

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

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

Property Address: **534 Hollins Ave.**

Historic Address (if applicable): **534 Hollins Ave.**

City/Town: **Helena**

Site Number: **24LC2439**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Lewis and Clark**

Historic Name: **Jefferson and Louise Harrison House**

Original Owner(s):

Current Ownership Private Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Harris, Dawn M**

Owner Address: **739 8th Ave., Helena, MT 59601**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **10 N** Range: **04 W**

$\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ **SE** $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section: **24**

Lot(s): **W 17' Lot 27, all Lots 28 & 29, E 8' Lot 30**

Block(s): **33**

Addition: **Broadwater** Year of Addition: **1887**

USGS Quad Name: **Helena** Year: **1992**

Historic Use: DOMESTIC/single family

Current Use: DOMESTIC/single family

Construction Date: **1910** Estimated Actual

Original Location Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference

www.nris.mt.gov

NAD 27 or NAD 83(**preferred**)

Zone: **12** Easting: **420100** Northing: **5161466**

Geocode: **05-1887-24-4-15-25-0000**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date:

Historic District:

NRHP Eligible: Yes No

Date of this document: **7/20/2016**

Form Prepared by: **Delia Hagen**

Address: **660 River Court, Missoula, MT 59801**

Daytime Phone: **(406) 360-0120**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: yes no

Criteria: A B C D

Date: 9/6/2016

Evaluator: Kate Hampton

Comments: Identifying Montana's African American Heritage Places Project.

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Architectural Description

Property Name: **Error! Reference source not found.** Site Number: **Error! Reference source not found.** 24LC2439

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style: **Craftsman** If Other, specify:

Property Type: **Residential** Specific Property Type: **Single-family dwelling**

Architect: **unknown** Architectural Firm/City/State:

Builder/Contractor: **unknown** Company/City/State:

Source of Information:

The property commonly known as 534 Hollins Avenue occupies a large square parcel on the north side of Hollins Avenue, which runs northwest to southeast. The block is bordered by Hollins Avenue to the south, Peosta Avenue to the north, Harrison Avenue to the west and Madison Avenue to the east. A gravel alley runs along the north end of the parcel. The main structure on the parcel is a Craftsman style home that faces south to Hollins Ave. The building occupies the southwestern portion of the parcel with a fenced yard, and planted to grass on the east and south sides. A city sidewalk runs along the south edge of the parcel and a concrete slab sidewalk extends from the front entrance to the sidewalk. The front yard is elevated from the city sidewalk by a concrete band with a single concrete step. The concrete slab walkway extends around the west side of the house, through a rear, wood privacy fence and into the backyard. A north facing, single car garage abuts the rear alleyway that runs parallel to Hollins Avenue.

The backyard consists primarily of open lawn space, with a gravel/dirt walkway leading to the garage. The yard is divided into two separate spaces by deciduous shrubs that run east to west from the fence line to the northeast corner of the house. In the northeast corner of the parcel, within the fence, is a small, modern shed.

House:

This wood-frame, one-story building has a north-south oriented L-shaped footprint and a moderately pitched cross-gable roof. Roof features consist of overhanging eaves with triangular knee braces and two chimneys. The first chimney is internal and bisects the roof on the ridge at the intersection of the cross gables. The second chimney is external and located on the southern half of the eastern eave wall. The external chimney is constructed of brick and features a corbeled chimney cap at the top. The roof is clad in asphalt composition shingles.

The building is clad in contemporary horizontal wood board, as well as vertical wood board beneath the eaves. The wood cladding is painted cream with maroon trim. This house sits atop a, uncut, no course, stone foundation and is comprised of two components, a front entrance façade and a rear attachment. All windows are vinyl-frame with wood trim unless otherwise noted.

South (front) elevation:

Fenestration on the façade (south wall) features a partial width open interior porch with an inset entry to the west and a ribbon of three windows to the east. A faux front-gabled awning, created by the deep eave of the main roof's west slope, an applied secondary pitch, and bulky knee brackets highlight the porch opening. Two flared piers flank the front, cutout entrance, which is accessible by two concrete steps. The front door is composed of a contemporary screen door and an unoriginal entrance door. The south elevation's east side contains a centered ribbon of three windows: two fixed rectangular lights flank one central one-over-one double hung window.

West and east (side) elevations:

The west (side) elevation includes the open interior porch, defined on this elevation by its half-wall sided with horizontal boards that match the rest of the exterior. North of the porch, the west elevation contains three windows and a door. One

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of the windows is a square fixed one-light wood-frame window that appears to be original. Farther north is a modern oriel window that projects from the house with a light on each face. Towards the rear (north end) of the house is a side entrance with an unoriginal screen door.

The east elevation features a pair of modern doors, located just north of the exterior chimney, which access a large, modern wood patio. This double entrance has vinyl doors, each with a full body fixed light. One double hung vinyl window with wood trim occupies the west wall of the cross gable bay.

North (rear) elevation:

The north elevation features a rear projecting front-gable bay to the west that sits on top of a maroon painted concrete block foundation. There are two double hung vinyl, wood trimmed windows on the north elevation. One of the windows is located on the north wall of the projecting bay, and the second is located on the north wall of the cross gable. To the east of the second window is an assemblage of electrical boxes and piping. A rear entrance is located on the east wall of the northern projection that opens to a wood open porch. Based on the 1930 Sanborn map, the porch was originally much smaller, and the eastern half of the porch is a modern extension.

Garage:

A detached one-story, wood-frame garage with a concrete foundation is located at the northern end of the parcel. The one car garage is oriented north-south, with the north façade abutting the rear alleyway. The garage has a gable front roof and is clad in horizontal wood board, which is painted cream. The roof is clad in asphalt composition shingles. The north wall features a one car entrance, with a modern vinyl overhead rolling door surrounded by maroon painted wood trim. The east elevation features a wood-frame window with four lights and a central dividing mullion.

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History of Property

Property Name: **Error! Reference source not found.**

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HISTORY OF PROPERTY

This property was first platted in 1887 as Lots 27 through 30 of Block 33 of the Broadwater Addition, along the northeast side of Hollins Avenue, southeast of its intersection with Harrison Avenue. By 1892, when the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company first mapped the area, the lot contained a house, identified as 534 Hollins, that stood in the midst of a rapidly developing neighborhood: many bare lots occupied surrounding blocks, but the northeast side of Hollins was lined with houses.

At the time, it was owned by Elmer and Constance Woodman, who'd purchased Lots 27 and 28 in 1888 from C.A. Broadwater himself. The Woodmans apparently rented the property out, for 1892 city directories listed the occupant of 534 Hollins as one Annie Anderson. In 1907, after owning the property for almost 20 years, the Woodmans sold Lot 27 and the east 15 feet of Lot 28 to Jefferson Harrison, who moved from Fort Harrison (where he'd been part of "colored" Co. D, 24th Infantry) with his wife Louise. The Harrisons probably built the current house, which replaced the original home on the property sometime between 1892 and 1930. During that period the original outbuildings on the property were also replaced with a garage. Jefferson and Louise would own and occupy the house for 15 years. During this time, they both worked a variety of jobs. In 1907, Virginia-born Jefferson worked as a porter at the Hotel Broadway, and the following year found him in the same position at the Montana Club. By 1910, Jefferson, then 48, made a living as a laborer at an unspecified club while Indiana-born Louise, 45, did contract catering. The year 1920 found Jefferson back at Fort Harrison, working as a "watchman" for the U.S. Army.

Like many in Helena's African-American community, the Harrisons supplemented their family income by taking in boarders. In addition to Jefferson and Louise, occupants of 534 Hollins included William and Florence Mason (1910); Mrs. Lena Bouncler (1912, 1914); and Fannie Fitzgerald (1916). All of these boarders appear to have been part of Helena's interconnected African-American community, and they worked at the community's typical occupations. When he lived at 534 Hollins, Virginia-born William Mason was a laborer doing odd jobs while his Missouri-born wife, Florence (nee Faulkerson) did housework in a private home.¹ Lena Bouncler, born in Mexico and wife of Pearl Bouncler (a black man who'd been a soldier at Fort Harrison), made a living as a cook. Fannie Fitzgerald worked as a domestic.

In the fall of 1922, the Harrison family sold their house and moved, possibly to Washington: 1930 found them in Tacoma, where Jefferson worked as a laborer for the city. During their tenure at 534 Hollins they had acquired neighboring lots which were subsequently conveyed with their home. The new owners of Lots 27 through 29 and the east 8 feet of Lot 30 were Edward and Minni Gertrude (nee Johnson) Miller, who were also likely members of Helena's African-American community: when the Millers married in 1910, Theresa York was a witness, and in the years before they bought 534 Hollins they lived at 802 Breckenridge with their adult niece and nephew (by the last name of Robnett) and a 68-year-old boarder, identified as black, named Spence Smith, who worked as a janitor at the Federal Building. Edward Miller may have been a soldier in previous years, for an Edward J. Miller was listed in the infantry at Fort Harrison. The Millers lived in the house at 534 Hollins in 1922, when Edward worked as a porter at the Banking Corp. of Montana. But their ownership, and likely their residence there, was brief: a little over a year after buying the property they conveyed it to Thomas Miller, probably a relative.

Thomas and his wife Maude would own 534 Hollins for over 20 years. During that time they conveyed a portion of Lot 27 to their neighbor at 524 Hollins: Charles Carlson bought the east 8 feet of that lot in 1933. In 1944, the Millers sold the remaining property—the west 17 feet of Lot 27, all of Lots 28 and 29, and the east 8 feet of Lot 30—in 1944 to Eugene and Anna Pruttis who in turn conveyed it to Bernard and Jeanette McGinley the following year. The McGinleys sold the property twelve years later to Jack and Peggy Crosser who owned it briefly before it passed, in 1959, to Edward and

¹ When William Mason married his previous wife, Mamie Faulkerson, in 1902, witnesses included Almira Dorsey and Annie Kelley. Florence had also been previously married, to Harry Meek.

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History of Property

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George Lamb. Lamb family members owned 534 Hollins for 30 years. In 1989, Darlene Lamb sold it to Phyllis D. Kasperon who, with her husband Carl Pockrus, owned it until 1994. That year, Greg and Gayla Hall acquired the property, which they conveyed four years later to Michael and Shawna Hawks. In 2005 Michael and Shawna sold 534 Hollins to Eugene and Patricia Franks. Eugene and Patricia sold it four years later to the current owner, Dawn Harris. Sanborn Maps indicate no modifications to the building footprints since before 1930.

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Information Sources/Bibliography

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Statement of Significance

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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 Heritage & Social History** Period of Significance: **1907-1923**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1907 by Jefferson Harrison, a black veteran of a Army unit stationed at nearby Fort Harrison, and his wife Louise, the Harrison house is significant under NRHP Criterion A (local level) as a residential property associated with the history of African-American people in Helena, MT. Originally constructed by the Harrisons during the heyday of the black community in Helena, the house remained Harrison-owned and occupied until 1922 and was owned by another black veteran's family until 1923, when the local black community was in the midst of rapid decline. The Harrison house is thus associated with two significant historic contexts: it black owner-occupants lived there during the heyday of Helena's, and Montana's, African-American community, ca. 1875-1910, and they sold their home and left it in the midst of the community decline and endurance that followed, ca. 1910-1940. The property's period of significance is the period during which it was owned and occupied by African-American people, ie. 1907-1923.

The Harrison house represents these significant historic themes in a number of specific ways. Located near the black Baptist Church (on the corner of Wilder and Harrison), it was one of multiple homes in the surrounding west-end/Broadwater Addition neighborhood that housed a cluster of African-American families, many of them containing veterans of the "colored" army units stationed at nearby Fort Harrison. Like many black families in Helena, the home's owners took in boarders to help make ends meet and provide lodging to the African-American community. And like other black people in the region, residents of the Harrison house migrated to Helena in the late 19th century from border-states, like Missouri, and other southern locales. Once in Helena, the Harrison and Miller men and their housemates worked as porters, laborers, janitors etc.—prototypical positions for black men, who in this period were oft-confined by structural racism to low-status, low-waged work. Harrison's stint at the Montana Club was also representative, for that business, along with other hospitality businesses like the Hotel Broadway, was the largest employer of black Helena residents. Female residents' labor was likewise typical: many black women worked at arduous service jobs, and common occupations included housekeeping and cooking.

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Integrity

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INTEGRITY (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association)

Constructed c. 1907-1910, the Craftsman style house retains a degree of integrity sufficient to convey its strong associations with the African American community in Helena, particularly the small neighborhood of former soldiers who mustered out of the military from Fort Harrison. Small changes on non-primary elevations, including the introduction of patio doors, an oriel window, and a porch extension, do affect its integrity of design. Also, the introduction of modern windows throughout the house affects its integrity of materials. However, the new windows occupy, for the most part, original openings and are in keeping with the original design intent of the house, and many aspects of the house's original workmanship remain present. The house stands in its original location in its historic setting, and retains its feeling and association.

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Feature #
Facing: N

Description:

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Feature #
Facing: E

Description:

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Feature #
Facing: SW

Description:

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Feature #
Facing: S

Description:

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Photographs

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Feature #
Facing: S-SW

Description: 534 Hollins, garage, view to S-SW

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Site Map

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Topographic Map

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PROPERTY:

**534 Hollins Ave
Lewis and Clark County
Helena, Montana**

GeoCode:

05-1887-24-4-15-25-0000

LAT 46.602017

LON -112.043242