

# 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: **835 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.**

Historic Address (if applicable): **835 5th Ave.**

City/Town: **Helena**

Site Number: **24LC2445**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Lewis and Clark**

Historic Name: **James Eugene and Sarah L. Ingram Residence**

Original Owner(s): **Blake**

Current Ownership  Private  Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Balukas, Valerie A and Martin L**

Owner Address: **5540 Keir Ln., Helena, MT 59602**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **10 N** Range: **03 W**

$\frac{1}{4}$   $\frac{1}{4}$  **NE**  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section: **31**

Lot(s): **2** Block(s): **1**

Addition: **Blake Amended** Year of Addition: **1887**

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

Historic Use: DOMESTIC/single family

Current Use: DOMESTIC/single family

Construction Date: **c. 1908**  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 T** Easting: **421393** Northing: **5159650**

Geocode: **05-1888-31-1-39-21-0000**

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: **8/25/2016**

Evaluator: **Kate Hampton**

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

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## Architectural Description

Property Name: James and Sarah L. Ingram Residence

Site Number: 24LC2445

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### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style: **Other:** 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 835 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue occupies a rectangular parcel on the south side of 5th Ave and is located on the eastern portion of the block. The block is bordered by 5th<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north, Breckrenridge Street to the south, N. Raleigh Street to the west and N. Hoback Street to the east. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue runs east-west. A rear gravel alley lines the southern edge of the parcel. The main building on the parcel, the house faces north to 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. The building occupies the northern portion of the parcel with a partially fenced yard, and a backyard which is surrounded by wood privacy fencing, and slim sideyards planted to grass. The front yard features a mature coniferous tree located to the west of the front entrance. A city sidewalk runs along the north edge of the parcel. The backyard (south) contains an open lawn. Landscaping is limited.

The simple, small wood-frame one and a half story building has a north-south oriented substantially rectangular footprint and a moderately-pitched gable-front roof. Gabled dormers appear low and centered on both the east and west slopes, though the east dormer is much smaller than the west. A brick chimney located straddles the ridgeline on the south end of the house, and a circular metal chimney appears low on the north side of the west slope. Stacked curved wood trim creates a delightful cornice around all eaves, including the dormers and the porch. Cedar wood shingles cover the roof and wide asbestos shingles clad the exterior walls. The building sits atop what appears to be a concrete foundation. The façade (north wall) features a full-width, open, half-walled, wood porch with an overhanging shed roof, accessed by four wood steps. Above the steps, a pediment-like gabled dormer filled with diamond-shaped wood shingles highlights the entrance. All windows in the building are wood-frame unless otherwise noted.

Fenestration on the façade (north wall) of the building is limited to an entry located on the east, and two windows. The entry is filled with a vinyl screendoor and a wood front door. A modern, fixed, twelve-light window in an original opening appears at the first story's west side, while a centered, three-over-one, double-hung, wood-frame window punctuates the gable end. The south side of the east elevation features a tri-part bay window component, with three fixed wood-frame windows. A wide leaded glass hopper ornaments the east elevation's north side. A single fixed triangular light fills the aforementioned centered gabled dormer above. ON the opposite side of the house, the west elevation's dormer contains a one-over-one, wood-frame window. At the first story, the west elevation contains two original window openings: one on both the north and south sides. Dense vegetation obscures these windows' style. The south wall contains a large, original, one-story hipped extension and another, more modern, shed-roofed sunporch attached to the hipped component's south side. Five large fixed lights, set together and pitched skyward, fill the sun porch's south elevation. A wide skylight appears low across its roof slope. An entry leads into the hipped extension from an original, open shed-roofed porch across its east side. A three-over-one double hung wood-frame window is located within the main building's gable end.

Located on the southwest portion of the parcel, a detached wood-frame, gable-front, one-car garage abuts the rear alley. Cedar shingles cover its roof. The façade (east wall) features a modern, paneled, pressed vinyl top roller garage door. Both the façade and west walls are clad in horizontal wood board. The south side is clad in vertical wood sheeting.

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History of Property

Property Name: James and Sarah L. Ingram Residence

Site Number: 24LC2445

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## HISTORY OF PROPERTY

This property was first platted in 1881 as Lot 2 of Block I of the Blake Addition (Amended), along the south side of 5th Avenue, west of its intersection with N. Hoback Street. Although tax records indicate the current house was built in 1887, when the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company mapped the neighborhood in 1892, the lot was vacant. At that time it was still owned by members of the Blake family, who conveyed it to John D. Thompson in 1910. By that time, 835 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue contained the current dwelling, which by 1908 was listed in city directories.

In subsequent years, 835 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. would house numerous members of Helena's African-American community. By 1908 it was the home of Joseph E. W. Clarke and his wife Mary Ella (nee Rowan, b. Tennessee ca. 1864). The Clarks, married in Helena in 1892, had long lived in the neighborhood, including at 556 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (1899) and 327 N. Hoback (1903-1906, at least).<sup>1</sup> They rented the home at 835 5<sup>th</sup> until 1915, with Joseph (b. Washington, D.C. ca. 1863) initially making a living as he long had—working as a barber, and doing “hairdressing and manicuring,” at 11 Grand—before going into a business as a “chiroprapist” who worked out of his 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue home. During the Clarks' tenancy, owner John D. Thompson died, and in 1912 his estate conveyed the property to Robert M. and Jennie Hawkins.

In 1915, the Hawkins sold the property and the Clarks moved out, and new owners James Eugene and Sarah L. Ingram moved in.<sup>2</sup> The Ingrams were associates of the Clarks—Joseph and Mary Ella Clarke served as witnesses at their 1908 Helena marriage—and, like them, were members of the local African-American community.<sup>3</sup> Mississippi-born James, who worked as a janitor and engineer at Montana Life Ins. Co., and Missouri-born Sarah likely remained at 835 5<sup>th</sup> until Sarah Ingram's death in 1938.<sup>4</sup> That same year, James remarried, wedding Tennessee-born divorcee Willie Bell Ollie in front of witnesses A.E. Banks and J.E.W. Clarke. Willie Bell soon died, or the couple soon divorced, for James wed again the following year, this time to Mary H. Dutriurille Ellise, a widow. In 1940, James and Mary H. Ingram sold their 835 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue property to Emma LaMaure.<sup>5</sup> James died three years later in Spokane.

LaMaure owned 835 5<sup>th</sup> some five years before conveying it to Warner A. and Nellie W. Smith. The Smiths, too, owned it about five years, and the property subsequently went through a series of short term owners, passing to Ernest F. and Thelma M. Christian in 1950, then to Stanley M. and Rachel B. Wheeler in 1952, then to Frank D. and Marjorie L. Mihelish in 1957, and to Catherine A. Ward just three months later. Ward owned the property seven years, conveying it to Eric N. and Vaneta R. Ortloff in 1964. From the Ortloffs it was deeded to Patricia E. Griffin in 1966.

Margaret W. and Kemp Roberts acquired it in 1971, and in turn conveyed it to Sandy McPherson in 1973. McPherson transferred it to Karen A. Summers six months later. It then passed to Robert Wallace and Bonnie S. Mock in 1976, to Ellen A. Goers and Kenneth P. Bangert in 1979, and then, later that same year, to David and Cynthia McAllister. In 1985, the McAllisters conveyed it to Charles W. Briggs, who owned it five years before deeding it to Harlan R. Davis. Current owner Valerie Thresher acquired it from Davis in 2000, and now holds title with her husband as Valerie A. and Martin K.

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<sup>1</sup> Other previous Clarke addresses included 126 Broadway (1890, while working at Clarke & Browne) and 902 Broadway (1898).

<sup>2</sup> The Clarks were subsequently listed in city directories at 520 Benton Ave. (1917-1920, at least, while working as a chauffeur for a private family), 204 S. Park (1927, while working at Clarke and Grose Pop Corn Crispetts), 14.5 S. Main (1930-1933, at least). At this last address they lived with Row Murrell. By 1940, Joseph Clarke was a widower, living on S. Main St. and working as a janitor and masseur.

<sup>3</sup> James had been married at least once before. In 1903 he wed Mamie Mason, a Missouri-born divorcee, in Helena. James and Mamie had divorced by 1908.

<sup>4</sup> James had previously worked as a porter for Charles Heilig (1908) and an engineer at the Granite Block (1909-1910).

<sup>5</sup> Although city directories list the Ingrams as the occupants of 835 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue through the 1930s, title to the property passed through a series of owners between 1923—when the Ingrams deeded it to Andrew P. Hanson—and 1932, when James and Mary Ingram again took title. Owners in this period included, in chronological order, Dora P. Hanson, Hattee C. Strandbery, and Andrew and Sophia Lyle.

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History of Property

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Balukas. The Balukas live elsewhere in Helena and do not occupy the property. According to Sanborn Maps, the footprint of the house at 835 5th Avenue was not modified from before 1930 to after 1958. A garage was constructed at the southwest corner of the lot between 1930 and 1951, and was likely replaced in 1968, when tax records indicate the extant garage was completed.

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Information Sources/Bibliography

Property Name: James and Sarah L. Ingram Residence

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## INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ancestry.com, various military and death records

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Helena, City of, Town Plats

1887 Blake Addition (Amended)

Lewis and Clark, County of. Clerk and Recorder's Office, property title records.

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## Statement of Significance

Property Name: James and Sarah L. Ingram Residence

Site Number: 24LC2445

### 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: **1908-1940**

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Purchased in 1915 by James and Sarah Ingram, the Ingram house is significant under NRHP Criterion A (local level) as a residential property associated with the history of African-American people in Helena, MT. The home served as a rental occupied by other members of the local black community prior to the Ingrams' purchase: prominent members of the local African-American community occupied it from 1908 until 1940, when widowed James and his third wife sold it. Among its prominent occupants was J.E.W. Clarke (president of the St. James AME Church's Literary Society, founder of the Afro-American Protective League, gubernatorial appointee as a MT delegate to the 1911 "National [Negro] Educational convention" in Denver), as well as Ingram's 3<sup>rd</sup> wife Mary, a longtime Montana resident who with her first husband, Duke Dutriuielle, lived in Helena, Fort Benton, and Marysville before settling in Belt. James and Sarah were also well known in the local black community and beyond, not least because they made headlines in 1906 when Sarah shot James, apparently in self-defense during a domestic violence altercation. The Ingram house is thus associated with two significant historic contexts: black occupants lived there during the heyday of Helena's, and Montana's, African-American community, ca. 1875-1910, and it was later owned and occupied by one of the few established black families that endured in Helena after the deep community decline that followed, ca. 1910-1940. The property's period of significance is the period during which it was owned and/or occupied by African-American people, ie. 1908 to 1940.

The Ingram house represents these significant historic themes in a number of specific ways. Located next door to the black St. James AME Church (Site LC2430), it was one of multiple homes in the surrounding east-side neighborhood that housed a cluster of African-American people. Like other black families in the region, residents of the home migrated to Montana from border-states like Missouri and other southern locales. The economic activities of the Ingram-house residents likewise were representative. Male residents of the home worked as janitors, porters, chauffeurs—prototypical positions for black men, who in this period were oft-confined by structural racism to low-status, low-waged work. James Ingram's earlier employment also included the Montana Club, the single largest employer of black people in Helena. Clarke's stint as a barber was likewise representative, for that field was primary among African-American male occupations in Montana.

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Integrity

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

The Ingram Residence retains its integrity of location, setting, feeling, workmanship, and association. The only compromise to design is the shed addition at the south side. Late/mid-century asbestos tile siding and more modern windows at the first story adversely impact its integrity of materials. The significance of the long tenure of two African American families in this home, together with its location next door to the African American Episcopal Church, eclipses its diminished integrity, and the building stands eligible for listing in the National Register.

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Photographs

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Property Name: James and Sarah L. Ingram Residence

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Feature #

Description:

Facing: S-SW



Feature #

Description:

Facing: SW

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Photographs

Property Name: James and Sarah L. Ingram Residence

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Feature #  
Facing: SE

Description:

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Photographs

Property Name: James and Sarah L. Ingram Residence

Site Number: 24LC2445



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Photographs

Property Name: James and Sarah L. Ingram Residence

Site Number: 24LC2445

Feature #  
Facing: N-NW

Description:



Feature #  
Facing: NW

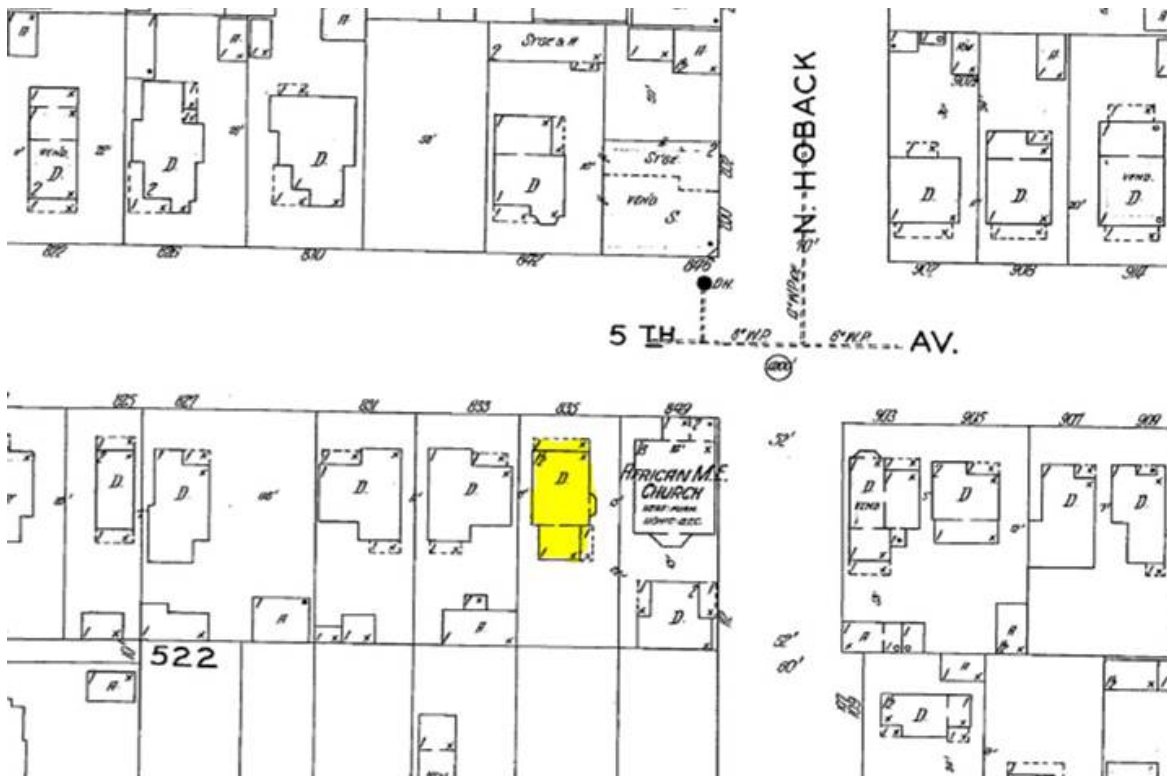
Description: 835 5<sup>th</sup>, garage, view to NW

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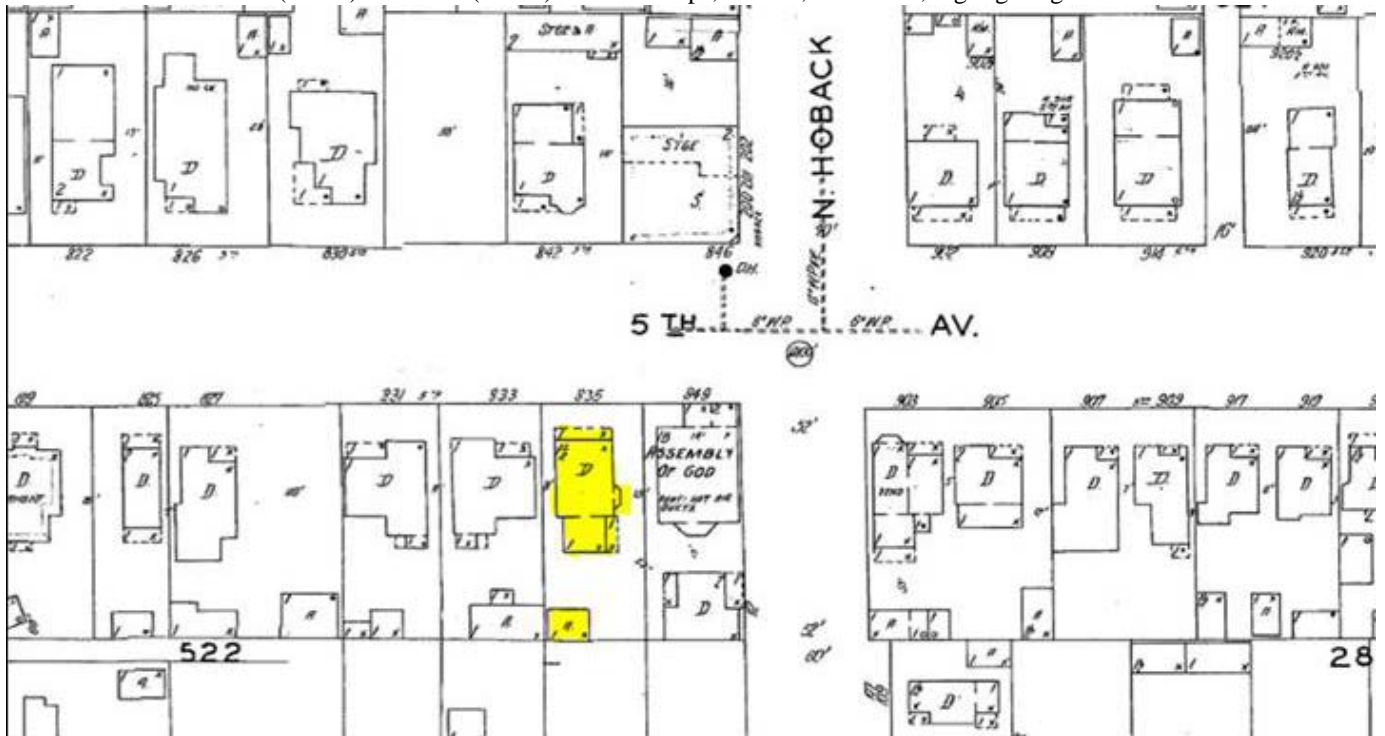
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Sanborn Maps

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Detail of 1930 (above) and 1951 (below) Sanborn maps, Helena, Sheet 208, highlighting 835 Fifth Avenue.



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Site Map

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# MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

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Topographic Map

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**PROPERTY:**

835 Fifth Ave  
Lewis and Clark County  
Helena, Montana  
GeoCode:  
05-1888-31-1-39-21-0000  
LAT 46.585818  
LON -112.026053