

# Landmarks Preservation Commission

## Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department

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747 Market Street ❖ Room 345 ❖ Tacoma WA 98402-3793 ❖ 253.591.5254

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## TACOMA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM

This form is required to nominate properties to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places per Tacoma Municipal Code 13.07.050. Type all entries and complete all applicable sections. Contact the Historic Preservation Office with any questions at 253-591-5254.

### PART 1: PROPERTY INFORMATION (for 'HELP' press the F1 key)

#### Property Name

Historic Name Henry J. & Nettie J. Craig Asberry house Common Name Asberry house

#### Location

Street Address 1219 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street Zip 98402

Parcel No(s). 0320053012

Legal Description and Plat or Addition: The North half of the following described tract: Commencing 208.5 feet west of the center of Section 5, Township 20 North, Range 3 East of the W.M. in Pierce County, Washington: Thence West 208.5 feet; Thence South 208.5 feet; Thence East 208.5 feet; Thence North 208.5 feet to the beginning, in Pierce County, Washington. Except from said North half those portions appropriated by the city of Tacoma, in the Superior Court for Pierce County under Case Nos. 24616 and 100530 for "M" Street, for South 13th Street and for alley. Also except for said North half that portion lying East of the center line alley between Blocks 1224 of Seibler De Ferry Addition to Tacoma, according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 7 of Plats page 91, in Pierce County, Washington, extended southerly.

#### Nominated Elements

Please indicate below significant elements of the property that are included in the nomination by checking the appropriate box(es) below. These elements should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Principal Structure   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Additions               | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Landscaping, Fencing, Walkways, etc.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessory Buildings/Outbuildings | <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Spaces/Other (inventory in narrative) |

#### Owner of Property

Name Keith R. Kepler & Amy E. Parks

Address 10016 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE City Seattle State WA Zip 98125

Is the owner the sponsor of this nomination? If not, please provide evidence that the owner has been contacted.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Owner Signature, if possible:

#### Form Preparer

Name/Title	Marshall R. McClintock	Company/Organization	Historic Tacoma
Address	701 North J Street	City	Tacoma
Phone	253-627-4408	State	WA
		Zip	98403
		Email	marshalm@q.com

04/2017

# Landmarks Preservation Commission

## Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department



747 Market Street ❖ Room 345 ❖ Tacoma WA 98402-3793 ❖ 253.591.5254

### Nomination Checklist—Attachments

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Filing Fee (payable to City Treasurer)  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuation Sheets  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Map (REQUIRED)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Plans  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographs (REQUIRED): <i>please label or caption photographs and include a photography index</i>                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please indicate): Current owner's support statement, Council Member waiver of fee |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Last Deed of Title (REQUIRED): <i>this document can usually be obtained for little or no cost from a titling company</i> |  |

#### FOR OFFICE USE

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Fee Paid \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative (continued)**

**PART 2: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Extent of Changes**

Please summarize the changes that have been made to the original plan, exterior, materials, cladding, windows, interior, and other significant elements by selecting the choices below. If the property has been previously documented, these may be indicated on the Washington State Historic Property Inventory Form. These changes should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

	Original Materials Intact			Original Materials Intact	
Plan (i.e.: no additions to footprint , relocation of walls, or roof plan)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Interior (woodwork, finishes, flooring, fixtures)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Original cladding/exterior materials	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Other elements	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Windows (no replacement windows or replacement sashes)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

**Physical Description Narrative**

Describe in detail the original (if known) and present physical appearance, condition and architectural characteristics of the site (context, location), exterior (all four walls), and interior. Please include a list of known alterations and their dates (use additional sheets if necessary).

See Appendix II for narrative and Appendix V for current photos.

## PART 3: HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

### Criteria for Designation

Tacoma Municipal Code recognizes six criteria of eligibility for inclusion on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. Please select any that apply to this property, for which there is documented evidence included in this nomination form.

- ☒ A Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- ☒ B Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- ☐ C 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 may lack individual distinction; or
- ☐ D Has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
- ☐ E Abuts a property that is already listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places and was constructed within the period of significance of the adjacent structure; or
- ☐ F Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City.

### Historical Data (if known)

Date(s) of Construction	1887	Other Date(s) of Significance	1903 – 1968 (Asberry ownership)		
Architect(s)	N/A	Builder	Benjamin F. Wood & David Garrett		
Architectural Style(s)	National Folk	Engineer	N/A		
Material(s)	Wood				

### Statement of Significance

Describe in detail the chronological history of the property and how it meets the criteria for the Register of Historic Places. Please provide a summary in the first paragraph that lists the relevant criteria (use additional sheets if necessary). This section should include a thorough narrative of the property's history, context, occupants, and uses. If using a Multiple Property Nomination that is already on record, or another historical context narrative, please reference it by name and source.

See Appendix III

## Appendix I: Site map and legal description



Fig. Site map showing the location of the nominated property, outlined in red. Source: Google Maps.

### Legal Description

The North half of the following described tract: Commencing 208.5 feet west of the center of Section 5, Township 20 North, Range 3 East of the W.M. in Pierce County, Washington:

Thence West 208.5 feet;

Thence South 208.5 feet;

Thence East 208.5 feet;

Thence North 208.5 feet to the beginning, in Pierce County, Washington.

Except from said North half those portions appropriated by the city of Tacoma, in the Superior Court for Pierce County under Case Nos. 24616 and 100530 for "M" Street, for South 13th Street and for alley.

Also except for said North half that portion lying East of the center line alley between Blocks 1224 of Seibler De Ferry Addition to Tacoma, according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 7 of Plats page 91, in Pierce County, Washington, extended southerly.

Parcel ID: 032005-3012

Commonly known as 1219 South 13th Street, Tacoma, WA 98405

## Appendix II: Physical Description Narrative

Located at 1219 South 13th Street in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood, the Asberry House sits at the west end of a large 8, 125 sq. ft. lot at the corner of South 13th and South M Streets. Built in 1887, this house is an example of the Gable Front and Wing subtype of the National Folk form, a simple vernacular house form popular from about 1850 until about 1930. This common form is sometimes called Upright-and-Wing, Temple & Wing, Gable Front or simply Farmhouse. Its occurrence followed the expansion of the railroads across the continent, which made lumber and other building materials widely and cheaply available.<sup>1</sup>

The house faces south to 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 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 short, single story, gabled extension with an 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, perhaps with some replacement, and narrow corner boards. 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 with Doric capitals and no base or balustrade between. The porch floor is one to two feet above the ground and reached by three concrete steps with a metal rail. The foundation is concrete block.

The main and porch roofs are clad in composition singles. A single brick, exterior 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, rose through the main portion of the house at about the middle of the roof ridge.

### South Elevation

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

At the second floor is a centered, vinyl three part window with horizontal sliding sashes. The surround 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 Fig. 15 in Appendix IV).

The first floor of the front gable has a large, three-section vinyl window with a plain molding surround west of the entry. Historic photographs indicate that this originally a large picture window with transom (See Fig. 7 in Appendix IV). The main entry to the east has a replacement, six-panel front door with a transom window above.

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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.

The first floor wing features a large, single pane picture window about the same size as that by the front door. 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 Fig. 15 in Appendix IV).

### **East Elevation**

The east elevation is dominated by the wing. The exterior brick chimney is centered on the façade. The gable has undecorated verges and patterned shingling like that in the south gable. At the second floor, narrow, double-hung vinyl window are located on either side of the chimney. The framing is simple and likely replacement. On the first floor, a modest-sized, fixed picture window is located south of the chimney. To the north of the chimney is a single panel, single leaf door with a small stoop and two steps. Historic photos show narrow, double hung windows in these locations (See Fig. 16 in Appendix IV).

To the north beyond the wing is an enclosed, shed-roofed rear porch extending from the rear wing of recent vintage. It has single panel, single-leaf door with small stoop at the south end. The rest is glazed panels set on what appears to be a plywood lower wall.

### **West Elevation**

The west elevation is dominated by a pair of replacement horizontal sliding, vinyl windows with narrow, plain molding surrounds on both the first and second floors. 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 window on that floor matches the one above. The surrounds are all narrow, plain molding. In the one-story rear extension is a small fixed window.

### **North Elevation**

The gable of the main section is clad in wood shiplap with a centered narrow, small double-hung window. On the first floor, the rear gabled wing extends from the main section about 12 feet. There are two narrow, double-hung windows toward the east and west sides.

## Appendix III: Statement of Significance

The house at 1219 South 13th Street was built by contractors Benjamin F. Wood and David Garrett in 1887 and is a remaining example of the initial settlement of Tacoma's emerging Hilltop neighborhood. It was built for William H. and Alida G. Jones, who lived here from 1888 to 1892. However, its major significance comes from it being the longtime residence of Henry Joseph and Nettie Craig Jones Asberry from 1903 until 1966. The Asberrys were among the early leaders of Tacoma's and Washington's emerging African-American community, and Nettie Asberry would play a pivotal role in early 20th Century civil rights in Tacoma and the Pacific Northwest. The yard is included in this nomination since it was the setting for many of Nettie Asberry's recitals and other cultural activities

This house is listed as a "priority property for future nomination" in the Hilltop Neighborhood Multiple Property Nomination of Tacoma's 1993 Cultural Resources Inventory. The period of significance is 1887 to 1968. The house and yard are eligible for the Tacoma Register of Historic Places under the following criteria:

- Criterion A as a remaining Territorial residence from the earliest period of the Hilltop neighborhood's development and associated with Tacoma's early African-American community.
- Criterion B for its association with Henry and Nettie Asberry, noted early leaders of Tacoma's African-American community.

The Asberry house maintains a significant degree of integrity with regard to its location, setting, feeling and association. While it retains its original massing, pattern and overall design, it has lost significant integrity of design, materials and workmanship with the loss of original window sashes and surrounds and some changes in fenestration.

The National Register of Historic Places has provided guidance on how to evaluate the integrity of a property. It acknowledges that negative changes to buildings do occur over time and that these must be weighed carefully. Regarding Criteria A (historic events) and B (historic persons), under which the Asberry house is nominated, it states that a building "...important for association with an event, historical pattern, or person(s) ideally might retain some features of all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association."<sup>2</sup> While the removal of original window sashes and frames and some fenestration is lamentable, the house still retains substantial integrity, especially in terms of the porch and the wing that housed Nettie's music room. The National Register Bulletin states that basic integrity test for Criteria A and B is "whether a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today."<sup>3</sup> A historical contemporary, in this case someone from 1888 or from 1903, would easily recognize this house as it exists today.

Moreover, territorial buildings are rare in the state and the city, especially in the Hilltop neighborhood. Indeed, this house would be the oldest structure listed in Hilltop and one of only eleven individually listed pre-1890 buildings on the Tacoma Register. Located as it is just within the boundaries of the new Hilltop Mixed-Use zoning district, this house is almost assured of destruction without historic designation. Additionally, this house is of particular importance in representing Tacoma's African-

<sup>2</sup> *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Register Bulletin, National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Revised 1995. Pg.44-49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 48.



American community. Currently the Silas Webber house in the North Slope Historic District is the only other building directly associated with that community on the city's Landmarks Register.

As part of the 2021-23 biennium budget, the Washington State Legislature awarded the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Clubs (TCACWC) an appropriation of \$919,000.00 through the Department of Commerce's Local Projects program to acquire the historic Asberry Home Site for future renovation and public benefit. Forterra NW joined the TCACWC as a partner on the request, and is acting as the fiscal and project manager for the TCACWC for the duration of the transaction. Plans are underway for assessing the condition of the house and developing a restoration plan.

## **Architectural Style**

This house is an example of the Gable Front and Wing subtype of the National Folk form, a vernacular house form popular from about 1850 until 1930 that followed the expansion of the railroads across the continent. Lumber availability and light balloon framing made these simple, relatively inexpensive houses a common sight in cities as well as rural areas. The gable front with 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 with relatively steep roof pitches with 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 being lower than that of the front gable portion. A shed-or hipped roof porch was typically placed within the L made by the two wings. The porches often retained Neoclassical details, such as the simple Tuscan, floor-to-ceiling columns with Doric order capitals seen on the Asberry house.<sup>4</sup>

## **Neighborhood Context**

The land on which Tacoma sits 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. Carr settled on Commencement Bay in 1864 in what is now "Old Town". In 1873 the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) selected this area as the terminus for their transcontinental railroad. In 1875 NPRR established a city site, New Tacoma, about two miles south of Carr's settlement. New Tacoma developed rapidly as a railway and shipping locus.

Early speculators, such as Clinton P. Ferry and George P. Riley, purchased land up the hill from the growing waterfront. Hilltop was the first residential neighborhood to develop outside of the downtown core. The residents during its early development were almost all immigrants to Tacoma whether from other countries or other states. 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 residents depended on their feet for transportation, so stores and social activities were typically located within easy walking distance from the homes. The construction of a cable car line up S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street and down S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street in 1891 and a streetcar line on M. L. King Way hastened the pace of the Hilltop's development.<sup>5</sup>

From 1900 to 1930, Tacoma experienced a huge growth in population. Hilltop absorbed a large share of working class immigrants arriving in Tacoma from throughout the United States and the world hoping to benefit from the city's well-publicized economic opportunities. The extension of city-wide trolley lines

<sup>4</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2013, pg. 138-140.

<sup>5</sup> G. Copass & G. Evsaman "Historic Resources of the Hilltop Neighborhood," *National Register of Historic Places*, 1994.

throughout the Hilltop spurred the construction of homes farther from the areas of first expansion and the commercial and industrial center of Tacoma. Those trends continued during the post-WWII era up to today.

### House Construction and History

Construction of the house at 1219 South 13th Street began September 5, 1887 and was complete by November 9, 1887.<sup>6</sup> It was built for William H. & Alida G. Jones by Benjamin F. Wood and David Garrett, both listed as carpenters in the city directories of the time. Mr. Garrett appears to have left Tacoma soon after the house was built and little information has been found about him.

Benjamin Franklin Wood (~1832 – 1903) was born in Westfield, N.Y., 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 building contractor. He died in Tacoma in 1903.<sup>7</sup>

From 1887 until 1892, this was the home of William H. and Alida G. Jones and their four sons, Harald, Carl, Jaspar, and Herman. 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 Western Mill Company. The Joneses moved around the Puget Sound region. They appear to have lived in Tacoma from ~1878 until ~1880 and then again from ~1887 to ~1892. By 1910 they lived in Seattle and finally moved to Centralia, WA, by 1920 where they are both buried.

The City Directory shows no listings for this address from 1893 and 1894. In 1895 James and Alice Holliston lived in the house. James was a butcher with a shop at 1303 South J St., while Alice taught art and sold art supplies at 1024 S. Yakima St. In 1897, Myron H. Woolsey lived in the house. He famously claimed to be Jessie James’ son.<sup>8</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 1903 Henry and Nettie Asberry bought the house from Charles E. Gibson and his wife for \$1,500.<sup>9</sup> Henry was the proprietor of the Tacoma Hotel barbershop, one of the most prestigious in town, from 1892 until hotel burned in 1935. He died at the house in 1939. Nettie taught music in her music room in the house until ~ 1955 and would continue to live there until 1966. She died in 1968 at the age of 103.

The house was the location not only of Nettie Asberry’s music teaching but the yard was often the location for her students’ recitals and concerts. The house was the location where Nettie organized the Mozart Club, a youth music appreciation club. In 1908 it would be where she organized the Clover Leaf Club, which would earn a gold medal for best women’s exhibit at the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle. The Clover Leaf Club would eventually be renamed the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women’s Clubs that exists today. The house was the location for much of Henry and Nettie’s

<sup>6</sup> *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 12/20/1887, pg. 1

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

<sup>8</sup> *Tacoma Times*, 01/30/1947. 08/13/1902, pg. 9

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

civil rights organizing, such as organizing protest meetings against President Wilson's racial segregation of federal workers and drafting the charter for the Tacoma NAACP chapter. In later years, Nettie would teach local children Black history here. The biographies of Henry and Nettie Asberry that follow provide more detailed information.

## Biographies

### Henry Joseph Asberry

Little information is currently available on Henry Asberry's early years. He was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1862, the year Union troops liberated the city. 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 population of free African-American, 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>10</sup> This might be Henry's father or perhaps another relative.

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 African Americans. It offered study from the elementary to the college level. Today it is part of Dillard University in New Orleans.<sup>11</sup>

Henry began his barbering career in 1884 at the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans.<sup>12</sup> The St. Charles was the premier hotel in New Orleans for some 135 years, and Henry would have worked in the hotel's second building, a massive Greek Revival structure near Canal Street. Although it's unknown how long he worked there, the St. Charles would have been a prestigious recommendation anywhere else in America. Following the St. Charles, Henry worked as a barber on the Anchor Line, a steamboat company with riverboats plying the Mississippi River.<sup>13</sup>

At some point, Henry operated a barbershop in Hot Springs, Arkansas, for a "few years" but left because of "...conditions threatening the welfare of an industrious and independent citizen...".<sup>14</sup> By 1888, Henry was in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he barbered at the Merchants Hotel, the premier hotel in that city at that time.<sup>15</sup> While there, Henry barbered Col. Chauncey Wright Griggs, one the wealthiest men in St. Paul. Henry stated he heard of Tacoma and its opportunities from Griggs.<sup>16</sup> In 1888, Griggs and two other investors purchased 80,000 acres of timberland near Tacoma from the Northern Pacific Railroad, which would become the Tacoma & St. Paul Lumber Company. By 1889 the Griggs had relocated to Tacoma.

In 1890 Henry arrived in Tacoma. He first works 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

<sup>10</sup> 79th Regiment, United States Colored Infantry, Film Number M589 roll 3

<sup>11</sup> Cayton, Horace R. "Negroes in Washington", *Seattle Republican*, 1896.

<sup>12</sup> Short, E. T. "Henry Asberry at the Tacoma Hotel Barbershop," *The Tacoma Times*, April 4, 1934, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Cayton, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Keeble, F. Fritz. "Tacoma Department", *Portland New Age*, 09/13/1902, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com

<sup>16</sup> Cayton, *op. cit.*

South 13th Street.<sup>17</sup> Mr. 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. At a time when few houses, apartments or even hotels had baths, public bathhouses 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 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>18</sup> Frequent local customers purchased made-to-order shaving mugs and brushes with their initials. Some of these mugs and brushes survived the 1935 fire and are now donated to the Washington State Historical Society.

Henry married Nettie Craig Jones on February 23, 1895. Initially they lived at 1022 South Tacoma Avenue until 1896. From 1897 until 1902, they lived at 1012 South 12th Street. On August 12, 1902, they purchased the house at 1219 South 13th Street from Charles Gibson for \$1500.<sup>19</sup> Henry would die at home in 1939.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to barbering, Henry was heavily involved in real estate. His barbershop was an idea place to pick up business and real estate news. At his death, he left his wife Nettie a considerable amount of property. From 1903 to 1911, he owned and operated the Pacific Soap Company producing Asberry's Tar Shampoo.<sup>21</sup> In addition, he was a member of the First Church of Christ, Scientist (902 Division Ave.). He chaired the Allen AME Red Cross Auxiliary along with Nettie. He was a member and Grand Master of Puget Sound Lodge No. 3211 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. Henry was a long-time member of Cassia Lodge #5, Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons (F. & A.M.). From 1917 to 1923, he was Grand Master for the State of Washington, Prince Hall, F & A.M.<sup>22, 23</sup>

### **Nettie Craig Jones Asberry**

Nettie Craig was born July 15, 1865, in Leavenworth, Kansas. She was the daughter of William P. Wallingford (1820 – 1875), an immigrant British farmer and slave-owner, and Violet (1835 – 1906), his former slave. Wallingford had moved his household from Kentucky to Missouri in 1837. He was married three times and fathered some 17 children, including six by Violet. Nettie was the youngest of these six 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 for Nettie's birth where she may have joined her mother Jemina (Jemima?) Craig.

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<sup>17</sup> Cayton, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Short, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Tacoma Daily Ledger, 08/12/1902, pg. 9

<sup>20</sup> "Pioneer barber passes". *The News Tribune*, 07/27/1939, P. 13.

<sup>21</sup> "Would have to employ 20 or more persons," *Tacoma Daily News*, 10/09/1908, Pg. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</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)

Jemina and Violet adopted the surname Craig upon their freedom, a possible reference to the Craig plantation in Kentucky where she was born in 1835.<sup>24</sup>

In 1858, a group of anti-slavery Free Staters drafted and adopted the Leavenworth Constitution for Kansas during the period called “Bleeding Kansas.” The most radical of four proposed state constitutions, it banned slavery and recognized African-American’s full citizenship. During and after the Civil War, many refugee African-Americans 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 managed her education and music training. At this time few women and only a tiny number of African Americans, mostly men, attended college. However, Nettie continued her music studies in Leavenworth at the Kansas Conservatory of Music and Elocution, and on June 12, 1883, she received a “Teacher of Music” degree from the Kansas Conservatory.<sup>25, 26</sup>

By 1870, Violet Craig had married Taylor Turner, and by 1881 the family had moved to the African-American town of Nicodemus, Kansas. Nicodemus is now a National Historic Site as the only remaining western town established by African Americans after the Civil War. Nettie taught school and music there. During this time, she also attended the Kansas Normal School Institute, but it is not clear if she received a degree.<sup>27, 28</sup> She also taught in Kansas City and Denver as well as playing in churches and directing choirs.

In 1890, she married Albert J. Jones in Kansas, and the newlyweds traveled to Seattle. Albert worked as a barber, and Nettie became the first organist and music director for Seattle’s First African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.<sup>29</sup> For unknown reasons, Nettie had returned to her family in Leavenworth, KS, by November, 1893.<sup>30</sup>

Albert meanwhile took a job with the Franklin coal mine in King County, WA. He is among the 37 miners who die on August 25, 1894, in the Franklin Mine fire, the second worst mining disaster in Washington history. Nettie received funds from the fund set up for the widows and orphans of the disaster.<sup>31</sup> Along

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<sup>24</sup> Broussard, Antoinette. “Nettie Craig Asberry: A pillar of Tacoma’s African American Community,” *Columbia*, 2005 (Fall), pg. 3-6.

<sup>25</sup> *The Leavenworth Times*, 06/13/1883, pg. 4

<sup>26</sup> It does not appear that Nettie received a Ph.D. degree from the conservatory. Her diploma does not mention “Doctor of Philosophy” but “Teacher of Music.” Nettie does not appear to have used “Dr.” or “Ph.D.” before or after 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). It is possible that Nettie received an honorary degree at some point or that the community bestowed that title in recognition of her service and legacy.

<sup>27</sup> *Western Cyclone* (Nicodemus), 08/26/1886, pg 3

<sup>28</sup> *The Fremont Press*, 08/14/1888, pg. 4

<sup>29</sup> Broussard, op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> *The Leavenworth Standard*, 11/29/1893, pg. 1

<sup>31</sup> “Franklin Relief Fund Final Report, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 03/03/1895, pg. 5

with several others, she brought a suit against the mine owners, but the court ultimately dismissed them.<sup>32</sup> During this time Nettie remained in Leavenworth.

She returned to Tacoma in February and married Henry Asberry on February 23, 1895.<sup>33</sup> Initially they lived at 1022 South Tacoma Avenue until 1896. From 1897 until 1902, they lived at 1012 South 12th Street. In 1903 they moved to 1219 South 13th Street. Nettie would live at this address for the next 63 years, leaving it at the age of 101.

**Cultural work.** In decades following the Civil War, a small but growing African-American middle class began 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 as a whole would demonstrate cultural parity with whites. The result was a 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>34</sup> She spoke fluent French and German. For some 50 years, 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>35</sup> The music education of young people would remain a lifelong avocation.

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. Nettie Asberry would play a major role in this movement in Washington State.

Washington’s African American women’s club movement began in 1908 with Nettie organizing the Clover Leaf Art Club in Tacoma. She had heard that Seattle would host 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 helped organize the Clover Leaf Arts Club to create an exhibit of needlecraft and artwork of black women in Pierce County.<sup>36</sup> At the Exhibition 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 the paintings and ceramics of Matilda Baker won a bronze medal. Most importantly, their exhibit won the gold medal for best exhibit.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “Court and County Notes,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 10/17/1895, pg. 5

<sup>33</sup> “A meeting and a parting,” *Leavenworth Times*, 02/17/1895, pg. 4

<sup>34</sup> Broussard, op.cit.

<sup>35</sup> *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 11/11/1902.

<sup>36</sup> Broussard, op. cit.

<sup>37</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).



Nettie would go on to start a number of improvement clubs, and in 1917 they became charter members of the Washington State Federation of Colored Women's Organizations, for which she would serve as president and participate on many of its committees. Eventually the Clover Leaf Club would be renamed the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Clubs.

In addition Nettie 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 chaired the Allen AME Red Cross Auxiliary. In addition, she was 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>38</sup> Today The Asberry Cultural Club of Tacoma continues Nettie Asberry's legacy as part of the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Clubs (TCACWC).<sup>39</sup>

Nettie Asberry was long associated with Allen AME, one of Tacoma's historic African-American congregations. 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.** 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 lynching 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 founders of the Tacoma chapter of the NAACP.

She submitted the Tacoma application, and when it received its charter in 1913, Tacoma's NAACP chapter became the first established west of the Rocky Mountains. Their first action was a mass meeting on September 19, 1913, in Tacoma of over 200 Black and White citizens protesting President Wilson's racial segregation of Federal workers.<sup>40</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 a mass meeting held at Allen AME Church. She drafted a letter to protest the movie and its racist message.<sup>41</sup> In 1918 she led the protest to the segregation of African American troops at Fort Lewis. She also led protests against the growing institution of segregated seating in Tacoma's theaters. Over the years, she wrote many newspaper articles and spoke on radio programs on civil rights issue.

In 1921, she helped organize the chapter's fund raising efforts to help the survivors of the Tulsa, OK, race massacre.<sup>42</sup> In 1930, Nettie spearheaded an effort to get a "Negro History Week" in local schools and would write numerous articles in the local newspapers on Black history into the 1950s.<sup>43, 44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> "New musical society to make its debut," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 12/14/1919, pg. 55

<sup>39</sup> Henry, op. cit.

<sup>40</sup> "Open Nation Wide Fight for Negro," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 09/20/1913, pg. 1

<sup>41</sup> Asberry, N. C. "Grounds on which colored people protest," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/13/1916, pg. 10.

<sup>42</sup> "N.A.A.C.P.," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/12/1921, pg. 45.

<sup>43</sup> "Negro History to be discussed," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 02/15/1930, pg. 7

<sup>44</sup> "Tacoma schools keep Lincoln Day," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 02/12/1930, pg. 3

In 1935 and again in 1937, she helped organize protests against a measure in the state legislature outlawing interracial marriage.<sup>45</sup> She served as regional field secretary and later as local branch secretary of the NAACP. She helped establish branches in Seattle, Spokane, and Portland, OR, as well as cities in Canada and Alaska. In 1943, *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP, published an account of her achievements and listed her as one of the “First Ladies of Colored America.”<sup>46</sup>

In 1961, she was honored for her music and her volunteer social work by 110 members of the TCACWC. The Asberry Cultural Club was named in her honor.<sup>47</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, Nettie left her beloved home of 63 years at 1219 North 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>48</sup> The following year, Mayor A. L. Rasmussen proclaimed May 11, 1969, as Nettie Asberry Day in Tacoma.<sup>49</sup> She has been furthered honored by MultiCare Health System with a bas-relief bust and plaque on 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 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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<sup>45</sup> Henry, op.cit.

<sup>46</sup> “First Ladies of Colored America,” *The Crisis*, February, 1943, pg. 50

<sup>47</sup> Erna Bence, Dr. Asberry, 96, Founder of NAACP here, to be honored,” *Tacoma News Tribune*, 7/23/1961, pg. A-3

<sup>48</sup> “Nettie Asberry of NAACP dies”, *Tacoma News Tribune*, 11/18/1968, pg. 37.

<sup>49</sup> “May 11 is proclaimed Dr. Nettie Asberry Day”, *Tacoma News Tribune*, 05/01/1969.



## Appendix IV: Figures



Fig. 1. Tacoma, Washington bird's-eye view map, Blatchly Co., 1893

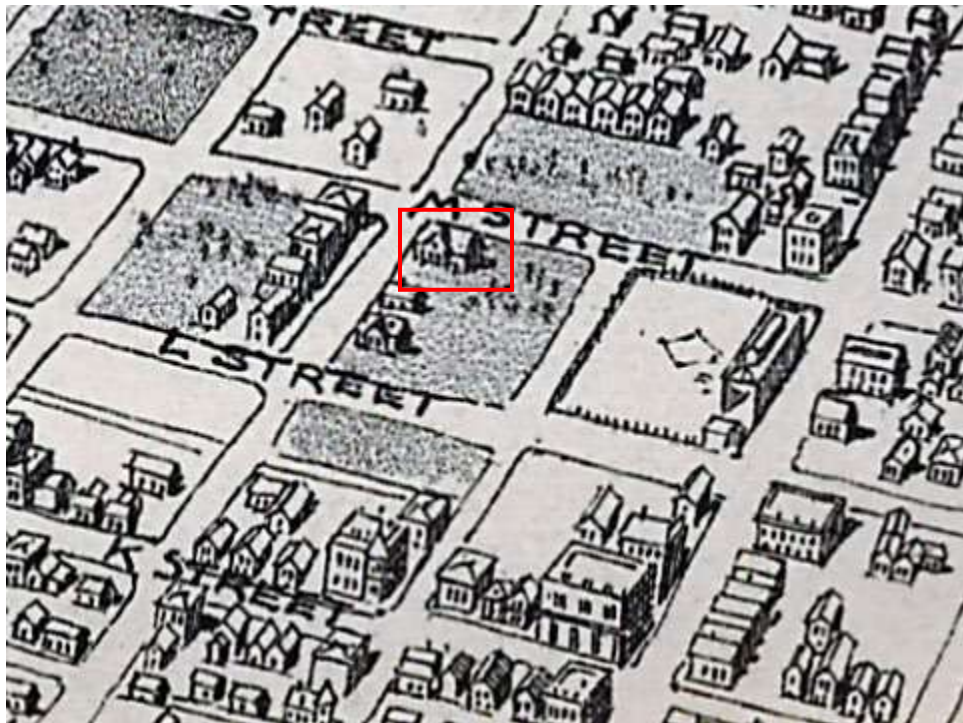


Fig. 2. Detail showing Asberry House, Tacoma, Washington bird's-eye view, Blatchly Co., 1893

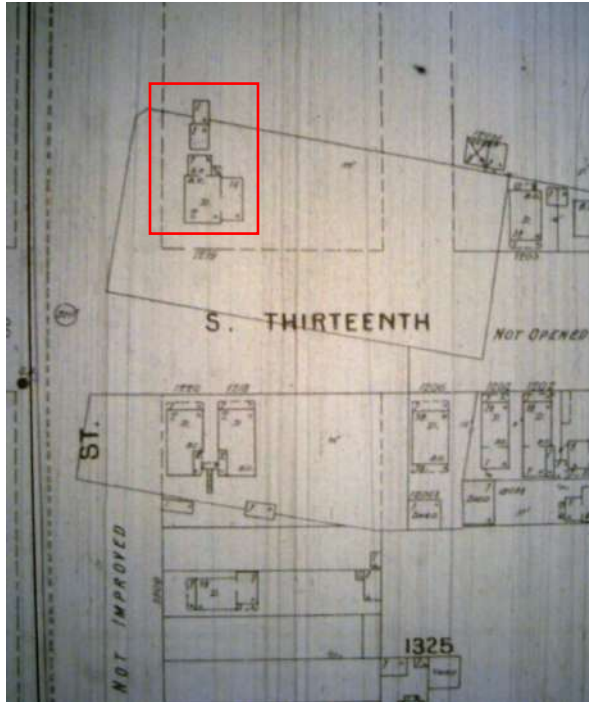


Fig. 3. Asberry House (in red), note “not improved” on S. M and “not opened” on S. 13<sup>th</sup> Streets. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1896, Tacoma, Vol. 2, Sheet 58.

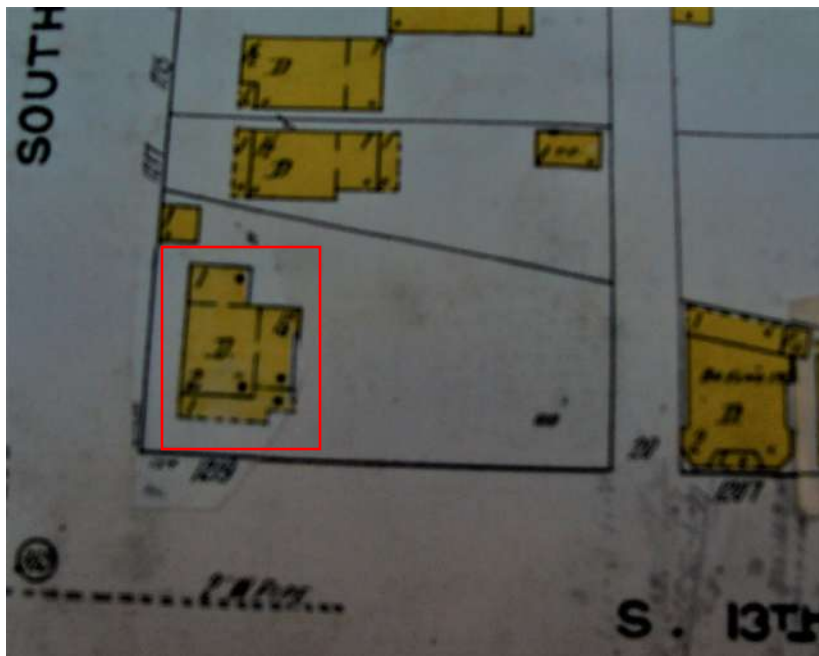


Fig. 4. Asberry House (in red), *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1912 (updated through 1945), Vol. 2, Sheet 61.



Fig. 5. Henry Asberry's Tacoma Hotel Barber Shop (Courtesy M. C. Broussard)

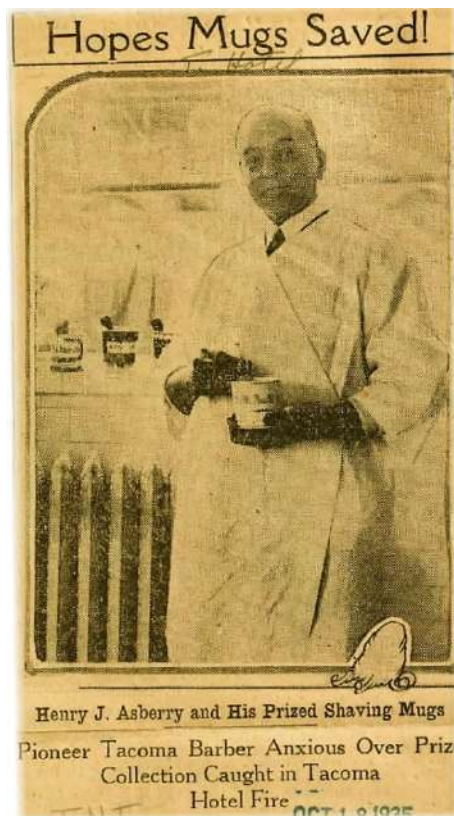


Fig. 6. Henry J. Asberry, Past Grand Master,  
Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington, Free. & Accepted Masons





Fig. 7. Henry J. Asberry by porch at 1219 N. 13<sup>th</sup> St. (date unknown) (Courtesy of M. C. Broussard)



By STUART WELCH

Henry J. Asberry, pioneer Tacoma barber, went to work early Thursday morning but found things too hot so he didn't open up his barber shop.

You see, he's the proprietor of the Tacoma Hotel barber shop (or was the proprietor) and as for having been around Tacoma for a long time, he's almost as much a landmark as the hotel was.

There's money a-flopping in the city that has sat in his chair for four generations. And he has a glass case full of 40 or 50 mugs on which are pointed the names of nearly everyone in Tacoma who ever submitted to a haircut.

He hopes the mugs are not damaged. That was his chief worry Thursday morning as he stood behind the police lines and watched firemen shooting a fierce stream of water in through the front windows of his shop.

**Then 45 Years**

When interviewed at his home, 1215 South 14th street, Friday morning, Mr. Asberry said he would certainly keep on working if the hotel and barber shop was rebuilt. He has been in that shop for 45 years, since 1890, and there is no reason why he shouldn't last on.

Mr. Asberry has shaved many prominent people. He is not very good at remembering names but he does remember the times he shaved Mark Twain and Calvin Coolidge.

"Calvin Coolidge was vice president at the time. I have never shaved Presidents because they always bring their own barbers. They don't trust regular barbers on the President. They are afraid they might get nervous or grow crazy while doing the job."

**Shaved Coolidge**

Coolidge did not say more than was necessary when he got into Asberry's chair. He just muttered, "a shave, please," or something like that. Asberry thought probably the vice president wasn't interested in the weather or the results of the approaching football game and consequently the shave was accomplished in silence.

He has also shaved Vice President Charles W. Fairbanks, in office during the former Roosevelt regime, and the famous author, Mark Twain.

His illustrious Mark Twain, who was always jolly and talkative, "twain" was in Tacoma for about a month.

Then there was one time the late Governor Louis F. Hart fell asleep in the barber chair. He used to fall asleep often but this time he slept longer than usual. The barbers were always reluctant to awaken the state's chief even though there were other people waiting for the chair.

**Came Here in 1890**

Asberry arrived in Tacoma in 1890 and immediately established himself in the Tacoma Hotel barber shop. He came here from the Merchants Hotel in St. Paul, and before that from the old St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans. It was in 1882 when he started in the trade.

When he first came in Tacoma, the haircut styles were much different than now. One of the best sellers in the trade was the "beard trim" which cost all of 50 cents. Styles in hair care are about the same now but the old days demanded the barbers know all the different styles in beards and mustaches.

Mr. Asberry thinks that men nowadays use perfume on their hair even more than they did back in the old times.

When the hotel burned, he said the 100 other barbers in the shop were put out of work. The other ones are D. W. Gibson and J. A. O. Washington. He hopes that both of them are enjoying only a temporary vacation.

Tacoma News Tribune  
October 18, 1935  
From the Tacoma Public Library  
Newspaper Clipping File

Fig. 8. "Henry Asberry and his prize shaving mugs," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 10/18/1935



Fig. 9. "Pioneer barber passes," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 07/27/1939, pg. 13.



Fig. 10. Nettie Asberry, undated (Courtesy UW Special Collections, Image No. PHColl663)

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Fig. 11. Nettie Asberry (outlined in red), *Northwest Negro Progress Number*, *Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition*, *Seattle Republican*, 1909, Pg. 9.



Fig. 12. Nettie Asberry in the Battenburg lace opera coat with silver medal from Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (Richards Studio Collection, Northwest Room, Tacoma Public Library)

Asberry House, 1219 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Tacoma





Fig 14. Nettie Asberry, ~1918, *Colored Women's Federation of Washington and Jurisdiction Club Journal*, 1922-1925



Fig. 15. Two pictures showing house front (note upper window in left picture), ~ 1951 (Courtesy of Martha C. Broussard)



Fig. 16. Music room, Asberry home, 1213 South 13<sup>th</sup> St., (Courtesy of Martha C. Broussard)

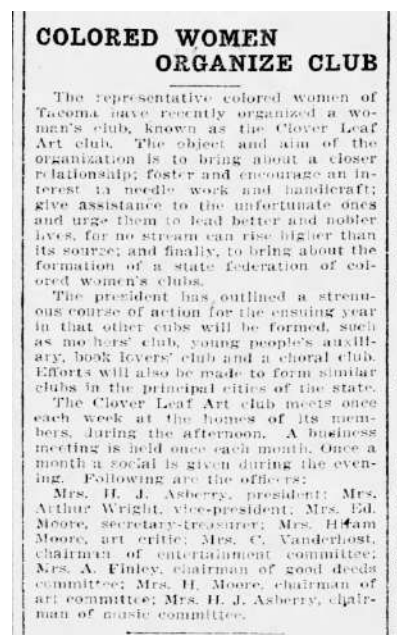


Fig. 17. Formation of Clover Leaf Club  
*Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 10/18/1908, Pg. 4.



## 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. Foreseeing 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.

One cannot help resenting the approach of Gus the rapist 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. Gus 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 smell scene is truly Dixonian.

The library scene between Stoneman (Thaddeus Stevens) and his colored mistress, is unsavory. 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 effusive 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 freemen—all pave the way for the advent of the notorious clansmen, 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, strove to quiet me, but without avail; but happily the end was near and we filed out.

Just an historical word about the Klu-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 Klu-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."

Jacques Loeb 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.

Fig. 18. Nettie Asberry's Letter to Editor, *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/13/1916, pg. 10.



Fig. 19. "Women have Debate about showing film," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/13/1916, pg. 4.

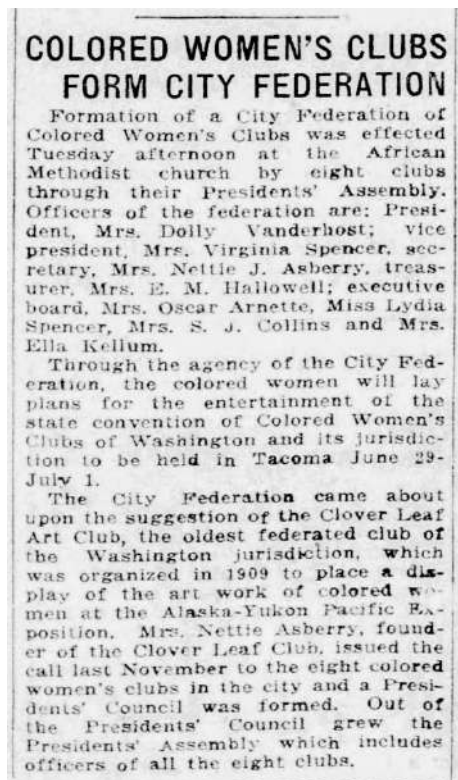


Fig. 20. "Colored women's clubs form city federation," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 05/29/1921, Pg. A8





Fig. 21. Nettie Asberry (white dress, center) with Baha'i friends in Lakewood, 1949 (Facebook [fan page]. Retrieved 01/10/2017 from <https://www.facebook.com/nettieasberry/photos/>)

## Dr. Asberry, 96, Founder of NAACP Here, to be Honored on Tuesday

By ERNA BENCE

In these days of "Freedom Riders" and worldwide racial unrest, few Americans take keener interest in the news than an alert little Tacoma colored woman, holder of a doctor's degree, who "can't make herself believe she's 96."


She is Mrs. Nettie J. (Craig) Asberry of 1219 S. 13th St. At her massive upright piano, in this home in which she has lived for more than a half-century, hundreds of young pupils have learned about music in her younger years when Mrs. Asberry was one of the best known music teachers. She presented classes of 45 or more in recital each year.

"They were of all colors and walks of life," she recalls, "for this has always been a melting-pot area of the city."

Few women of half Mrs. Asberry's age have keener minds, better hearing and eyesight and more awareness of what's going on in the world. She plays her piano every day, walks around the block daily, attends many social and business affairs and listens to worthwhile programs on her radio. She appears not a day over 70.

**She'll Be Honored**

It is not only for her music, but for her outstanding achievements in the field of voluntary social service that Mrs. Asberry will be honored Tuesday evening by some 110 co-workers in the City Association of Colored Women at a birthday party in the clubhouse at 2245 S. Yakima Ave.



**MRS. NETTIE J. ASBERRY**  
*Hundreds Have Studied at Her Piano*

Fig. 22. "Dr. Asberry, 96, Founder of NAACP here...," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 07/23/1961

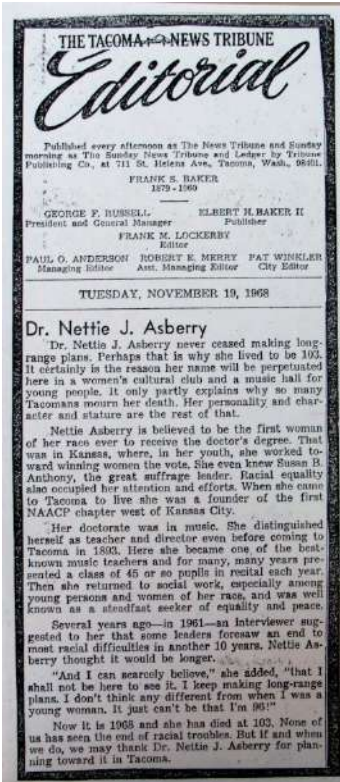


Fig. 23. Editorial eulogy, *Tacoma News Tribune*, 11/19/1968



Fig. 24. "May 11 is proclaimed Dr. Nettie Asberry Day, *Tacoma News Tribune*, 05/01/1969



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Fig. 25. Henry and Nettie J. Asberry headstone, Oakwood Hill Cemetery, Tacoma, WA.



Fig. 26. Nettie Asberry commemorative sidewalk plaque, 2121 N. 30<sup>th</sup> St., Tacoma



Fig. 27. Nettie Asberry commemorative bas-relief bust and plaque, Tacoma General Hospital, 410 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Tacoma

**Asberry House, 1219 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Tacoma**



## Appendix V: Current Photographs



Figure 1. South Elevation



Figure 2. Southeast Elevation





Fig. 3. East Elevation



Fig. 4. East Elevation from alley showing side yard.





Fig. 5. Southwest Elevation



Fig. 6. West Elevation





Fig. 7. Northwest Elevation