

# MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
Montana Historical Society  
PO Box 201202, 1301 E. Lockey  
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **318 First Avenue**  
Historic Address (if applicable):

City/Town: **Havre, Montana**

Site Number: **24HL1626**  
(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Hill County**

Historic Name: **Conley Residence**

Original Owner(s): **Pascal Conley**

Current Ownership  Private  Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Mary M Bergie (mail to: Arlene Rice)**

Owner Address: **1891 38<sup>th</sup> Ave NE**  
**Havre, MT 59501-6514**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: MT Township: **32N** Range: **16E**

**NW ¼ NE ¼** of Section: **08**

Lot(s): **001 (lots 1&2)**

Block(s): **009**

Addition: **Meili-Almas Addition**

Year of Addition:

USGS Quad Name: **Havre** Year: **1992**

Historic Use: **Domestic**

Current Use: **Domestic**

Construction Date: **1912**  Estimated  Actual

Original Location  Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference [www.nris.mt.gov](http://www.nris.mt.gov)

NAD 27 or  NAD 83(preferred)

Zone: **12** Easting: **597266** Northing: **5378417**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date: **10/5/1989**

Historic District: **Havre Residential Historic District**

NRHP Eligible: **X** Yes No

Date of this document: **8/17/2016**

Form Prepared by: **Diana Nettleton**

Address: **1301 E. Lockey, Helena MT, 59620-1202**

Daytime Phone: **406-444-1715**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: **X** yes  no

Criteria: **X** A  B  C  D

Date: **9/12/2016**

Evaluator: **Kate Hampton**

Comments: Property record form written as part of the  
"Identifying Montana's African American Heritage Places  
Project."

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:

NRHP Eligibility:  Yes  No  Individually  Contributing to Historic District  Noncontributing to Historic District

NRHP Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Area of Significance: **Ethnic History**

Period of Significance: **c. 1910-1919**

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Property Name: Conley Residence

Smithsonian Number: 24HL1626

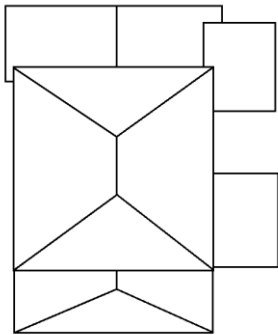
Architectural Style: Other If Other, specify: **American Four-Square**  
Property Type: Single Family Residence Specific Property Type: Single Family Residence

Architect: Architectural Firm/City/State:  
Builder/Contractor: Company/City/State:  
Source of Information:

## Architectural Description:

### *Setting and Location*

The Conley house is located in the 9<sup>th</sup> block of the Meili-Almas Addition on Havre's west side and within the Historic Havre Residential District. The block is bounded by 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the north, 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to the east. An alley that dissects the block on an east-west axis runs along the south end of the house. The west side of the block meets a large bare hill before running into the Eagles Addition. There is a large deciduous tree on the east end of the property, and another large deciduous tree in the west end of the back yard. This large tree is all that separates the property from the National Register listed Gussenhoven Castle property to the west.



### *Overview*

The Conley house is a two-story American Four-Square style home with a concrete foundation, grey aluminum siding, and a hipped roof clad with asphalt shingles. A hipped roof porch spans the east (front) elevation and a one-story porch spans the west elevation. A shed-roof garage and shed are visible on the north elevation.

### *East Façade*

The east elevation is defined by a full-span partially enclosed porch supported by stately tapered wood columns at the corners. The porch apron is also tapered and clad with grey aluminum siding. A ribbon of single light fixed sash enclose the south end of the porch. The north end is open. The entrance is on the north end and leads to a wood door with a white metal storm door. A large rectangular fixed window is located to the south of the door. A pair of evenly space double-hung wood sash are located on the second floor. To the north, the attached garage displays a stepped parapet wall with a low-slope shed roof, aluminum siding, and a metal retractable garage door.

### *North Elevation*

The north elevation is broken physically and visually by the garage and rear shed attachment. Fenestration on the north elevation includes a small single-light fixed window in the center of the wall, and a double-hung sash window sitting just beneath the eave on the second floor.

### *West Elevation*

The west elevation is not visible from the photographs available. It is assumed that the same grey aluminum siding continues along this elevation, and that the view would be that of a front gabled roof.

### *South Elevation*

A brick chimney projects from the south slope of the hipped roof. Fenestration includes two large fixed sash windows with wood trim at the east and west ends on the first story. Vegetation partially obscures the view of the window on the east end. Second floor fenestration includes two evenly spaced one-over-one double-hung wood sash units with wood frames.

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### HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

#### *Architectural History*

The original building on the site was a small two room L-shape house built before 1910, but this was replaced by the present structure sometime between 1910 and 1914.<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Paschal Conley Family*

Paschal Conley was born in Alabama in 1858, where he lived until he joined the army in 1878 as a private in the 24<sup>th</sup> infantry company 'H' of the famed Buffalo Soldiers. He worked mainly as a regimental clerk at Fort Supply in modern day Oklahoma. When his term of service had expired in 1884, Paschal went home to Madison, Alabama and married Miss Mary Jones on April 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>2,3</sup> After their marriage, Paschal re-enlisted and with every station, Mary followed him. We can see this correlation in comparing his station details and the births of his children. Mattie was born in 1887 in 'Indian Territory', Charles was born at Fort Bayard, New Mexico in 1891, Edward was born in North Dakota Territory in 1892, and finally Paschal Jr. was born in Montana 1894. In the aftermath of the Great Sioux War of 1876-77, the U.S. Military established military forts throughout the Northern Plains to protect U.S. interests and dissuade attacks from tribal nations, including Fort Assiniboine, established near the Milk River in north-central Montana. The U.S. government stationed the famed Buffalo Soldiers in various forts across the West, including Fort Assiniboine. 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry troops occupied the fort from 1891 until the beginning of the Spanish American War in 1898. Paschal Conley was among the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. His company H was stationed at the fort long enough for his family to establish themselves in the Havre area. They remained there while Paschal fought in the Spanish American War, and while he was stationed in Cuba from 1899 until 1902. According to his military records, whenever there was a furlough, Paschal was located in Havre with his family.<sup>4</sup> While Paschal was stationed in Cuba, Mary and their children ran the farm in Havre.<sup>5</sup>

Paschal retired from service as a Quarter Master Sergeant in the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in November of 1906.<sup>6</sup> His retirement came during a time of great controversy for the Buffalo Soldiers, directly after the Brownsville incident in Texas. An entire company of soldiers received dishonorable discharges for their supposed involvement in the incident, and a news outlet in Washington D.C. took the opportunity to display the contrast between this company and two soldiers who retired.<sup>7</sup> After his retirement, Paschal returned to Havre and began taking part in the social life of the town. In 1907, the newly created Colored Co-operative League number 9 elected Paschal as the president and his wife Mary as the treasurer.<sup>8</sup> By this time, his two oldest children, Mattie and Charles, had finished with school, and Edward and Paschal Jr were in the top three of their respective classes.<sup>9</sup> There was a big 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party thrown in Minnesota that Paschal and Mary attended, along with several other African American military veterans living in Havre, the Allsups and Barnes (see William Barnes HPRF). The gift given by the Conley's consisted of a silver souvenir spoon.<sup>10</sup> In 1914, the Conley's hosted the wedding of William Barnes and Jennie Alexander in their home on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.<sup>11</sup> Paschal and Mary eventually went to Spokane,

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<sup>1</sup> "Barnes and Alexander". *Havre Promoter*.

<sup>2</sup> "Marriage Certificate for Paschal Conley and Mary Jones".

<sup>3</sup> "Enlistment Records: Paschal Conley".

<sup>4</sup> US Buffalo Soldier Returns: Paschal Conley.

<sup>5</sup> Federal Census 1900.

<sup>6</sup> Application for Veteran Headstone: Paschal Conley

<sup>7</sup> "With and Without Honor", *Evening Star*.

<sup>8</sup> "Reverend J. D. Pettigrew ...".

<sup>9</sup> "Winners of Credit Marks", *Havre Herald*. "Report of Schools for September", *Havre Herald*. "The School Report for February", *Havre Herald*.

<sup>10</sup> "25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ...", *The Appeal*.

<sup>11</sup> Barnes and Alexander ...", *Havre Promoter*.

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Washington where they died within two days of each other. Mary died on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 1919, and Paschal died two days later on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March.

Mattie worked as a dressmaker while living in Havre, Montana, and she eventually moved to Spokane, Washington where she met and married J. Everett Davis on January 16, 1912.<sup>12,13</sup> The couple had a baby in 1914 named Everett Conley Davis, born April 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>14</sup> The family lived in Spokane until 1919, and then moved to Seattle.<sup>15</sup> Mattie Conley Davis died in Seattle January 24, 1936.<sup>16</sup>

Charles Hamilton Conley worked as a postal clerk for railroad companies his entire working career. He registered for the World War I draft in 1917, listing the small house next to his parent's home as his place of residence, and WWII when he lived in Great Falls.<sup>17</sup> Charles moved to Great Falls around 1917 where he continued working as a railway postal clerk. He married Daisy Taylor on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1926 and they lived together in Great Falls for the rest of their lives.<sup>18</sup> Charles died in Great Falls October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1967 and received the honor of burial within the veteran section of the Highland Cemetery.<sup>19</sup>

Edward Ira Conley also worked as a postal clerk for the railroad, but he moved to California as soon as he had enough money for the journey. He was a small man, his World War I and II draft cards list him as small and slender at 5'2" and 117 pounds. It was because of his stature that he was exempt from WWI and enlisted in the company 'M' of the 812 Pioneer Infantry for WWII. His company was intended to go into Europe to maintain roads and other infrastructure associated with the war effort, but the war ended by the time his troop was ready to leave. Edward never saw battle but he was honored with a veteran's headstone for service when he died in California March 29, 1943.<sup>20</sup>

Paschal Conley Jr. represents a sad chapter in the Conley's family history. Paschal graduated high school in the top percentile of his class and continued to live with his parents in Havre until 1917. In February of 1917, tragedy and madness struck his life in the form of unrequited and forbidden love. According to several newspapers around the state, Paschal Jr. had fallen in love with divorced Miss Helen Rumberg whom the same newspapers claimed had mixed Native American and English parentage. The *Havre Daily Promoter* on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 1917, reported that while Helen's mother, Mrs. Dexter known also as Mary Fiddler, was in the hospital for gall stones, Paschal paid her a visit to ask her for Helen's hand in marriage. The news article quoted these next few interactions, but there is very little proof that these were the exact words. Upon hearing Paschal Jr.'s request for her daughter's hand in marriage, Mrs. Dexter is reported to have said, "You're the wrong color to marry Helen", and Paschal's supposed response was, "If I can't marry her no one else shall!" He then proceeded to the general store where Helena was filling in for her mother, and they exchanged words that no one can corroborate because they were alone, and he shot her with a pistol and then shot himself in the head.<sup>21</sup> The next day, the same *Havre Daily Promoter* reported that an eye witness was present for the shooting but not the verbal exchange; Mr. J. Macdonald walked in just as they exited the side room used as a bedroom, before the shooting occurred. He then ran out to call for the sheriff. The article also noted that Paschal's behavior seemed to have been leading up to something tragic, as just a few months previous, he caused an altercation involving a shotgun (not a pistol) and another

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<sup>12</sup> Polk City Directory, Havre Montana.

<sup>13</sup> "Marriage Certificate: J. Everett Davis and Mattie Conley".

<sup>14</sup> "Birth Certificate: Baby Davis Davis".

<sup>15</sup> Polk City Directory, Spokane Washington. Polk City Directory, Seattle Washington.

<sup>16</sup> Death Certificate: Mattie Conley Davis".

<sup>17</sup> "WWI Draft Registration Card: Charles Hamilton Conley". "WWII Draft Registration Card: Charles Hamilton Conley".

<sup>18</sup> "Marriage Certificate: Charles Conley and Daisy Taylor". Polk City Directory, Great Falls Montana.

<sup>19</sup> "Headstone: Charles Conley".

<sup>20</sup> "WWI Draft Registration Card: Edward Ira Conley". "WWII Draft Registration Card: Edward Ira Conley". "Military Veteran Headstone Application: Edward Ira Conley". "Headstone: Edward I. Conley".

<sup>21</sup> "Suicide and Attempted Murder Follows Infatuation". *Havre Daily Promoter*.

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gentleman who was showing affection toward Helen.<sup>22</sup> It was shortly after this tragedy that Paschal Sr. and Mary left Havre for Washington, leaving behind their home and friends.

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<sup>22</sup> "Details of Tragedy Learned at Inquest". *Havre Daily Promoter*.

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### Statement of Significance

The Conley house, located at 318 First Avenue in Havre Montana, provides historic significance in the Conley family themselves. Not only was Paschal Sr. and respected Buffalo Soldier, Spanish-American and Indian Wars veteran, his family represents one of the few prosperous African American families in Havre. His wife, Mary, successfully managed to farm with their family while Paschal was away serving in the army, and his children went to school and earned jobs within Havre. Two of his sons, Charles and Edward, served in the United States Army, even though Edward never saw any actual fighting. Finally, Paschal Jr. was victim of racial prejudices in Havre to the point of an attempted murder-suicide that wracked the town news.

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**Integrity** (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association)

The Conley house maintains the same American Four-Square structure in which the Conley's lived during the early 1900s. The siding material is historically inaccurate, but the covered porch is visible in the Sanborn maps of the time, as is the single-story western addition. The neighborhood is still a residential neighborhood, and lies within a Havre Historic Residential District. The Gussenhoven house still stands to the west of the house, which is also visible in the historic Sanborns. Because the property retains its integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association, with only minor compromises to the materials and workmanship, it stands eligible for listing in the NRHP under the context of Ethnic History.

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**Photographs**



Photo Supplied by Google Maps – accessed August 2016.



Photo Supplied by Google Maps – accessed August 2016.

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Photo Supplied by Google Maps – accessed August 2016.

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## Site Map/Aerial Photo

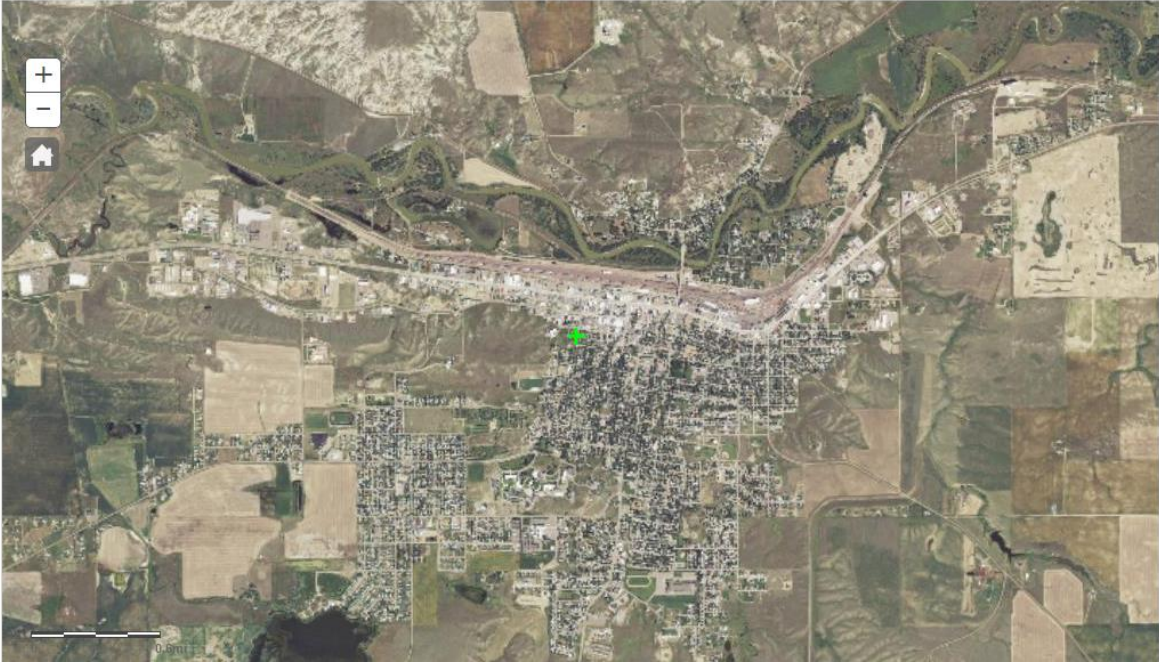


Photo Supplied by mt.gov – accessed June 2016.



Photo Supplied by mt.gov – accessed June 2016.

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## Topographic Map

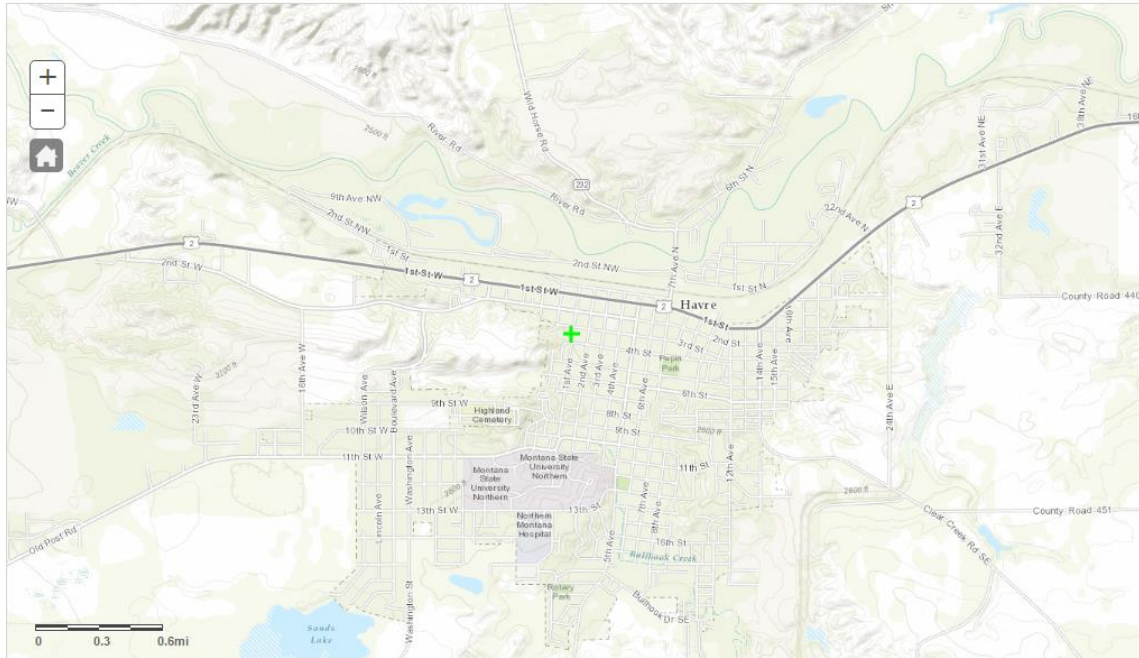


Photo Supplied by mt.gov – accessed June 2016.

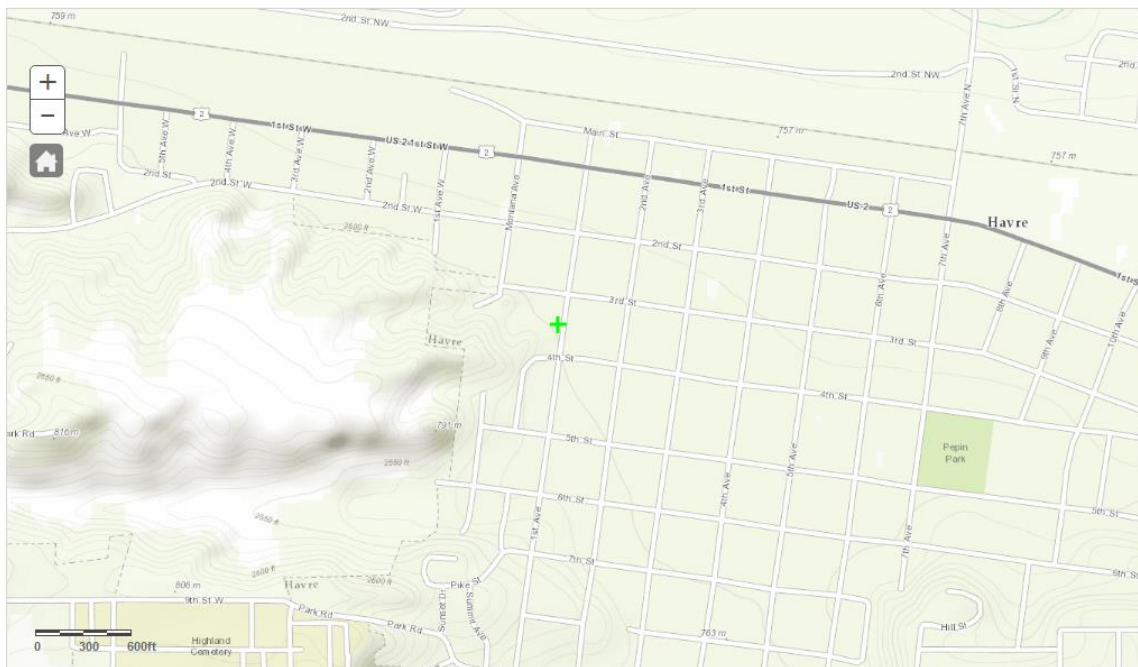


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