



CITY OF JEFFERSON APPLICATION FOR NOMINATION HISTORIC LEGACY DISTRICT

Proposed Name of the Historic Legacy District:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Primary Contact for the Application:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Mailing Address:

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

- Map showing the boundaries of the proposed district
- Written response(s) to the required criteria for nomination as found on page 2.
- List of sources consulted to prepare written responses (newspaper articles, photographs, books, government documents, oral histories, etc.)

CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION

A Historic Legacy District may be nominated when most of all of the physical attributes (structures, streets, public areas, archeology, etc.) relevant to the historical or cultural period of significance no longer exist.

- I. Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the community, county, state, or nation; or
- II. Its location as a site of significant local, county, state, or national event; or
- III. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation.

RESPONSES FOR CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION

Please provide a response to at least one of the following criteria for nomination. Attach additional pages as necessary with the final application.

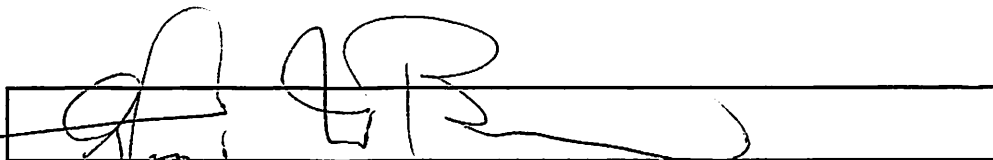
- I. Explain the character, interest of values as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the community, county, state, or nation.
- II. Explain why/how the location of the proposed district is a site of a significant local, county, state, or national event
- III. Explain the identification the proposed district has with a person(s) who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation.

Provide any other historical and relevant information to describe the historical and cultural legacy of the proposed district.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By signing and submitting this application, I have read and understand Sec. 8-48 of the City of Code of Jefferson. I understand that Historic Legacy Districts cannot alter the uses permitted by existing zoning, land use, or future development of the property so designated. I have consulted credible sources to form the responses as outlined above.

Signature of Primary Contact:



Name of Primary Contact:

Glover W. Brown

Date:

9/26/2022

THE FOOT

Most of the African American community in the forties, fifties and into the early sixties in Jefferson City lived on streets close to or adjacent to Lincoln University: Lafayette, Dunklin, Elm, Miller, Chestnut, Linn, Locust, Marshall, Jackson, Atchison, Maple Streets., and Clark Avenue. A few African American families lived near or within the boundaries of Washington Park. Wherever these families lived, the hub of black business and social activity remained on Lafayette Street.

700 block of Lafayette St.

This block was filled with homes of African Americans, many of them faculty, staff and administrators at Lincoln University. The main entrance to Lincoln University was a set of steps on the southeast corner of Lafayette and Dunklin Streets. This was known as "the Foot" as the stairway lay at the foot of a long set of steps up the hill to the university's campus.

At some point a few businesses were located on the southwest corner of Dunklin and Lafayette Streets. This building actually faced Dunklin Street. A new shop opened at this location at the same time that some African American men began to have their hair processed, sort of the precursor of the Jerry Curl (Jeri). The shop, called "The House of Process and Ultra Wave," was directly across the street from Turners Filling Station. Shortly after, Mr. Carl Johnson moved his Barber Shop into this location. There was also a liquor store, confectionery/ pool hall located in this same building owned by Clifton Dameron (Wingie), along with a dinner type restaurant, an early version of our modern day strip mall. In later years a few modest apartments were added to the western most end of the building, shortly before the introduction of the Urban Renewal Plan, which devastated this area.

600 block of Lafayette St.

Eldorado Club: This establishment was in a single building that housed three businesses on its first floor. The Eldorado Club was a pool hall. Out front were benches where men sat and watched the traffic going by.

Miss Leona's: Miss Leona owned and ran a diner on the northeast corner of Lafayette and Elm Streets. It was in the same building as the Eldorado Club and was at the northern end of the building. Her meals were said to be like old home cooking. Dr. Harold F. Lee, a single man who taught at Lincoln University, always bought his dinner at Miss Leona's

Jack's Drug Store: Jack King owned this store that was housed in the same building as the Eldorado Club and Miss Leona's Diner. At the southern end of the building, it was a liquor store that was said to sell most over-the-counter medications such as aspirin (no prescription medications).

Booker T. Hotel, 600 Lafayette Street was owned by Charles Mayberry Sr.: where it was originally named the Mayberry Hotel. In the 1930s and 1940s it was owned by a white man by the name of Murphy Clark, and the hotel was named the Lincoln Hotel. By 1945, when Leo Daniels, another white man from southeast Missouri, owned the hotel, and thus given the name Booker T. Hotel. In 1953 the hotel changed hands again, and was owned by Mr. Rufus Petty, a nephew to Annie Mayberry, one of the descendants of Charlie Mayberry, one of the original owners of the property when it was called the Mayberry Hotel. Mr. Petty renamed it the Carver Hotel. Mr. Petty was active in the Second Baptist Church, the local NAACP, and the Tony Jenkins American Legion Post 231 (see attachment C1). According to the Green Book, in the 1940s this was the only hotel where African Americans traveling through Jefferson City could stay. It also housed one of three black taxi cab companies located in the area. It was on the northwest corner of Lafayette Street, directly across from the building that housed Jack's Drug Store, the Eldorado Club, and Miss Leona's Diner. African American entertainers who came to Jefferson City to perform stayed at this hotel unless they were housed in the homes of African American residents. The hotel had a restaurant within its walls and a large room where parties/dances could be held. Rooms were known to be rented by

the hour as well as overnight.

The Green Book: This was a book intended to let African American travelers in the United States know where they could stop to spend the night, eat a meal, buy gasoline, have their cars fixed or use the restroom in cities and towns across the country. The book also covered parts of Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. It was published annually from 1936 to 1966 by Victor Green, an African American postal worker and travel agent located in New York. As the black middle class increased, African Americans often traveled more and more by car to avoid discrimination and insults suffered on public transportation of the time.

Norman's Confectionery: This small shop in the middle of the 600 block of Lafayette St. on the west side was owned by two Lincoln University graduates, name unknown and Sophronia Norman. They sold candy, commercially wrapped cookies and pies, ice cream treats, soda and cigarettes and they also stocked a small selection of canned goods (soup, chili, etc.) Mr Dan Turner also operated a small soda shop in this area, and later built a modern, moderate sized grocery store in this location.

At some point, Mr. Carl Johnson opened a barber shop in a building in the middle of the block on the west side. His shop may have occupied the building that had been Norman's confectionery.

A house just north of The Tops was owned by Miss Minnie White. In this fairly large home, lived Miss Minnie, her daughter Phyllis, and her two children, one or two of Miss Minnie's adult sons and another family, possibly cousins, with the surname of Wade. There were approximately three houses that lay on the west side of Lafayette street between Norman's Confectionery and the White family home.

The Tops: Located at 626 Lafayette Street, called a bar and grill, was more a restaurant with a bar. The Tops was owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Glover Brown, Sr. Many Lincoln University students who did not care for the food served in Lincoln's cafeteria ate at the Tops. This restaurant was known for its excellent barbecue; at least one Missouri Governor used to visit the Tops, driven by his chauffeur to its rear door. Many visiting African American dignitaries, as well as many national and international African American celebrities ate at this establishment.

In the basement of the Tops building (owned by Mr. Brown) was a barber shop for African American customers. At times there were two barbers working in this shop, but Mr. West was the principal barber in this shop. The shop was reached by an outside stairway.

Turner's Filling Station: This filling station actually faced Dunklin Street. It sat at the northeast corner of Lafayette and Dunklin Streets. Not only gasoline and oil were sold here, but the station served as an auto repair center. This station was the only one in Jefferson City owned by an African American; it was the only station where African American clients, local or traveling, knew that they could be served.

At the northeast corner of Lafayette and Dunklin Streets across from Turner's Filling Station where several buildings were located at various times. In the early 1940s, in 1942, there was a black owned restaurant on that corner. In later years there was a bookstore located in a building on that corner, along with a dry cleaning service. It is now home to the annex building of the Second Christian Church, Disciples of Christ located at 631 Lafayette Street.

500 block of Lafayette Street

Tayes Barber Stop: Mr. Tayes had a one-chair barber shop in the 500 block of Lafayette St. on the west side of the street, not far north of the corner of Lafayette and Elm Streets. The shop building seemed to lean to the north, and when a customer walked across the floor inside, it seemed that the building was shaking.

Logan's Shoe Repair was originally located at 610 Lafayette Street in 1919, where he made shoes for soldiers during WW1, and then moved in 1925 into the Logan home at 524 Lafayette Street. Logan's Shoe Repair was founded by Benjamin Harrison Logan, who was the grandson of one of the founding soldiers of Lincoln Institute, later to become Lincoln University.

Just under where the freeway goes over Lafayette St. now was the home of Mr. Duke & Mrs. Estella Diggs, Mrs Diggs was known as one of the "grande dames" of the Jefferson City's African American community. (see attachment 1B). The house was a substantial two-story brick house with a front porch across the front.

Just north of the Diggs home were four houses including three identical Craftsman style houses. One was occupied by the Mayberry family. The northernmost of these houses was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Charles (Lefty) Robinson and their three daughters. Mr. Robinson, called Lefty, was often known as the "Mayor of Bronzeville." Mr. Robinson was the coordinator of all the funerals for the Jefferson City black community. Although he was not known as a funeral director himself, Dullley Funeral home allowed him to enlist their mortician services and some times, in later years, their facilities to conduct the funeral services. He knew everyone in the black community and many people in the white community as well. When civic matters were being discussed, Mr. Robinson was frequently called upon to serve as the voice of the black community. (See attachment 1A)

The house farthest north on the west side of the 500 block of Lafayette St. was ultimately occupied by Dr. Ross, an osteopathic physician who came to Jefferson City at about the time that the Charles Still Hospital was opened. (Before his arrival, the only African American physician, Dr. Richardson, was unable to practice at St. Mary's Hospital. Dr. Ross lived in his house and had his office there, too.

On the east side of the 500 block of Lafayette St. were five or six homes. This was before the recently vacated Quinn Chapel AME Church was built. The church vacated this location due to updating and expansion of the 50/63 Rex Whitton Expressway.

400 block of Lafayette Street

Catty-cornered from Dr. Ross' home/office, on the northeast corner of Lafayette and Miller Streets was the home of Dr. and Mrs. Richardson. Mrs. Nana Belle Richardson competed as one of the "grande dames" of the African American community. Dr. Richardson, from the Caribbean, had his medical office in the basement of his home. The entrance to his office was on Miller St. Because of segregation Dr. Richardson did not have privileges at St. Mary's Hospital; when one of his patients became ill enough to enter the hospital, Dr. Richardson had standing arrangements with one of his white colleagues to look after his hospitalized patients. Living with the Richardson's at times was Mrs. Clementine Haley, Mrs. Richardson's much younger sister. At other times, Mrs. Haley rented the Richardson's much smaller house next door, a house set far back from Lafayette St. At one point this house was covered with pinkish/rose colored shingles

Just next door to the Richardson's rental house was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Busby. After twenty-three years on Lincoln's faculty, Mr. Busby continued his connection with the university by serving as the Counselor to veterans returning from the Vietnam War.

The farthest south, next to the alley, was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Blue and their two daughters. Mr. Blue, received his Doctor of Philosophy degree at Harvard University. He served in the English Department at Lincoln University. Located in this area, is the current home of Quinn Chapel AME Church located at 415 Lafayette Street.

News Tribune**Cole County History: 'Lefty' Robinson, the king of Jefferson City Mohawk Baseball**

November 23, 2019 at 6:05 a.m. | Updated January 6, 2020 at 6:10 p.m



Charles "Lefty" Robinson

The "Jefferson City Mohawks reigned as king of baseball in Jefferson City." That quote ran in a 1969 News Tribune sports feature more than 40 years after the team was organized.

Charles "Lefty" Robinson was the pitcher and later manager for the impressive team of black players who took on exhibition games with American Negro Baseball League teams, including the Kansas City Monarchs, St. Louis Stars and Birmingham Black Barons, as the professionals traveled across the state. The Mohawks hosted the 1932 Negro Baseball Championships of Central Missouri at Whiteway Park. But more often, they played at Lincoln Park, enclosed by a board fence near Lincoln University's practice field, according to Gary Kremer.

Before the Mohawks organized in 1922, the Jefferson City Hubs were the big team for black players. But they only had two local players. After the locally filled Mohawks beat the Hubs twice decisively in the 1920s, the Hubs team disbanded.

Later, Lincoln University also manned a competitive team called the Jefferson City Eagles. In the 1950s, the Mohawks and Eagles combined as the Dodgers to play in the new Central Missouri Negro League. Robinson gained notoriety for his left-handed pitching.

"I learned to throw the curve by watching a crippled man in my hometown of New London - something was wrong with his hand and his thumb stuck straight up in the air," Robinson said.

He went home and modeled his style after the man, throwing in a walnut grove behind his home. "A big smile broke across 'Lefty's' face as he paused, then, 'Why, that ball started out on one side of that tree, curved all the way and came out on the other side of the tree.'"

But he eventually had to learn to throw the curveball the right way, as batters learned to anticipate the curve ball when they saw his thumb up.

The 1921, Daily Capital News called him "one of the best colored pitchers in the country." He pitched his first no-run, no-hit game in June 1929 at Linn, 21-0. By May 1930, the Post Tribune called Robinson "ancient."

He was invited to pitch full time with the St. Louis Stars, taking the job for one month in 1924. "But I quit because I was making more money working at the Capitol," Robinson said. Proud to be a Christian and holding to high morals, he said he didn't want to desert his family, either.

Robinson wasn't the only team standout. As a whole, the Daily Capital News said the Mohawks were "Missouri's fastest colored team in the semi-professional class." Centerfielder Bud Rankin had his share of long drives from the plate. And shortstop Willie Smith was quite the slugger, too.

Lincoln University student Ralph Shropshire was catcher when not giving a "heavy hitting exhibition," and he went on to be catcher for the St. Louis Stars in 1937.

They also played white teams, like the local Senators or Crevelts, or when competing in the State Semi-Professional Tournament.

Local ball games often featured live music before a game and in between innings. Robinson and his string band or his Jubilee Singers performed at many of the white ball games.

By the 1930s, Robinson moved into a management role for the Mohawks, with his son Charles Jr., taking over the pitching.

Robinson also was a leader in the community, presiding over meetings of the young Negro Republicans at the Washington School and serving 15 years as president of the Jefferson City Community Center Association.

When the white community was debating a recreation center for boys, Robinson told them "no colored youngsters have been in trouble since the center was established and urged that a similar program be instituted for white youth," the Post Tribune reported on Feb. 17, 1950.

He was active in the area Republican party, serving as a delegate to the 1960 national convention. He was the first black man in modern times to be listed on the city ballot, though he lost to the incumbent city assessor in 1961.

Robinson was a charter member of the Jefferson City chapter of the NAACP, serving 27 years as chapter treasurer. Gov. Christopher Bond proclaimed Nov. 4, 1975, as Charles E. "Lefty" Robinson Day at the 18th annual Freedom Dinner.

He also volunteered 18 years with the Community Chest and with the Boy Scouts. And he organized the first day nursery for working moms.

He came to Jefferson City in 1912 to work in Gov. Arthur Hyde's administration, then was the first black employee for the state workmen's compensation commission in 1922. He clerked for the food and drug department and the Senate before working at Lincoln University in the 1950s, and retired as a funeral director.

The city's JeffTran headquarters at 820 E. Miller St. is named for Robinson.



John "Duke" Diggs



Estella Branham / Diggs

A world-traveling missionary, musician, teacher and civil rights leader, Estella Diggs is a woman even 21st-century women can aspire to be like.

In 1945 alone, she was matron of the Boone Chapter of the Eastern Stars, Young Women's Association at Second Baptist Church supervisor, Women's Baptist Missionary convention corresponding secretary emeritus, local Baptist missionary circle president, Jefferson City Community Center Association secretary and the Missouri Baptist Convention interracial committee chairman.

The year before, she became the first Black woman to represent the 2nd Congressional District Republican party as a presidential elector.

She was born in 1872 to George and Fannie Branham. Her father left slavery in Callaway County to serve in the 68th U.S. Colored Troops. Her mother was born into slavery in Boone County, running away at age 14. George became a plasterer, and Fannie was a well-known pastry cook.

Estella's mother was a founding member of Second Baptist Church, where Estella polished her talents, teaching Sunday school at age 13 and serving as church organist.

She was active in the Missouri Baptist Woman's Missionary Union and the World Baptist Alliance, representing Second Baptist at national and international conventions throughout the 1930s and 1940s. One of the key roles she took on was improving interracial relations within the state Baptist convention. Through the 1940s and 1950s, she was a committee officer and frequent speaker for conferences across the state.

Locally, she organized the YWA Circle named in her honor, serving as president for 13 years. And when the church razed the parsonage in 1970 to build the present building at 501 Monroe St., she donated one of her properties at 220 E. Ashley St. to replace it.

Estella Branham Diggs earned a bachelor's degree from Western Baptist Seminary, Kansas City, and taught in Olean, MO before marrying Jefferson City entrepreneur John "Duke" Diggs in 1893. After his death, she earned a master's degree in 1948.

They were a power couple, having no children but leaving a lasting legacy. Duke was active in local civic issues, as well as advocating for African-American rights at the Capitol.

They were both leaders in the United Brothers of Friendship and the Sisters of the Mysterious 10, at one time the largest Black fraternal organization in the state. They also were both active in Republican politics. In 1944, the 2nd Congressional District Republicans met in Jefferson City to nominate delegates to the Republican National Convention in Chicago, Illinois, which nominated New York Gov. Thomas Dewey. When no Black members were named to the initial delegation, a Bunceton representative protested. After a 15-minute recess, a second vote made Estella Diggs the first African American woman to represent the district.

She may be best remembered as the long-time financial secretary of the Jefferson City Community Center Association, formed by the Modern Priscilla Art and Charity Club, of which she was a founding member. The Modern Priscillas were founded in 1906 with the motto "life is too short to waste." During the Depression, the club used a small building in The Foot on Dunklin Street to store and distribute commodities. Looking next to provide hot lunches for school children, the community center idea was born in 1935. The first center at Dunklin and Linn streets primarily served as a day nursery for working mothers. In 1942, Duke and Estella Diggs were instrumental in seeing the current Jefferson City Community Center built, despite a halt on other construction due to World War II. After collecting \$1,000 from the Black community, the center partnered with the Community Chest, a forerunner of the United Way, to make a community-wide appeal to cover the remaining costs. Afterward, the association officers, including Estella,

ran a "thank you" ad saying: "America is the only place in the world today where a minority can ask a majority for aid and get what they ask. Democracy may she live forever! We are very, very grateful." The Jefferson City Community Center, also known as the Duke Diggs Community Center was added to the National Register of Historic Places on May 14, 1992, and is located at 608 E. Dunklin Street.

Mrs. Diggs was a member of the city's first racial relations committee, organized in 1949, along with other leaders of the day including Ruth Hardiman, Charles Robinson and Mrs. Julius Meyerhardt. The committee was replaced with the Commission on Human Relations in 1952, retaining several members, including Diggs.

"It may seem strange that Jefferson City has suddenly made a turn for better brotherhood, but the facts show that this same turn is being made throughout the nation. Americans have finally awakened to the fact that one can't preach democracy abroad and not practice it at home," the Lincoln University Clarion reported May 2, 1952.

Diggs embodied the Modern Priscillas' motto, promoting better civic relations, helping people on an individual basis and championing her faith.

Michelle Brooks is a former Jefferson City News Tribune reporter. She enjoys researching local history, particularly Lincoln University.

Print Headline: Cole County History: Estella Branham Diggs, a woman of faith and action



Tony Jenkins

Toney Jenkins of Jefferson City, Missouri, was killed in action during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive of World War I. The "Harlem Hellfighter" became the only black veteran from Cole County to die in the war and was laid to rest in the Jefferson City National Cemetery. His name is listed on the WWI monument in front of the Cole County Courthouse.

Jenkins was inducted into the U.S. Army on October 29, 1917. In the book "Scott's Official History of the American Negro in the World War," the author notes that during World War I, "about 367,710 of the nearly 400,000 black soldiers that served entered the service because of the Selective Draft Law," as was the case with young Jenkins.

Black recruits were often separated into one of two combat divisions—the 92nd or the 93rd Division. Jenkins was attached to Company G, 365th Infantry Regiment of the 92nd Division, which was formed at Camp Dodge, Iowa.

In December of 1917, he was transferred to Camp Funston, Kansas, where he remained until departing for France in late March 1918 as a member of Company G, 369th Infantry Regiment, which was formed from the 15th New York National Guard Infantry Regiment and became part of the 93rd Division.

Early in the war, General John J. Pershing made the decision to loan the four regiments of the 93rd Division to the French. Despite the institutional racism they faced within the

larger military structure, the division would go on to fight boldly on behalf of those who did not recognize their value as citizens and soldiers.

Jenkins' regiment, the 369th, was the first to arrive in France and, following training with the French forces, was integrated into France's Fourth Army and soon began to prove their mettle in combat operations, all the while wearing French uniforms and using French weapons.

In an article by Jami Bryan appearing in "On Point," an Army Historical Foundation publication, she notes that although the division experienced some early problems related to the language barrier, their French counterparts treated the American soldiers as equals. The division's list of military operations included several major battles along the Western Front; however, after bitter fighting during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the division earned the title of "Hellfighters" by their German foes (the title later morphed into "Harlem Hellfighters" in recognition of the location from which many of the division's recruits originated).

On September 28, 1918, during the carnage of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, which resulted in more than 26,000 American casualties, a 23-year-old Tony Jenkins lost his life from wounds received in combat. (The day following Jenkins' death, fellow Jefferson City resident Roscoe Enloe was killed in action). News of the soldier's death was shared in the December 16, 1918 edition of the Jefferson City Post-Tribune, with the young "Harlem Hellfighter" being laid to rest as an American soldier alongside hundreds of his fellow veterans in the Jefferson City National Cemetery.

Years later, the Tony Jenkins Lodge No. 432 of the Elks was formed to honor the late veteran (with the "e" removed from his first name) and on February 1, 1934, at the old Community Building, 901 E. Dunklin Street, the Tony Jenkins American Legion Post was formed with a charter group of 15 local veterans. Since that time, it has remained a predominantly black post.

In a confidential cablegram sent to Washington, D.C., General Pershing lauds the black soldiers of the 92nd and 93rd Divisions, beaming with pride over their "comparatively high degree of training and efficiency," followed by remarks that would indicate their sacrifices did not go unrecognized.

“(The) only regret expressed by colored troops is that they are not given more dangerous work to do,” wrote Pershing, adding, “I cannot commend too highly the spirit shown among the colored combat troops, who exhibit fine capacity for quick training and eagerness for the most dangerous work.”

Nearly 30 years after Jenkins’ burial, President Truman desegregated the military through Executive Order 9981, with the sacrifice and performance of the 93rd Division helping inspire major changes in highest levels of U.S. leadership and delivering the beginning stages of equality for which the soldiers of the division so valiantly fought.