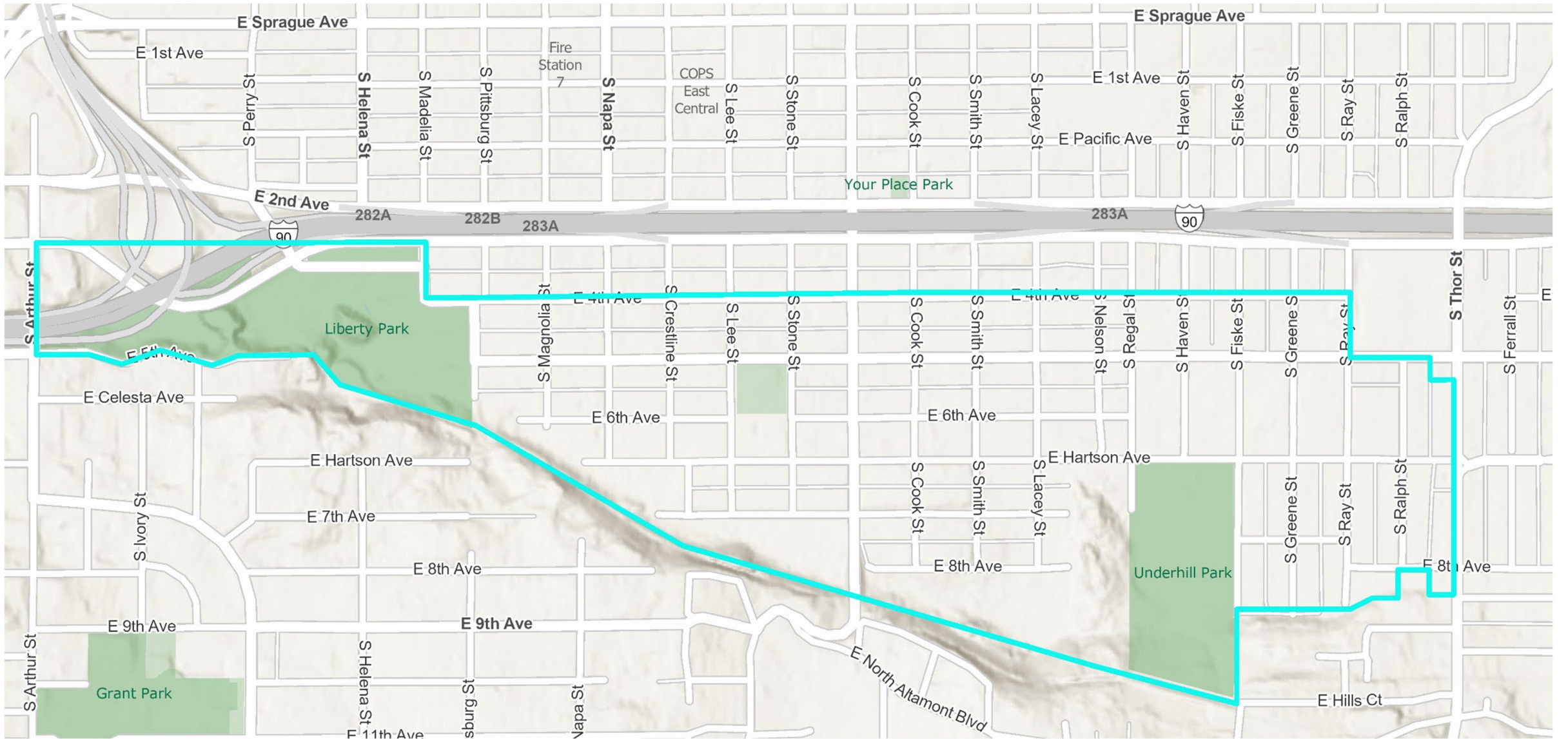


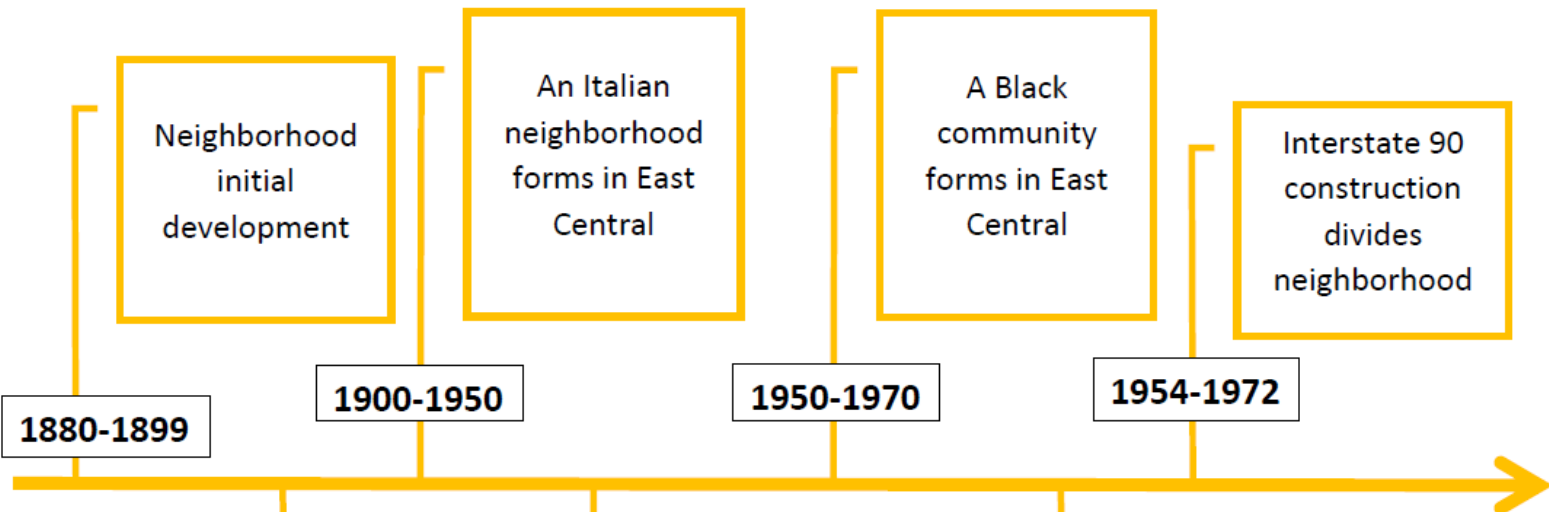


# **EAST CENTRAL HISTORIC & CULTURAL CONTEXT**

Spokane Historic Preservation Office



# Historic Timeline



1900-1909  
Decade of greatest growth in Spokane and East Central

1938-1970

Redlining and Restrictive Covenants steered people of color into East Central

1954-1968

Civil Rights, Fair Housing

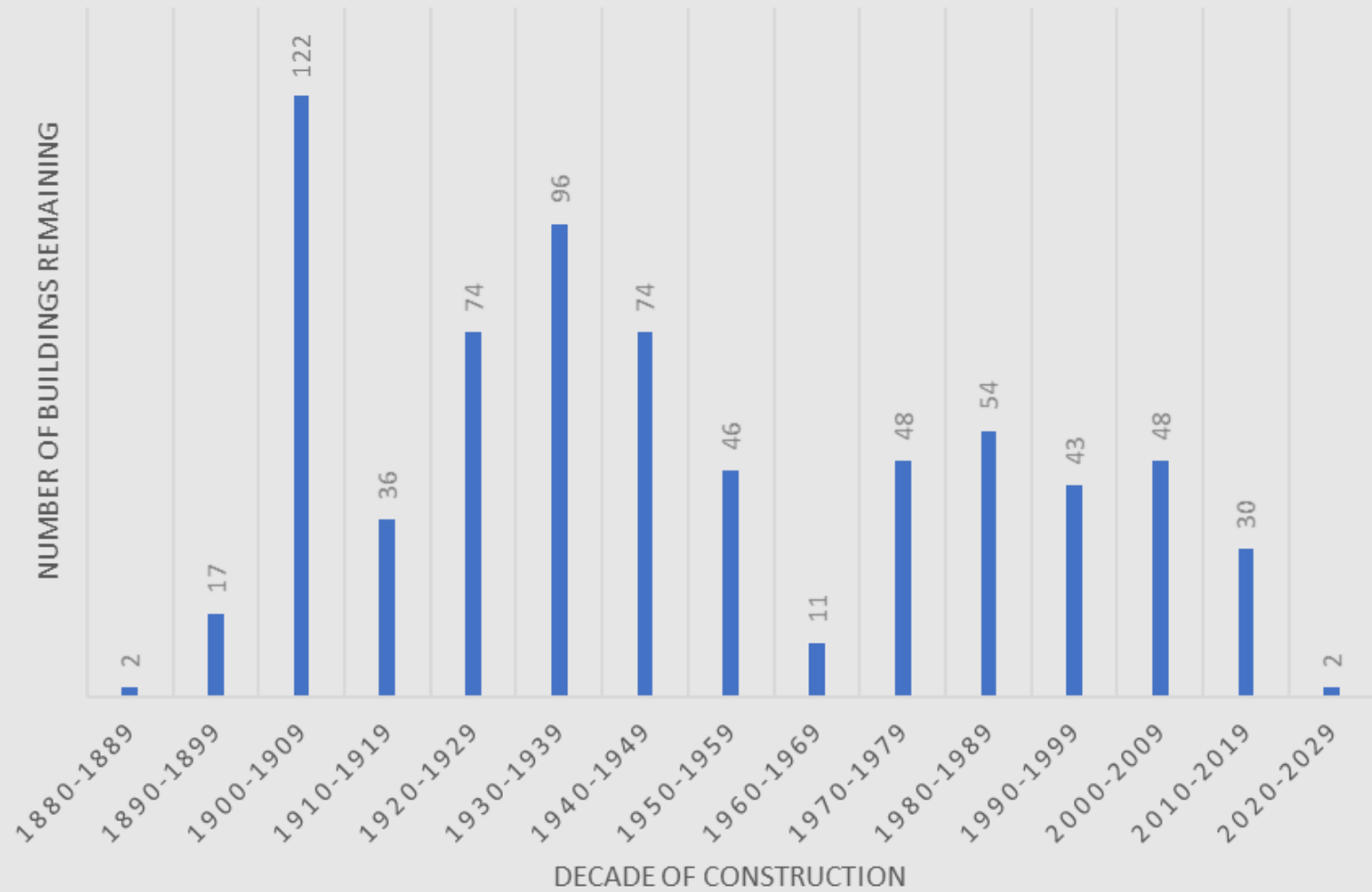
Table of Contents

- 1) East Central Historic Context Statement
- 2) Historic Timeline
- 3) Properties Associated with Different Eras
  - 1880-1899: Neighborhood initial development
  - 1900-1917: Period of greatest growth and Italian immigration
  - 1938-1960: Housing segregation and growth of a Black community
  - 1958- 2020: Navigating the freeway and community empowerment

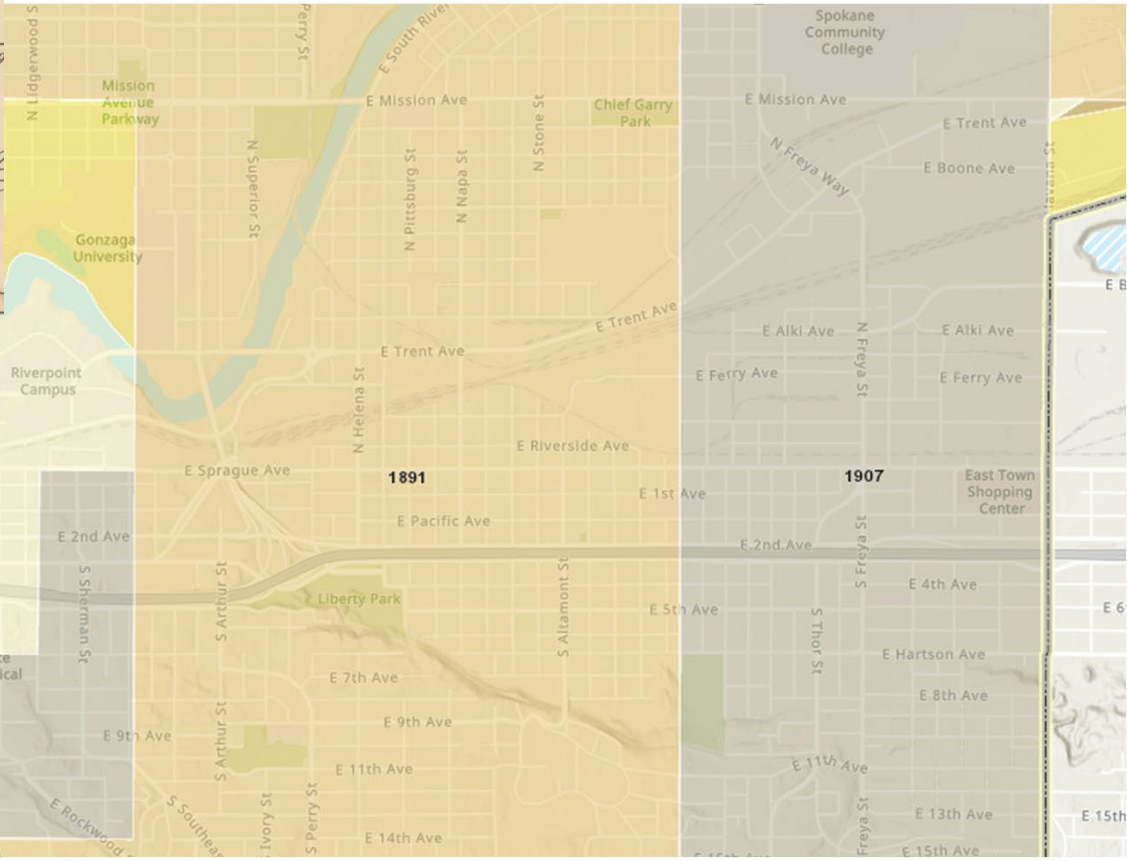
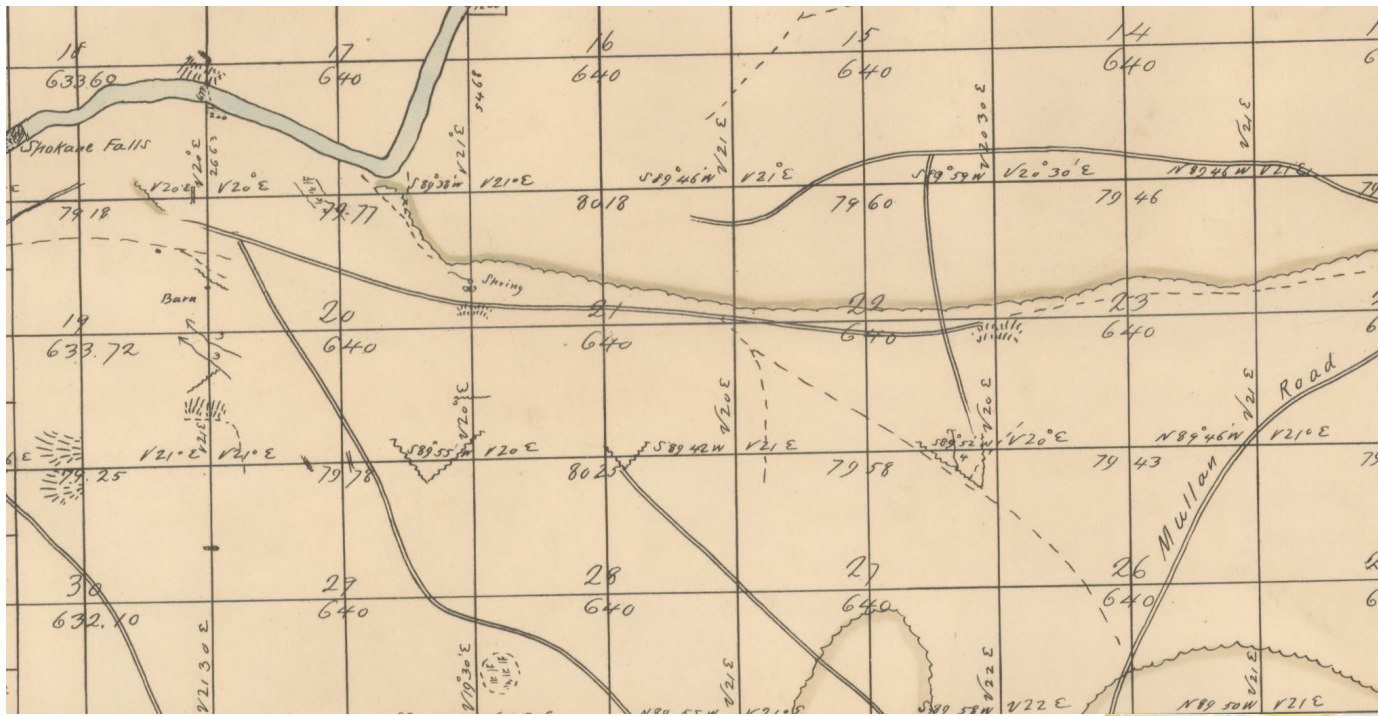


# EAST CENTRAL HISTORIC PROPERTY SURVEY

## BUILDINGS REMAINING PER DECADE OF CONSTRUCTION







# "SONS OF ITALY" CLUB IN SPOKANE

## COSENZA PROVINCE SAFE

SPOKANE ITALIANS GET CHEERING WORD FROM HOME.

**Local Colony Continues Collection of Relief Fund, Which Now Aggregates \$368.**

Joe Cozzetta of the Spokane Italian colony received a cablegram yesterday from Italy saying that the mainland had not suffered from the earthquake and that all residents of Cosenza province, in which the majority of the local colony is interested, are safe. The collection of a relief fund was continued yesterday, the sum reaching \$468. Secretary Cozzetta reported the following additional subscriptions:

Joseph Piastino, \$50; Sam Jacol, \$5; J. S. McEuclnim, \$5; Raffaele Cincinnati, \$1; C. C. Dempsey, \$5; Columbia pharmacy, \$10; Lingi Madia, \$2; Broberg & Schuler, \$5; Comas Gianelli, \$5; Joseph R. Grinsfelder, \$5.

# ITALIANS PLAN ANNUAL PICNIC

Plans for the annual picnic of the Marconi Colombo society, the Italian people's organization, will be worked out at the next meeting of the society, May 28, at Forresters' hall.

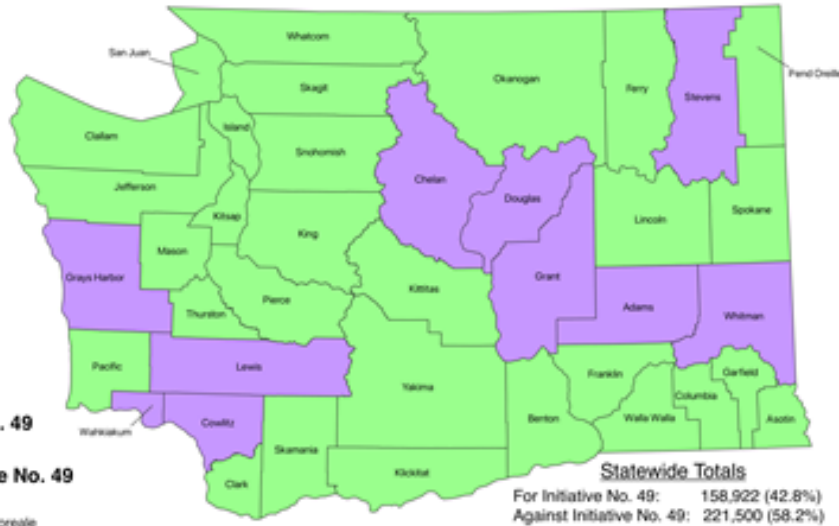
Date and place of the affair have not been decided upon, according to Fred Cello, secretary. Mike Sacco is president.

## Washington State 1924 General Election

Results by County for Initiative No. 49 (Klan School Bill)

"An Act compelling children between seven (7) and sixteen (16) years of age to attend the public schools, and prescribing penalties."

Initiative No. 49 was a ballot measure to ban attendance to private elementary and secondary schools in Washington State. The measure was initiated and supported by the Ku Klux Klan. The measure was hotly debated with prominent supporters on both sides, however most newspapers published editorials advocating against Initiative No. 49. Spokane Attorney Adolph Munter explained the intent of the initiative succinctly: "The Klan is trying to get hold of the schools. And they are trying to convey the impression that no Roman Catholic is as good a citizen as those who are of another faith, and that no foreign born American can be as good a citizen as one who is native born."



Data courtesy of WA SoS I Map by Logan Camporeale







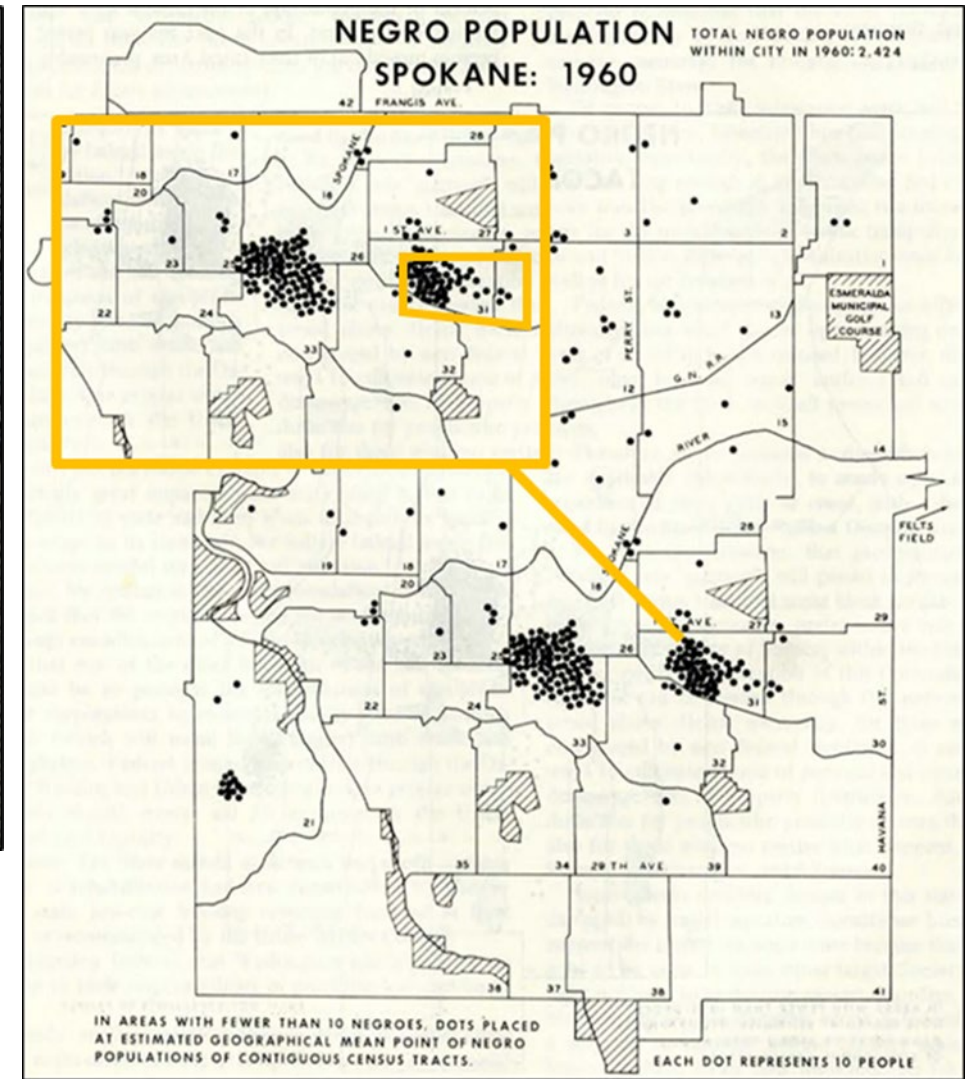
Spokane, WA

C15 C16 Fairgrounds Addition C17

Show Full Show Scan

5. Clarifying Remarks

Zoned single family residential with multi-family zoning along Pacific Avenue and provision for so many business centers, principally along Fifth Avenue. Lot values \$5 to \$7 per front foot. This area is on the verge of being 4th grade and is assigned a very "low yellow" grade. Both







Long hours of volunteer effort by Clarence T. Freeman brought improvements to Liberty Park. Mrs. Freeman, Freeman and their daughter Sandra stroll in landscaped section of the park. Presidency of the Liberty Park Improvement Group is only one of Freeman's civic efforts; Mrs. Freeman also is an active community worker.

## How do I get in on the action?

Figure 19

"First, you are invited to the Neighborhood Congress Saturday, Sept. 22 at our beautiful new East Central Community Center, 5th and Stone. You'll meet a lot of your neighbors in Spokane and guests from other cities who got started just like you—because they cared enough to get involved.

The most important thing is to attend your neighborhood meeting, because that's where the nitty-gritty action starts. It takes a lot of work and you've gotta be persistent, but it can really make a difference—look at our Community Center!"

LEE WADE  
Chairperson, East Central Neighborhood



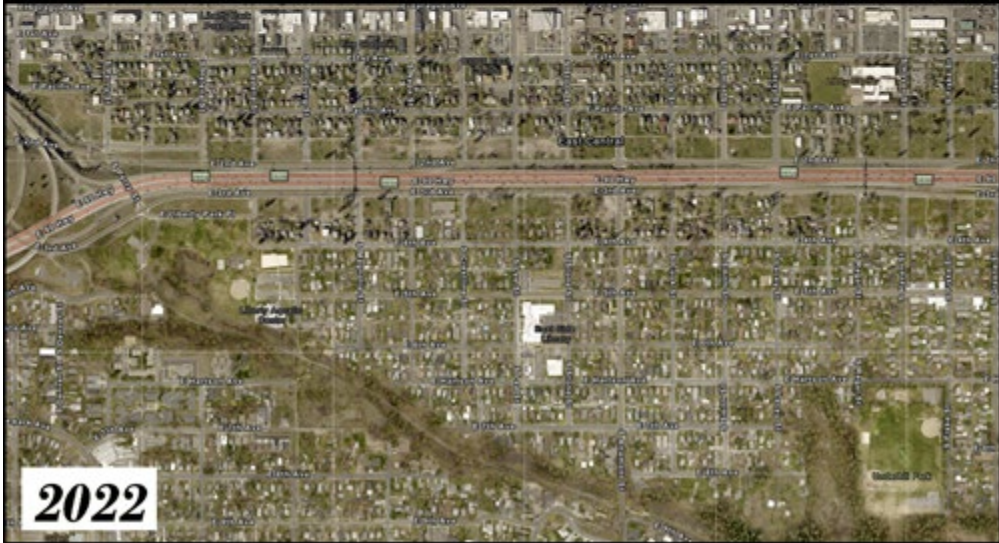




**1958**



**1958**

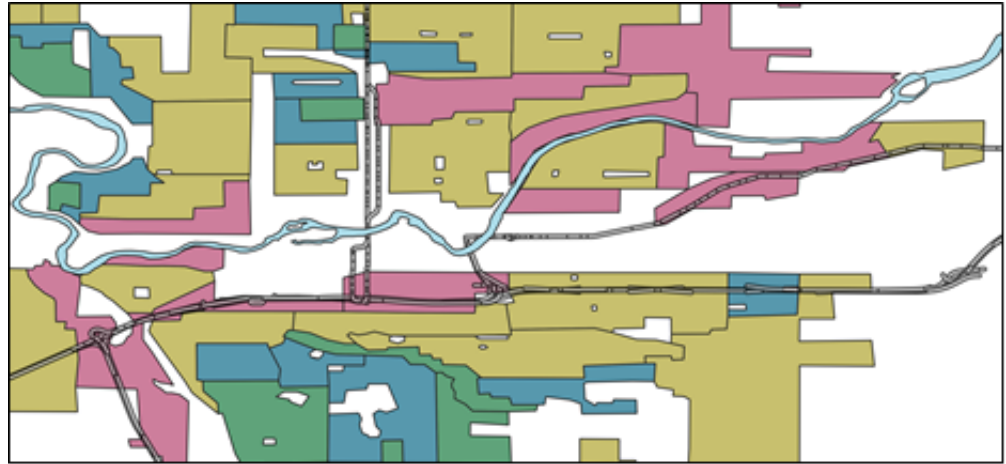


**2022**



**2022**





## 2307 East Fifth Avenue

Leonard and Odelia Funk Residence

Significant Dates:	Built in 1889
Architect/Builder:	Unknown / Leonard Funk
Property Type:	House
Historic Timeline:	Neighborhood Initial Development
Communities:	Union Household
Potentially Eligible?	Yes: under SRHP categories A & B

Leonard Funk built this house in 1889 soon after arriving in Spokane. He was born on a farm near Portage, Wisconsin in 1868. Funk began working as a carpenter's apprentice when he was fifteen years old. He married Odalia Spiegler on his twenty-first birthday in February of 1889 and the couple moved to Spokane Falls in March of that year. A month after arriving in Spokane, Funk purchased a lot in the Union Park Addition at 2307 East Fifth Avenue where he constructed a small house for himself and his family. He resided in the house until his death in 1935.

Funk became associated with the local carpenters union in November of 1889. He was elected president of the local union chapter many times and he was representative to the central body where he also served as president for a period. In 1900, he traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to serve as a delegate of the local union at the national convention. While there, he was appointed as national representative to the building trades department of the American Federation of Labor. Funk served in that role for ten years, including a period as national vice president.

Funk was also engaged in local politics and civic leadership. In 1901, Funk ran for city council and was elected. He won four consecutive terms up until 1911 when a new form of city government was adopted. He lost his bid for election as a city commissioner under the new system and lost again in a subsequent campaign in 1913. Undeterred, Funk threw his hat in the ring in 1915 and finally gathered enough votes to resume a position in city leadership. He was reelected again in 1919, 1925, 1929, and 1933. In 1929, the other commissioners elected him as mayor and he was serving in that role at the time of his death in 1935. He was a respectful and well-liked politician who was described by his peers as a "man of the people." At the same time, he was a



fierce campaigner who did not mince words, once describing his opponent as a "gelatin-spined shrimp."

Funk served as the Commissioner of Public Works for most of his time on the commission. In that role, he led Spokane in one of its greatest bridge building campaigns. He was adamant about modernizing Spokane's network of bridges and his name remains emblazoned on the side of many of Spokane's extant historic bridges including: Monroe Street Bridge, the Marne Bridge, Greene Street Bridge, Mission Avenue Bridge, Post Street Bridge, Eleventh Avenue Bridge, and Chestnut Street Bridge.

Leonard and Odalia had seven children and 10 grandchildren, some of whom became engaged in politics themselves.<sup>1</sup>



Latest Photo of Leonard Funk

<sup>1</sup> "Leonard Funk Wrote History of His Life," *Spokane Chronicle*, 2/4/1935



## 1902 East Fourth Avenue

Marian & Roger Fruci Sr. Residence

Significant Dates:	Built in 1921, Frucis lived here from 1946-1956
Architect/Builder:	Unknown / Unknown
Property Type:	House
Historic Timeline:	Period of greatest growth and Italian immigration
Communities:	Italian Spokanites
Potentially Eligible?	Yes: under SRHP category A, B, and E

Roger Fruci, Sr. was born in October of 1912 and he grew up in the East Central Neighborhood on the 3900 block of East Fifth Avenue. Roger's father, Paolo, immigrated to the United States in 1902 from Filodelfia, Italy in the southern part of the country. Paolo had a third grade education and when he was fifty-seven years old he worked as a laborer in an asphalt manufacturing plant in Spokane. At the time the census was taken in April of 1940, he had been unemployed for three weeks and he was looking for a new job.

Roger Sr. went to elementary school at Sheridan Elementary (now Frances L.N. Scott Elementary) on East Fifth Avenue. He attended Lewis & Clark High School where he played football, did drama, and was a member of the science club. He graduated in 1931 and began attending school at the Kinman Business College in Spokane. He was proficient in math and he won a skills completion at the college. The prize for winning was an internship at one of the city's largest law firms. Fruci made repeated attempts to arrange a start date for his internship, but he kept getting ignored or was otherwise given the run around. Eventually Roger was able to get a conversation with one of the firm's managing partners who told him "our clients just wouldn't understand if we had an Italian working here." Roger was unable to claim his prize due to anti-Italian sentiment that was strong in the United States from 1900-1940.<sup>5</sup>

Roger Sr. joined the Army Air Corps in the mid-1930s and spent four years in the service before returning Spokane. In 1938, he put his math skills to work opening an accounting firm known as Fruci & Associates. World War II made Roger put his upstart business on hold. In October of 1942, less than a year after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Roger enlisted in the United States Army for



the duration of the war. He served for four years in the Army Finance Department mostly working on contract management for the Army.<sup>6</sup>

Roger returned home in 1945. He got married in April of 1945 and announced that he would reopen his accounting firm in March of 1946. Over the subsequent decades, Fruci and his wife grew Fruci & Associates to be one of the largest accounting firms in the Inland Northwest. One of their primary sources of business were accounts with doctor's offices.

Roger's wife, Marian (Sacco) Fruci was an Italian



<sup>5</sup> Becky Kramer, "Accounting Leader Roger Fruci Dies," *Spokesman-Review*, 12/31/2004; Lewis and Clark High School Yearbook, 1931, Ancestry.com.

<sup>6</sup> "Announcement! Roger Fruci," *Spokane Chronicle*, 4/1/1946, page 6.

## 1902 East Fifth Avenue

### Scarpelli Residence

Significant Dates:	Built in 1902, Scarpellis lived here 1920s-1960s
Architect/Builder:	Unknown / Unknown
Property Type:	House
Historic Timeline:	Period of greatest growth and Italian immigration
Communities:	Italian Spokanites
Potentially Eligible?	Yes: under SRHP category A and E

The Giuseppe Scarpelli House was constructed in 1902 and the multi-generational Scarpelli family moved into the house in the 1920s.

Giuseppe (Joe) Eduardo Scarpelli was born in Rovito, Italy in 1888. In May of 1905, at age 16, he immigrated to the United States with his brother, Francesco. By 1910, he was working with his uncle and brothers at the Scarpelli Macaroni Factory. He submitted a Declaration of Intent to become a United States citizen in 1912. As his occupation he listed that he was the manager of a macaroni plant. In 1916 he married another Italian immigrant, Adeli Ambrosio, with whom he had three children: Anthony, Minot, and Louise.<sup>9</sup>

In 1916 a fire destroyed Scarpelli's macaroni factory forcing them to purchase a new building on East Sprague Avenue (Ripoli-Scarpelli Building SRHP 2019). When the Scarpelli Brothers Macaroni Factory at East Sprague Avenue opened in 1917, Giuseppe was chosen to serve as president of the factory, a role he maintained until the business closed in 1945. The Scarpelli Brothers Macaroni Factory was founded and operated by Giuseppe's uncle, Antonio Scarpelli, and his three brothers: Pasquale, Francesco, and Folicardo Scarpelli. The Scarpellis imported macaroni-making factory equipment from Italy and jobs in their factory were the catalyst for many Italian immigrants to come to Spokane. The factory was in operation in east Spokane for 36 years from 1909 to 1945.

Recent Italian immigrants in the early 1900s often lived in multi-generational households when they arrived in the United States. In 1920, there were seventeen Scarpellis, including Giuseppe and Adeli, living at the same address on Freya. In 1930, Giuseppe, Adeli and their kids lived at 1902 East Fifth Avenue, along with one of Giuseppe's brothers and his mother. Giuseppe's

<sup>9</sup> Ripoli-Scarpelli Building Spokane Historic Register Nomination, Spokane Historic Preservation Office, [historicspokane.org](http://historicspokane.org).

<sup>10</sup> 1920 and 1930 United States Census, [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com).



mother immigrated to the United States in 1908 after her sons had immigrated.<sup>10</sup>

Giuseppe died in 1954 at age 66 but Scarpellis continued to reside at 1902 East Fifth Avenue into the 1960s.





## 2702 East Fourth Avenue

### Tommy and Lula Mae Montgomery House

Significant Dates:	Built 1923, Montgomerys lived here 1968-2000s
Architect/Builder:	Unknown / Unknown
Property Type:	House
Historic Timeline:	Housing segregation and growth of a Black community
Communities:	Black Spokanites, Veterans
Potentially Eligible?	Yes: under SRHP category E

Tommy and Lula Mae Montgomery purchased the house at 2702 East Fourth Avenue in 1968 after living in Spokane for over two decades. Lula Brundge was born in Nakatuck, Louisiana on March 14, 1920. She married Tommy Montgomery in 1937 and the couple moved to Spokane in 1944. Lula Mae worked as a cook. She was a founding board member of the League of Women for Community Action. She was a foster mother to multiple children, and she was a member of the Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Eastern Star Masons.<sup>22</sup>

Tommy was born in Tennessee in 1916 and he worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. He enlisted in the United States Army in 1943 and served as a Private First Class. The couple were likely stationed in Spokane, prompting their move here in 1944. At the time of his discharge from the service in 1946, he had been awarded the American Theater Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, and World War II Victory Medal. After the war, Tommy first worked as a fireman at Fairchild Air Force Base and later as a janitor in various buildings. Tommy was also active in his community, advocating that community development funds be used to pave streets in the project area. He pointed to the health complications that can come from living on a frequently traveled dirt road. He was successful on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue (maybe add the year that it was finally paved?), but many streets in the area remain unpaved today.<sup>23</sup>

The couple lived at the Victory Heights Public War Housing complex formerly located south of the interchange of Highway 195 and Interstate 90. The couple lived there until the housing project was closed in the early 1950s. By 1954, the Montgomerys had moved to 1801 E 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which is also in the project area but has been demolished. They were among the 500+ Black Spokanites

<sup>22</sup> Obituary for Lula Mae Montgomery, *Spokesman-Review*, 6/25/2008; Articles of Incorporation for the League of Women for Community Action.

<sup>23</sup> Obituary for Tommy Montgomery, *Spokesman-Review*, 9/17/2010; 1955 Polk Directory, page 300 (595); "Pleased Pair," *Spokane Chronicle*, 5/26/1976.

<sup>24</sup> 1960 Polk Directory, page 426 (571); 1950 Polk Directory, 364 (721)



who moved into the project area from 1950-1960. The couple purchased the house at 2702 E 4<sup>th</sup> and remained there until the 2000s when they relocated to Richard Allen Court.<sup>24</sup>



## 3017-3019 East Fifth Avenue

### Larry's Afro Barber Shop

Significant Dates:	Built in 1953 (3017), and added 3019 onto the east in mid-1980s
Architect/Builder:	Unknown / Elmer Vogel
Property Type:	Neighborhood Retail
Historic Timeline:	Housing segregation and growth of a Black community
Communities:	Black Spokanites
Potentially Eligible?	Yes: under SRHP category E

Elmer Vogel constructed a barber shop for his own barbering business at 3017 East Fifth Avenue in 1953. In Vogel's October 1940 WWII draft registration card, he notes an address of 3022 E 5<sup>th</sup>. The 1940 Census lists Elmer and his wife Hazel with their three young children residing in what appears to be a one story commercial building with "living rooms" according to a 1933 newspaper ad across the street from 3017. One year after building the shop at 3017, he expanded the building to add a second store front.

In the early 1970s, Larry Roseman began apprenticing with Vogel. He worked with him for years before purchasing the barber shop and taking it over in 1978. Larry was born in Memphis, Tennessee and he landed in Spokane after spending time in the United States Air Force, a typical path for many Black Spokanites who came to city in the mid-century. Larry attended barbering school at Moler Barber College, but he had been cutting hair as a side business since he was a child.

For much of its existence, Larry's Afro Barber Shop has been the only barber shop in Spokane owned by a Black man. It was, and still is, a gathering place for Spokane's Black community. It is a place to connect, a place to gossip, and a place to laugh. The barber shop and Larry have an even deeper importance to many, including former *Spokesman-Review* reporter Isamu Jordan who wrote a profile on Larry in 1996. According to Jordan, "for many young Black men, Larry is like an uncle or even a second father. For those like myself, who grew up without dads, Larry might be their first male role model, aside from Michael



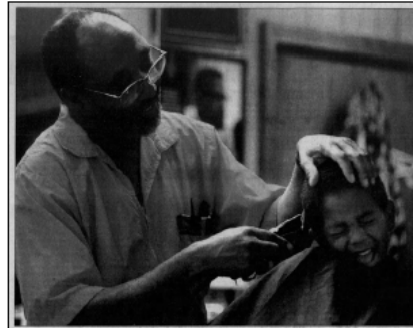
### Rainbow Gallery specializes in ethnic art

The Rainbow Gallery, E3019 Fifth, is Spokane's only gallery devoted exclusively to ethnic art.

Rainbow Gallery has been at its present location since March after opening at a downtown location last fall.

Manager Jeri Williamson said not all the artwork is by ethnic artists, but all is of ethnic subjects.

She said the gallery has given local ethnic artists a chance to have their pictures displayed where the public can see them.



## A cut above

*As a hub for Spokane's Black community, Larry's Barber Shop goes far beyond haircuts.*



# 500 South Stone Street

East Central Community Center

Significant Dates:	Built in 1893. Mostly demolished in 1977, but small section retained and converted to ECCCC in 1979
Architect/Builder:	Unknown / Unknown
Property Type:	Community Center
Historic Timeline:	Navigating the freeway and community empowerment
Communities:	Black Spokanites
Potentially Eligible?	Yes: under SRHP category E

The building at 500 South Stone Street was originally constructed as the Union Park School in 1893. It was first built as a ten-room brick school house. The name of the school changed to Edison School within a handful of years of opening. Named after the famous inventor Thomas Edison, the school grew to be one of the largest in Spokane School District by the first decade of the 1900s. The school was expanded in 1903-04 and continued to grow until the school was reduced from K-8 to K-6 in 1919.

The school attendance shrank from over 800 students down to the 200s and by the 1940s, discussions about closing the school had begun.

Through the mid-century period, the school had a significant Black student population and was socioeconomically disadvantaged. Black civil rights attorney Carl Maxey called the school one of the poorest in Washington State in 1966.<sup>40</sup>

After decades of debate about the future of the school, a failed levy by Spokane voters in 1972 was



<sup>40</sup> Spokane Public Schools, *First Class for 100 Years*, "Edison School," page 26.

<sup>41</sup> Agreements between the City of Spokane and the League of Women for Community Action, City of Spokane Public Records Database, 2/27/1980 and 9/25/1980.



the death knell for Edison School. It, along with eight other elementary schools in the district, were closed in the wake of the levy failure. It is easy to imagine why Edison school was selected for closure versus other schools in the district (it would be interesting to map the locations of all the closed schools from that year).

After the school closed, the district leased the building to the city for a youth center, foreshadowing the site's future long-term use. After years of advocacy from the community, especially the League of Women for Community Action, in 1977 Edison School was demolished except for a mid-century addition that was retained. With funding from community development grants and other sources, in its place the East Central Community Center was constructed with the mission to provide day care services, youth activities, education, and other community services that the League had provided in their previous locations. The center had a soft opening in June of 1979 and was fully completed by early 1980. In 1980 the city offered to lease the center on South Stone Street to the League on favorable terms of \$1.00 rent per year.<sup>41</sup>

Providing a resource for day care was critical to Spokane's working class. Much as the situation is today, it was impossible for parents (especially single parents) of children under 5 to go to work during the day and earn a paycheck

to provide for their family if they did not have any access to affordable childcare. Additionally, the Southeast Community Day Care Center endeavored to provide services to children including medical, dental and education. The center also employed social workers who could connect with parents and try to meet their individual needs as well.

A day care and community center continues to operate in the building the League constructed. And, importantly, the League and their center inspired other neighborhoods to pursue community and day care centers throughout Spokane. The *Spokesman-Review* remarked that East Central's "determined hard-working residents could be considered inspiring pathfinders for those in other parts of the city." In 1980, West Central followed suit, and in 1982 Northeast Spokane opened a center too.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the day care, the center provided a space in the neighborhood for important community meetings. The NAACP met there regularly. The meetings hosted at the center included: community workshops, lectures on Black history in Spokane, programming for Black teens, lectures that featured Black civil rights attorney Carl Maxey, the NAACP 76<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, and general membership meetings. The location would have been especially convenient for the NAACP members who lived in the project area, including John K. Carpenter (2103 East Hartson) who held a leadership position with the group serving as a committee chairperson.<sup>43</sup>

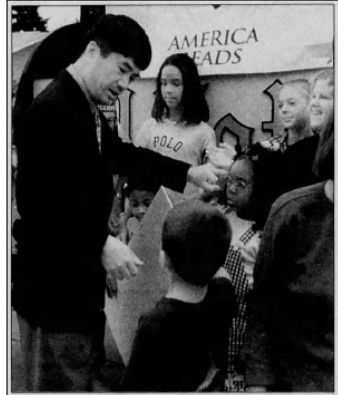
Community programming at the community center has been constant from the moment it opened to the present. There are over 6000 articles in the Spokane newspapers that have the phrase "East Central Community Center" between 1976 and the present. The vast majority advertisements for community events. This illustrates how much programming and how often events were held and advertised at the center. The grand opening of the center was held in September of 1979, but the NAACP had already been meeting there for months since the soft opening. In November 1979 the center screened a film called "A Brief History of Black Americans in Spokane County." In the 1980s, the Citizens for Fair Power Rates met at the center. In the 1999, Governor Gary Locke visited the center in an effort to boost reading proficiencies amongst East Central youth. In the 2000s the center hosted breathing relaxation classes and a free youth baseball clinic. And the legacy as a community meeting space continues today with the Kiwanis Club hosting a pancake breakfast at the center in 2022.

In 2020, there was some debate over the name of the center as a new operator was selected to run it. City Council voted to allow the name change to the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center after a recommendation against renaming from the Plan Commission. Then, in 2022 there was significant

<sup>42</sup> "Long Citizen Effort Successful," *Spokesman-Review*, 2/8/1978, page 4;

<sup>43</sup> "NAACP to Celebrate Birthday," *Spokane Chronicle*, 2/15/1983, page 11; "Social Action Success," *Spokane Chronicle*, 4/27/1978;

debate about the siting of a police substation on the site. Despite the occasional controversy and turnover in operators, the mission remains the same: to serve the East Central Community. Today the community center sits on a campus with many additional community centered buildings including: CHAS Dental Clinic, the Martin Luther King Junior Center, the East Central Senior Center, and others.



Gov. Gary Locke greets children from the East Central Community Center youth program after unveiling a public service announcement urging public involvement in the Washington Reading Corps.



### Festive Opening

Saturday's formal dedication of the East Central Community Center was a festive event. Among the artists exhibiting their work was Dennis Wilson, with his oil painting, "Musical Odyssey." The youngsters at right were waiting in a dressing room before going on stage during a fashion show. The center is at 500 Stone.



## 2702 East Fifth Avenue

### Prince Hall Masonic Temple

Significant Dates:	Built circa 1909, Masons moved in 1958
Architect/Builder:	Unknown / Clarence T. Freeman (1972)
Property Type:	Fraternal Lodge
Historic Timeline:	Navigating the freeway and community empowerment
Communities:	Black Spokanites
Potentially Eligible?	Yes: under SRHP category E

The Prince Hall Masonic Temple at 2702 East Fifth Avenue was originally constructed as a small drugstore sometime between 1902 and 1910, likely in 1909. By 1910 it was operating under the name Union Park Pharmacy and from 1911-1916 the proprietor was H. E. White. White abandoned the store in 1916 and went to Alaska without tending to the business at all before he departed.<sup>44</sup>

Over the next few decades, it would be known as Clark's Union Park Pharmacy (1917-1919), Peyton Grocery (1919-1926), Wyard Grocery/Confectionary (1926-1935), and Hank's Store/Grocery (1941-1952). The building sold in 1953 and the new owners sought to change the use from grocery to a church.

In December of 1953, the East Side Gospel Center requested permission from the City Plan Commission to use the former grocery as a place of worship. They needed special permission because the property was not zoned for assembly uses. The Plan Commission granted the special permission for the change of use but required the center to provide off street parking on site to the south of the building. In August of 1956, a new parish named East Side House of Prayer took over the building but it appears they lasted for less than two years in the building.<sup>45</sup>

In February of 1958, the Perfect Ashler [sic] Mason Lodge No. 40 (a Black Masonic group) applied to Spokane Plan Commission to use the building as a fraternal lodge, a relatively similar assembly use to its previous use as a church. Despite that, the Plan Commission denied the request for the change of use.



The Plan Commission cited the surrounding residential uses and the abandonment of the former business district area along this portion of Fifth Avenue as the reasons for denial. The Masons appealed the decision and an appeal was heard before the city council. Opponents of the lodge claimed that the proposed use would cause parking problems and that the site was not fit for assembly uses. H. L. Campbell (who did not live in the district himself but claimed to own property) said that his and other neighbor's opposition was "not a racial issue at all," he continued "we like you and hope you like us." Another opponent, George Olson (a neighbor to the east of the property) said that the matter was not one of race and color, but rather that it "is not a fitting meeting place." Some people were skeptical of the opponent's motives.<sup>46</sup>

Black civil rights attorney Carl Maxey represented the lodge and explained to city council that the property was in the proper zone for the proposed type of use, and that it was urgent to provide the Black community of Spokane with a "place to meet in fellowship." He explained that the building was an abandoned eyesore and that the lodge intended to make significant investments in the property to convert it into a meeting place. They also intended to pave the

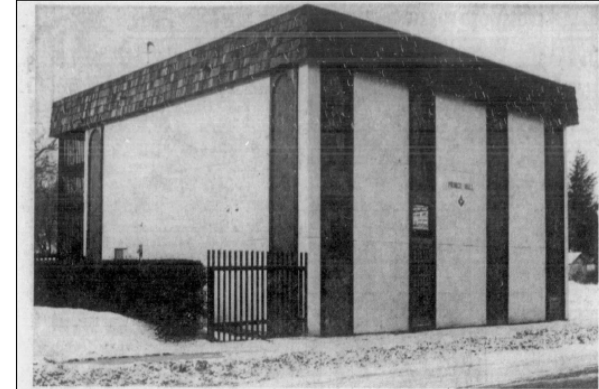
parking lot that was required for the church. Future Mayor of Spokane, Jim Chase, also spoke in support of the lodge and the change of use. City council was swayed by the arguments and they rejected the Plan Commissions recommendation and allowed for the change of use.<sup>47</sup>

In 1960, a 14-year-old boy painted a swastika on the side of the Mason Lodge at 2702 E Fifth Avenue. Two older Black boys in the neighborhood tracked him down and forced him to paint over the racist and anti-Semitic symbol. They then took him to a basement where they took turns beating him up. The newspaper article reporting on the incident uses a sympathetic tone that suggests the teens actions were understandable.<sup>48</sup>

In 1966, the Prince Hall Masons received an official charter. In the early 1970s, the Prince Hall Masons, another Black Masonic group, initiated renovations on the building to appoint it more properly for fraternal lodge use. The Masons worked collectively as a group of five different lodges to fundraise for the building. They hired Black general contractor and builder Clarence T. Freeman to do the work. The new building was unveiled with a ribbon cutting ceremony on January 15, 1972. The building featured a first-floor auditorium, kitchen, and lounge. The second floor had a meeting hall and conference room. The five groups that called the building home were: the Inland Empire Lodge, the Perfect Ashler Lodge, a consistory body, and two Eastern Star women's groups: Spokane Lodge No. 3 and Sheila Lodge No. 8.<sup>49</sup>

The building was more than a secretive fraternal lodge, it was a community gathering space. The NAACP hosted events in the building, Carl Maxey and other prominent Black speakers gave lectures in the building, and the Coalition of 100 Black Women hosted fundraisers in the building. The Masons sponsored after school activities, Easter egg hunts at Underhill Park, Martin Luther King Jr. essay contests, dinners at the East Central Community Center, and educational events.

In a 1993 interview with the newspaper, the president of the Masons explained that membership was dwindling much like other fraternal organization, although he said it was exacerbated the relatively small young Black population in Spokane. The Masons sold the building in 2009, possibly as a result of the financial crisis occurring all over the country. They only got \$25,000 for the building. It has since sold twice in 2012 and 2019 for \$129,000 and \$232,000 respectively. Although the Masons have departed the building, the cornerstone from the 1972 renovation remains on the northwest corner and it is inscribed with the name of former Mayor Jim Chase from his time as Grandmaster of the Lodge. In the *Spokesman-Review* endorsement of Jim Chase for Mayor in 1981



### Lodge Hall to Open

Scheduled for opening tomorrow is this new home of the Prince Hall Masonic lodges, recently completed by the Freeman Construction Co. at E2702 Fifth. Five Masonic organizations will share the quarters.



<sup>44</sup> Sanborn Maps for Spokane, 1902, 1910, 1952.

<sup>45</sup> Historic Building Permits for 2702 E Fifth Avenue, City of Spokane, Accela Citizen Access; "Service Station Work Allowed: Apartment Ok'd," *Spokesman-Review*, 1/7/1954, page 6; "Minister Accepts Gospel Pastorate," *Spokane Chronicle*, 8/4/1956, page 6.

<sup>46</sup> "Lodge Voices Appeal to Meet in Building," *Spokane Chronicle*, 3/13/1958, page 3.

<sup>47</sup> "Council Passes Lodge Request," *Spokane Chronicle*, 3/17/1958, page 5.

<sup>48</sup> "Youths Take Own Revenge on Painter," *Spokesman-Review*, 4/13/1960, page 10.

<sup>49</sup> "Prince Hall Masons Due for Session," *Spokane Chronicle*, 1/14/1972, page 19.

# THANK YOU

