			77			78			79			80			81			82			83			84			85			86			87			88			89			90			91			92			93			94			95			96			97			98			99			100	
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Cover sheet for set of scale drawings showing the current existing condition of the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry House, a portion of which are presented below. - August 2022, Ankrom Moisan.

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**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
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Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House
Name of Property
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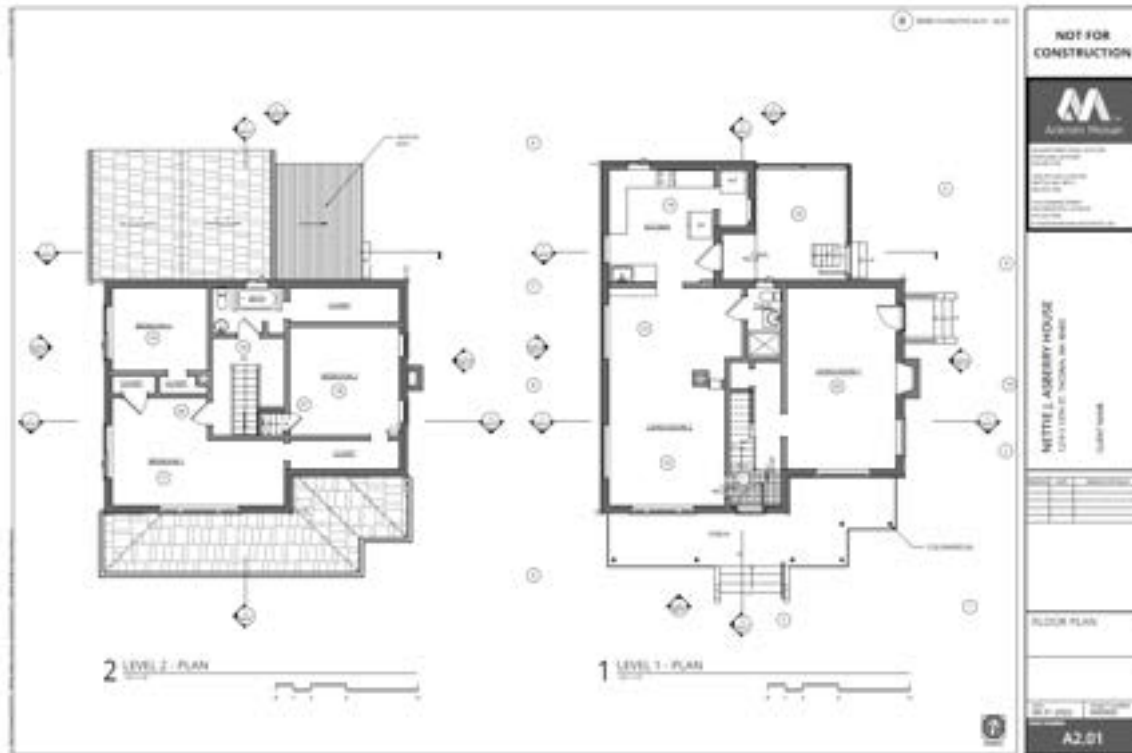


Foundation Plan - showing the current existing condition of the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry House.  
- August 2022, Ankrom Moisan.

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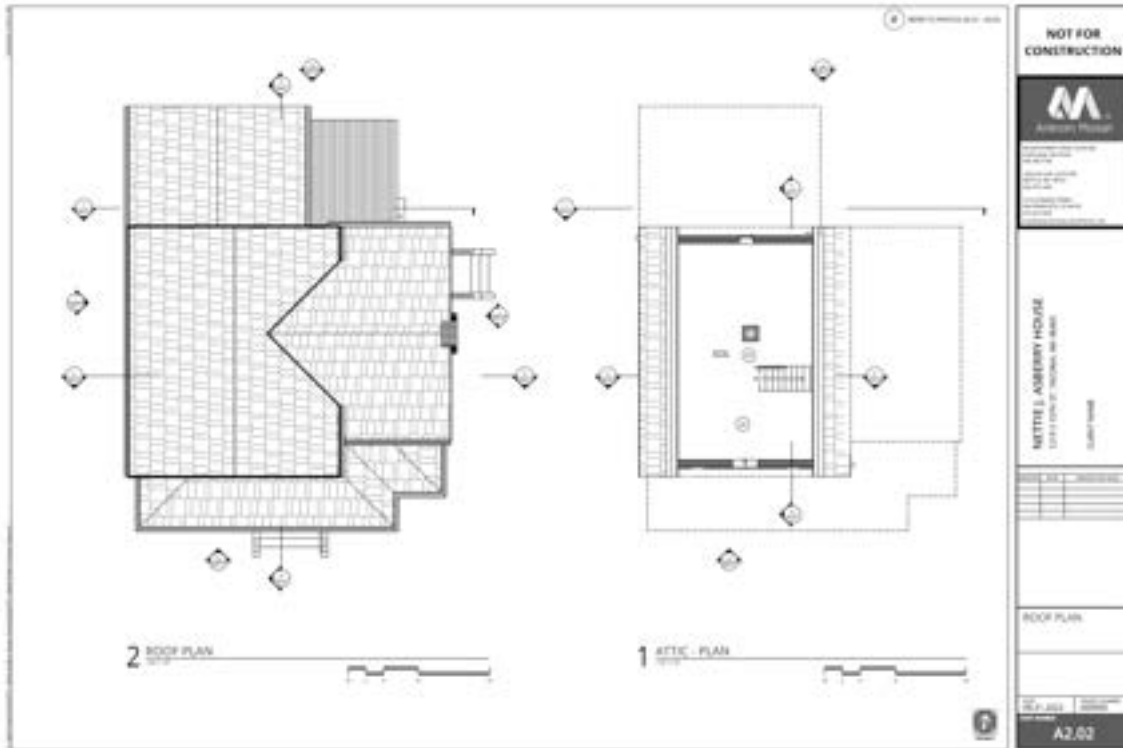


Floor Plans - showing the current existing condition of the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry House.  
- August 2022, Ankrom Moisan.



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Roof and Attic Plan - showing the current existing condition of the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry House.  
- August 2022, Ankrom Moisan.

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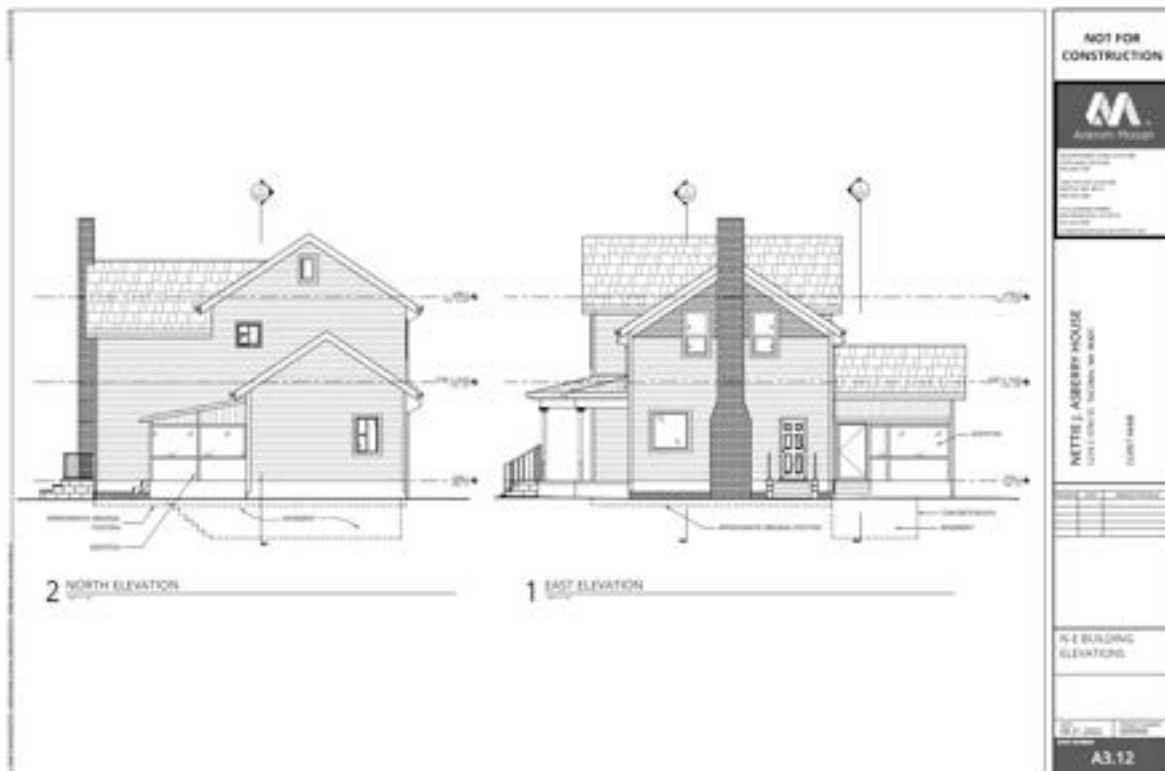


South and West Elevations - showing the current existing condition of the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry House.  
- August 2022, Ankrom Moisan.

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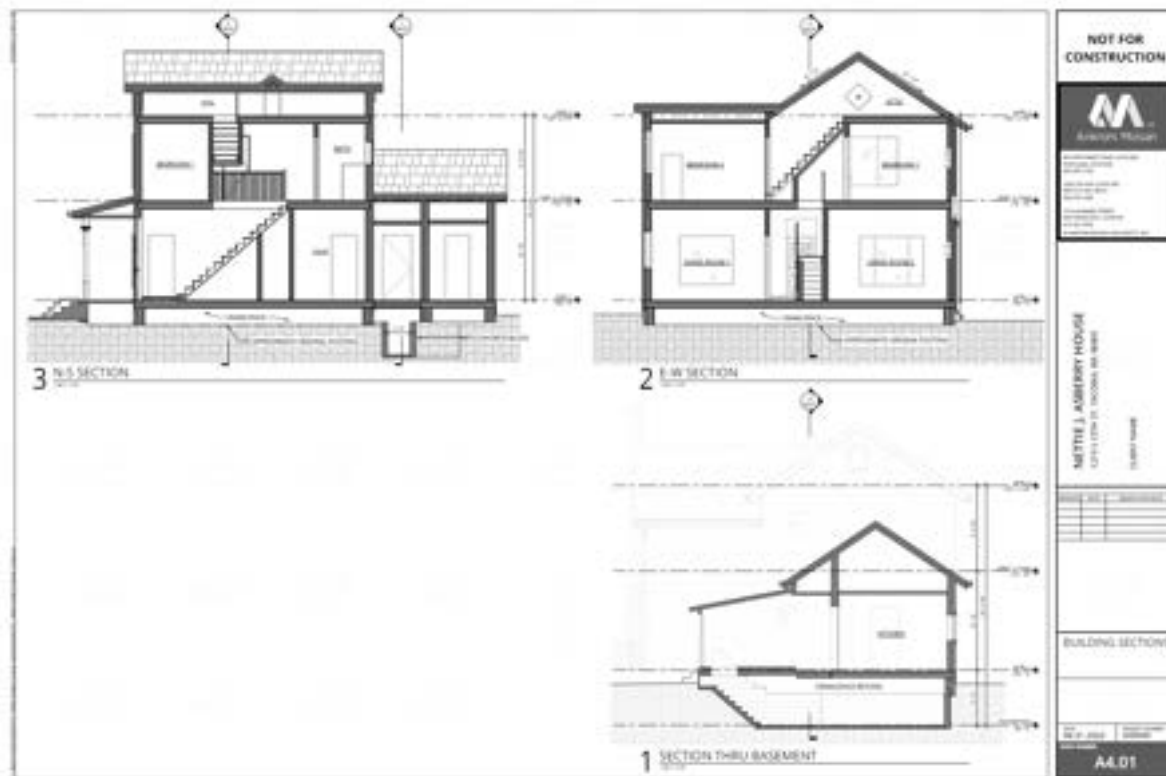


North and East Elevations - showing the current existing condition of the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry House.  
- August 2022, Ankrom Moisan.

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Section - showing the current existing condition of the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry House.  
- August 2022, Ankrom Moisan.

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Digital Rendering - showing the current existing condition of the Nettie J. and Henry J. Asberry House. - August 2022, Anskrom Moisan.

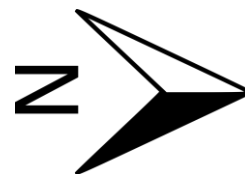
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Tacoma, Washington, bird's-eye view map, Blatchly Co., 1893 (See detail below)



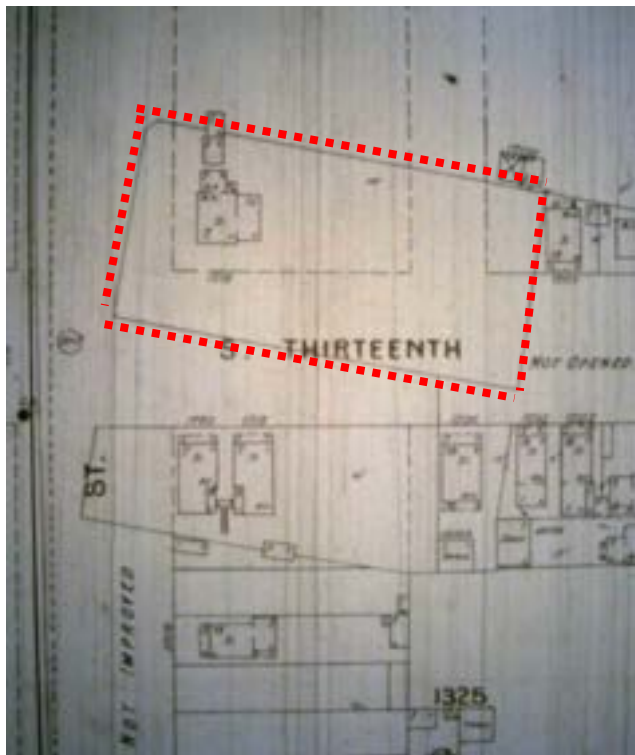
Detail showing Asberry House in red, Tacoma, Washington, bird's-eye view, Blatchly Co., 1893



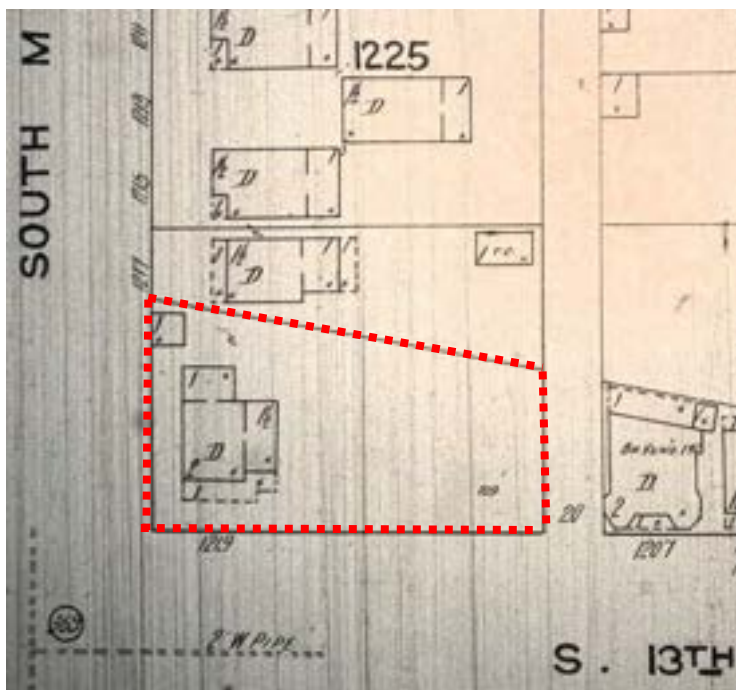
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Asberry House (in red), *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1896, Tacoma, Vol. 2, Sheet 58. The angled rectangle on this map indicates the original extent of the parcel before the streets were put through. Note the “not improved” on S. “M” St. and “not opened” on S. Thirteenth.



Asberry House (in red), *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1912, Vol. 2, Sheet 61. Note that the front porch first appears on this not-updated 1912 Sanborn map.

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Henry Asberry's Tacoma Hotel Barber Shop, c1912 (Courtesy Maybelle C. Broussard)



Advertisement for Henry J. Asberry's Barber Shop at the Tacoma Hotel (second location), *Tacoma News Tribune*, February 11, 1936.

Henry J. Asberry, Past Grand Master, Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington, Free. & Accepted Masons.



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Henry J. Asberry by porch at  
1219 S. 13<sup>th</sup> St. (c.1930)  
(Courtesy of Maybelle C. Broussard)



"Hopes Mugs Saved"  
*Tacoma News Tribune*, October 18, 1935.



Advertisement for Asherry's Tar Shampoo.  
*Tacoma Daily Ledger* – September 11, 1910.

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Nettie J. Asberry, undated (Courtesy UW Special Collections, Image No. PHColl663)



Nettie J. Asberry (outlined in red), *Northwest Negro Progress Number, Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, Seattle Republican*, June 1909, Pg. 9. This is one of several pages in this publication showing Black leaders in Washington communities.

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Music room, Asberry Home, 1213 South 13<sup>th</sup> St., c.1912. This is the only interior picture of house from the time of the Asberrys that has been located. (Courtesy of Maybelle C. Broussard)



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Two pictures showing  
house front, c1951  
(Courtesy of Maybelle  
C. Broussard)

### COLORED WOMEN ORGANIZE CLUB

The representative colored women of Tacoma have recently organized a woman's club, known as the Clover Leaf Art club. The object and aim of the organization is to bring about a closer relationship; foster and encourage an interest in needle work and handicraft; give assistance to the unfortunate ones and urge them to lead better and nobler lives, for no stream can rise higher than its source; and finally, to bring about the formation of a state federation of colored women's clubs.

The president has outlined a strenuous course of action for the ensuing year in that other clubs will be formed, such as mothers' club, young people's auxiliary, book lovers' club and a choral club. Efforts will also be made to form similar clubs in the principal cities of the state.

The Clover Leaf Art club meets once each week at the homes of its members, during the afternoon. A business meeting is held once each month. Once a month a social is given during the evening. Following are the officers:

Mrs. H. J. Asberry, president; Mrs. Arthur Wright, vice-president; Mrs. Ed. Moore, secretary-treasurer; Mrs. H. M. Moore, art critic; Mrs. C. Vanderhoof, chairman of entertainment committee; Mrs. A. Finley, chairman of good deeds committee; Mrs. H. Moore, chairman of art committee; Mrs. H. J. Asberry, chairman of music committee.

Left - Formation of the Clover Leaf Art Club *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, October 18, 1908, pg. 4. The Clover Leaf Art Club later became part of the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Clubs where it continues today as the Asberry Cultural Club.

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Left - Formation of the  
Clover Leaf Art Club  
*Tacoma Daily Ledger*,  
October 17, 1908. The  
Clover Leaf Art Club  
later becomes part of  
the Tacoma City  
Association of Colored  
Women's Clubs.



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## Grounds on Which Colored People Protest Against "The Birth of a Nation"

Editor Tacoma Ledger: At a recent mass meeting held at the African Methodist church by the colored citizens to protest against the production in Tacoma of the film, "The Birth of a Nation," the writer was elected the secretary of the meeting, and was instructed to write a letter to the press correcting erroneous statements being circulated concerning the "Birth of a Nation."

Wherever this film has appeared in the north in cities where a certain number of colored people reside, a protest has been made against the showing of the film. A protest was made in Seattle by the Seattle branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, but there was no city ordinance against obscene and immoral shows, hence the protest was futile.

At Portland, where the books of Tom Dixon are not permitted in the city library, a rigorous protest was made. Letters were published in the Daily Oregonian and the Journal protesting against the film being shown. At Spokane a battle royal was fought over the film. The people were exercised there about the production of the film as they have never been exercised about anything else. The councilman who first permitted the film to show at Spokane, was by a rigorous campaign by the colored people, defeated at the polls for re-election.

Several weeks ago when the "Birth of a Nation" returned for a second performance the city council objected to its exhibition along some lines. The matter got into the courts but the judge sustained the action of the city council. I was in Oakland, Cal., last year during the time the infamous film was being shown. Great excitement prevailed among the better class of white people, including the G. A. R. Post. Protest meetings were held all over the city by white, as well as colored people. White ministers opened the doors of their churches to the public and preached powerful sermons against the immoral film. Two and three mass meetings were held the same evenings. The newspapers were filled with letters from indignant people.

During the first performance of the film it was said the colored people were going to make a raid on the film machinery. Great crowds of angry people congregated around the theater where the film was being shown. It was said that the manager of the theater refused to sell tickets to colored persons. I was never before in the midst of so much excitement. Lawyers were trying to get an injunction against the film, but nothing seemed to be able to stop the exhibition, because there was no city ordinance against objectionable shows.

I had no desire whatever to see the play, but friends, knowing that I was a representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, urged me to reconsider the matter and see the show. Presuming the film would finally attempt to show in Tacoma, and the force of the argument just referred to, I decided to see the film. It was well that I saw it, for one of the first questions that was put to me when I appeared last year before the city council of Tacoma: "Have you seen the photo film?" "I have," said I. It might not be amiss to express how the play impressed and affected me.

The first part of the film went fairly well. The scenario was beautiful, the folk songs rendered by colored singers were typically southern. I did not enjoy the assassination of Lincoln; it was gruesome and cruel. The war scenes were spectacular but painful to the heart. All along I wondered from what history Dixon and Griffith studied.

The northern people were belittled and slandered, especially the Hon. Thaddeus Stevens. I wondered how the northern whites could stand for that; and thru the battle scenes there is sinister style caricaturing the Union army and the Union soldiers and particularly the absolutely unfounded scenes calculated to impress the auditor that during recon-

struction times negro soldiers freely plundered and abused the white people of the south, and were upheld in this by their white officers. I never saw a history that recorded such things. 'Twas plain Tom Dixon had deliberately lied to create prejudice against the black man. Why should the white Union army stand for such slander, perjury, libel?

I had considered myself broad-minded, free from prejudice, either as to race or religion, but my intelligence began to resent the circumstantial evidence that was slowly being woven around the white and colored heroes of the infamous play.

I cannot help resenting the approach of this the rapid upon the innocent Cameron girl. (Here is where Dixon displays the method of his madness.) Her effort to escape—her leap over the precipice to her death below. This is given the character of a brute in human form. The scenes that follow the tragedy are sad and impressive. The trial and execution of Gus is the natural outcome of the rape incident. The so-called small scene is truly Dixonian.

The library scene between Stoneman (Thaddeus Stevens) and his colored mistress, is unshy. The entire scene of Lynch to force the hand of the daughter of his benefactor in marriage is outrageous. No such thing ever occurred, save in the fertile imagination of Tom Dixon—twin brother of Beelzebub. He was weaving a net of prejudice as artfully as a spider weaves his web to catch flies.

The offensive scenes of the colored men in the legislature fitted well into the plot of the black and white, of Aryan and African races. The rape scene, the intermarriage affair, the demoralized negro soldiers—the insolence of the freedmen—all pave the way for the advent of the notorious Klansmen, who now come galloping over the screen by the hundreds. Like a clap of thunder the applause breaks upon the ear. My blood was at the white heat point. Instantly I began to hiss in my feeling of resentment at the series of infamous lies. People turned around and stared at me, but I had lost my equilibrium. I was in a fighting mood. My sister who accompanied me, straggled to quiet me, but without avail, but happily the end was near and we fled out.

Just an historical word about the Ku-Klux Klan. Not in all the eight hundred and thirty-two (832) pages of testimony and argument in these York county cases is any crime against white women mentioned.

Quite in passing and as though it were the commonest thing in the world, witnesses speak of the murder and mistreatment of negro women and girls by members of the Klan. These crimes, the records indicate, were not prompted by low desires that are mirrored on the animal face of the negro "Gus" in the "Birth of a Nation." They were committed as a punishment on husbands and fathers who voted the wrong ticket.

The Rev. Dr. Crothers says, speaking of the "Birth of a Nation," "It is not a work of art for art's sake, to be so enjoyed; it is not history as an impartial historian understands history. It is a deliberate and skillful bit of treachery."

In the survey Joseph Lee writes: "Is lynching negroes immoral? That seems to be the question raised by the approval of the Ku-Klux and anti-negro features of the 'Birth of a Nation' film. Appealing to the strongest race prejudice in the most vivid possible way, at the precise point where it has led to wholesale murder in the South, is, of course, an incitement to continued murder."

Jacquard Leeb calls the play an "insult" and a "glorification of homicidal mania."

No one can witness the production of the "Birth of a Nation" and be the same as before he saw it. No city can afford to have the equilibrium of its people disturbed. Yours very truly,

NETTIE J. ASBERRY.

Nettie J. Asberry's Letter to Editor,  
*Tacoma Daily Ledger*,  
August 13, 1916, pg. 10.



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## COLORED WOMEN'S CLUBS FORM CITY FEDERATION

Formation of a City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs was effected Tuesday afternoon at the African Methodist church by eight clubs through their Presidents' Assembly. Officers of the federation are: President, Mrs. Dolly Vanderhost; vice president, Mrs. Virginia Spencer, secretary, Mrs. Nettie J. Asberry, treasurer, Mrs. E. M. Hollowell; executive board, Mrs. Oscar Arnette, Miss Lydia Spencer, Mrs. S. J. Collins and Mrs. Ella Kellum.

Through the agency of the City Federation, the colored women will lay plans for the entertainment of the state convention of Colored Women's Clubs of Washington and its jurisdiction to be held in Tacoma June 29-July 1.

The City Federation came about upon the suggestion of the Clover Leaf Art Club, the oldest federated club of the Washington jurisdiction, which was organized in 1909 to place a display of the art work of colored women at the Alaska-Yukon Pacific Exposition. Mrs. Nettie Asberry, founder of the Clover Leaf Club, issued the call last November to the eight colored women's clubs in the city and a Presidents' Council was formed. Out of the Presidents' Council grew the Presidents' Assembly which includes officers of all the eight clubs.



"Colored Women's Clubs Form City Federation"  
*Tacoma Daily Ledger*, May 29, 1921, Pg. A8.

Nettie Asberry, c.1918, *Colored Women's Federation of Washington and Jurisdiction Club Journal*, 1922-1925.

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"Colored Women's in Convention"  
*Seattle Union Record*, June 29, 1921.



Nettie Asberry (white dress, center) with Baha'i friends in Lakewood, 1949, (Facebook [fan page]. Retrieved January 10, 2017 from <https://www.facebook.com/nettieasberry/photos/>)



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Henry and Nettie J. Asberry headstone,  
Oakwood Hill Cemetery, Tacoma, WA.

Nettie Asberry in her Battenburg lace opera coat holding the silver medal from Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, "First Ladies of Colored America," *The Crisis*, February 1943, pg. 50.

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**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House

**City or Vicinity:** Tacoma

**County:** Pierce County

**State:** Washington

**Photographer:** Marshall McClintock

**Date Photographed:** December 23, 2023



Photo 1 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0001) South (front) facade



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Photo 2 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0002) Southeast oblique, viewing northwest.



Photo 3 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0003) East facade.

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Photo 4 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0004) West facade.



Photo 5 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0005) Rear porch. Northeast oblique, viewing southwest.



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Photo 6 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0006) Kitchen wing. Northwest oblique, viewing southeast.



Photo 7 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0007) West room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Southwest corner. Viewing from northeast. Note joists for removed dropped ceiling.

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Photo 8 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0008) West room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor. North wall. Viewing from south. Note joists for removed dropped ceiling. At left is central chimney encased in drywall.



Photo 9 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0009) West room, rear, 1<sup>st</sup> floor. East wall into bathroom. Viewing from west.

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Photo 10 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0010) Kitchen. Northeast corner. Viewing from south. Note pantry entrance at right.



Photo 11 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0011) Kitchen. Northwest corner. Viewing from southeast corner. Contemporary cabinets and counter removed.

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Photo 12 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0012) Kitchen. Southeast corner. Viewing from northwest corner. Doorway on right accesses west room. Door at left accesses the back porch.



Photo 13 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0013) Entry hall and staircase, 1<sup>st</sup> Fl. North. Viewing from south. Doorway at right accesses east room.



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Photo 14 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0014) East room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Northeast corner. Viewing from southwest corner. The non-original doorway at right accesses exterior. Note that the contemporary drywall, some lathe, and the dropped ceiling are removed.



Photo 15 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0015) East room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Southwest corner. Viewing from northeast corner. Doorway at left accesses entry hall. Note that the contemporary drywall, some lathe and dropped ceiling are removed.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House
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Photo 16 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0016) East room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Northwest corner. Viewing from southeast corner. The door accesses hall. Note the angled ceiling with contemporary drywall removed.



Photo 17 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0017) East room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Southwest corner. Viewing from northeast corner. The low doorway on left accesses a storage space. The low doorway on right is access to attic. Note the angled ceiling with contemporary drywall removed.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House
Name of Property
Pierce County, Washington
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Photo 18 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0018) South room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Southeast corner. Viewing from northwest corner. The low door on left is access to same storage space seen in Photo 17. Note the contemporary drywall is removed from ceiling and around south window.



Photo 19 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0019) South room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. West wall. Viewing from southeast corner. The doorway at left is to a closet. Note that the contemporary drywall is removed from ceiling and around west window.



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

Asberry, Nettie J. and Henry J., House
Name of Property
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Photo 20 of 20. (WA\_Pierce\_AsberryNettieJ.andHenryJ.House\_0020) East side yard. Northeast oblique, viewing from southeast corner. Note the low CMU wall at the alley and the large Hazelnut tree in northeast corner. Southeast corner of front porch at lower left.

**Property Owner:** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)name Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Clubsstreet & number 2316 Yakima Avenuetelephone (253) 627-9777city or town Tacomastate WAzip code 98402

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC









































































