

Landmarks Preservation Commission

Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department



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

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 <u>John and Henrietta Pratt House</u>	Common Name _____
Location	
Street Address <u>832 N. Steele St., Tacoma, WA</u>	Zip <u>98406</u>
Parcel No(s). <u>2745001400</u>	Legal Description and Plat or Addition: <u>Lots 1 and 2 Block 9 plat of Buckley's Addition to Tacoma which plat was filed for record in the office of Pierce County Auditor on June 12, 1883</u>
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 type="checkbox"/> Site
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Additions	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Landscaping, Fencing, Walkways, etc.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessory Buildings/Outbuildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Interior Spaces/Other (inventory in narrative)
Owner of Property	
Name <u>Robert and Dawn Klimas; Scott and Donna Armstrong</u>	
Address <u>831 N. Steele St</u>	City <u>Tacoma</u> State <u>WA</u> Zip <u>98406</u>
Is the owner the sponsor of this nomination? If not, please provide evidence that the owner has been contacted.	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Owner Signature, if possible:	
Form Preparer	
Name/Title <u>Scott Armstrong</u>	Company/Organization _____
Address <u>831 N. Steele St</u>	City <u>Tacoma</u> State <u>WA</u> Zip <u>98406</u>
Phone <u>256 698 3026</u>	Email <u>Arms6779@yahoo.com</u>

04/2017

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Nomination Checklist—Attachments

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Filing Fee (payable to City Treasurer) | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation Sheets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site Map (REQUIRED) | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Plans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs (REQUIRED): <i>please label or caption photographs and include a photography index</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please indicate): _____ |
| <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Original cladding/exterior materials	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Other elements	Yes <input checked="" 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).

The John and Henrietta Pratt house at 832 North Steele Street is a contributing property within the National Register of Historic Places designated Buckley’s Addition Historic District and sits directly adjacent to the boundary of the Tacoma Landmark Register and National Register North Slope Historic District. The 1½ story National Folk style house is situated on a lot in the southwest corner of the intersection of North 10th and North Steele Streets. The house has three bedrooms and 1¾ baths and a full basement.

Site

The 50 ft. X 100 ft. lot is level with sidewalks run along the east and north sides. The approximately 31 ft. X 77 ft. house is slightly off-center on the lot toward the north side, providing a larger side yard on the south side. The house’s main east façade fronts North Steele. The one-story, 216 sq. ft. garage stands at the northwest corner of the lot opening to North 10th Street. The landscaping is minimal with several fruit trees: apple trees in the northeast and southwest corners, a pear trees between the house and garage and in the parking strip along N. 10th St, and a cherry tree in parking strip along N. Steele. A large juniper tree endangering the front porch was removed in 2020.

Exterior

This 1½ story, wood frame house in the Gable-Front family of the National Folk style has a rectangular plan and sits on a basement foundation of natural stone topped with decorative concrete block. At the rear is a one story, full-width projection with shed roof. The house is clad in four-inch reveal, wood clapboard. Composition shingles clad the moderate pitched roof. A red brick chimney with brick crown and dentils and replacement caps exits roof at the center of the south slope. The narrow, boxed eaves have a wide, plain frieze board below and cornice returns at the gables.

The house retains the majority of its original wood windows with narrow, plain casing with the head casing having a slight arch. The north or N. 10th Street façade has two original narrow, one-over-one, double-hung windows on the first floor: one toward the rear of the house and the other in shed-roofed extension. The second floor of this façade has a narrow, one-over-one, double-hung, through-the-cornice window with gabled roof. The south façade has two narrow, one-over-one, double-hung, paired windows that share a mullion toward the rear of the house. These were moved 24 inches to the east in 2021 to accommodate a new exterior door which exits onto a small stoop with balustrade, a hipped roof, and with trim matched to other doors. The new door is a vintage, 1/3 glazed, three-panel door matching the width of the front door. The rear extension has a fixed, four-light window toward the west end of south side.

Each gabled end has a closely spaced pair of narrow, one-over-one, double-hung windows on the second floor. To the north of the paired windows in the rear gable are the original main power attachment brackets with glass insulators. The sashes of the single window on the rear extension of the north façade and the paired windows in the rear gable have at some point been replaced with vinyl sashes that match the width and configuration of the original windows.

The front, east façade has a full-width, open porch with hip roof supported by three original turned wooden posts and two turned pilasters with modest spindle work brackets. The porch roof has original Boston-patterned cedar gutters. The porch is reached by three concrete steps with low, line-decorated sides offset to the north. The topmost step is stamped “832”. The original, narrow front door with plain trim is offset to the north and features a glazed transom with



house number and a decorated, one-third-glazed door with mail slot. South of the door is a large, fixed single-pane window and transom with plain trim. The transom window has a center pane with a border of small lights of alternating blue, clear and orange glass (Glencoe patterned window, Sears & Roebuck Catalog, 1902, pg. 746)

The front, rear and north dormer gables are clad in alternating sections of staggered-butt and saw-tooth wood shingles. The main, front gable features a decorative “collar tie with drip” truss in the pitch.

The west, rear façade has a full-width, one-story shed-roof extension with a full-width, inset back porch. About ¼ of the south end of the porch has the original enclosed toilet stall (now closet) with a narrow door onto the porch and a small, fixed window on its west side. The porch’s northwest corner is supported by a single tapered post with chamfer edges. The original six-paneled rear entry door is offset to the north on the porch. An ice box originally sat on the rear porch between the rear door and the toilet stall according to family members. At the northwest rear corner and extending along the north side of the house is a narrow, concrete stairwell of four steps to the exterior basement door, which is the original, four-panel door with a glazed second panel. The north and south basement walls each has two single pane fixed horizontal windows.

Interior

The Pratt house retains many of its original interior features. The narrow staircase just inside the front door has decorative balusters. The front parlor has nine-foot ceiling with a decorative, wide picture rail and a coal-burning fireplace with original cast iron coal basket grate and screen. Throughout the house are original fir floors, doors with entablatures (headers and cornices), window frames, and 10-inch baseboards.

The 2021 remodel of the center/dining room (now kitchen) revealed stovepipe vent holes in west side of chimney confirming family stories that the room was heated by coal-burning stove. Passive air registers between first and second floor in the center room allowed stove-heated air to rise into second floor. The original kitchen area at the rear of the house has been remodeled into a bedroom in 2021. The lower portion of the original, built-in Douglas Fir kitchen cabinetry along entire north wall with wood countertop has been converted to a dresser, retaining the naturally cooled cabinet with passive, exterior vent. The basement has a root cellar area under the front porch.

Garage

In the northwest corner of the parcel along the alley is single-car garage with front gable facing North 10th Street. It is clad in four-inch reveal, wood clapboard, and the gable has three decorative knee-braces and retains its original swing-out barn doors. The Pierce County Assessor lists the garage as built in 1946. However, its design and the presence of knob and tube wiring suggest an earlier build date, probably about 1910.

Alterations

Major alterations were made in 2021 primarily to the interior. The kitchen was relocated from the rear to the center room. A set of paired windows on the south façade was moved 24 inches east to accommodate an added exterior door into the new kitchen. A full bath and laundry hook-ups were added upstairs. All knob and tube wiring, plumbing and lathe and plaster replaced, and walls insulated. Original interior Douglas Fir door and window trim, baseboard, and floors were restored. Floating vinyl flooring was installed over the original Douglas Fir flooring downstairs due to extensive damage. The 1980’s-era, natural gas furnace (heating only the first floor) and natural gas hot water heater were replaced with an energy-efficient ductless, mini-split heating heat pump and air conditioning system on both floors, and a hybrid electric heat pump hot water heater, respectively.

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 Adjoins 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	ca. 1903	Other Date(s) of Significance	1936 remodel		
Architect(s)	n/a	Builder	John Pratt (likely)	Engineer	<u>n/a</u>
Architectural Style(s)	National Folk	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.

The John & Henrietta Pratt house, constructed in 1903, is a contributing property within the National Register of Historic Places listed Buckley's Addition Historic District and sits directly adjacent to the boundary of the Tacoma Landmark Register and National Register North Slope Historic District. The house is a well-executed example of the National Folk style, probably built by John Pratt and his son Frederick, and represents a fine example of early 20th Century working-class housing in Tacoma. John Pratt was a skilled brick and cement mason who eventually developed a successful small business laying cement sidewalks and street curbs for the city. Due to these associations and its retention of integrity, the property is eligible for listing on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places under criteria A, C and E.

Neighborhood Context

The Buckley's Addition Historic District is a Tacoma residential district located in northwestern section of Tacoma, WA, above the south shore of Commencement Bay along the upper reaches of Buckley Gulch. Named after its owner, James M. Buckley, "Buckley's Addition to Tacoma" was filed for record on June 12, 1883. The topography is generally flat with the streets are laid out in a strict grid pattern oriented to the cardinal map coordinates. However, the deep Buckley Gulch bisects the northwest corner.

The land upon which Tacoma exists has been home to the Puyallup people since time immemorial. The area's wealth of resources attracted Euro-Americans to move to the region and establish settlements. Job Carr (1813-1887), a Union Army veteran, settled on Commencement Bay below Buckley's Addition in 1864 in what is now "Old Town." In 1873 the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) selected Commencement Bay as the terminus for their transcontinental railroad. The railroad established their own town site about two miles south of Carr's settlement, which had grown considerably over the intervening nine years. Both settlements continued to develop, but the new city became the political, business and cultural seat as Tacoma rapidly developed as an important point of shipment for the Pacific Northwest's timber and mineral resources. Land speculators, as well as every type of businessman and entrepreneur, began to move into the growing railroad town strung along Commencement Bay where the rails ended. Wharves and mills quickly proliferated.



The city's importance expanded exponentially when the railroad tracks were finally completed to St. Paul, Minnesota in 1887, connecting Tacoma with all points East. James M. Buckley, as Assistant General Manager of the Northern Pacific Railroad, was responsible for the final push through the Cascade Mountains, pounding in the final spike himself.

Seeing Tacoma's investment potential, Buckley had bought several large homestead claims in the city. Among them was land from J.W. King and Howard Carr, Job Carr's son. Quickly he platted the land as Buckley's Addition and began selling entire blocks to developers, builders and individual home owners. Advertisements show that an entire block could initially be purchased for \$800.

Development began in areas closest to the streetcar lines, such as North 21st St. (1890), 6th Avenue (1893) and North K St. (1893), which is two blocks from 832 N. Steele St. An advertisement in the 1891 *Tacoma Daily Ledger* notes that Buckley's Addition lots were offered for sale from \$100 to \$300. Further advertisements noted that no other addition in the city was as accessible and that the addition had many graded and paved streets with sidewalks. As the neighborhood developed, buyers had many available lots to purchase. This wide range of choices gave rise to a checkerboard pattern of development. By 1910 50% of the houses were built, but it took an additional 19 years for another 25% percent of the homes to be completed. By 1941, only 8% of the lots were left for development.

Construction and Occupants of 832 North Steele Street

John and Henrietta Pratt and their family entered the United States from Canada in November, 1902. John Pratt bought the parcel on Feb. 13, 1903, from Ellen E. Houghton, who lived nearby (424 North G St) and was the widow of Joseph H. Houghton, who had died in 1899. They came to Tacoma before 1883 and lived at 424 North G St. until Ellen returned to Massachusetts by 1904. Joseph was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Tacoma Light & Water Co., and they bought a fair amount of land in Tacoma over the years. The fact that Ellen owned the property at 832 N. Steele St, but didn't live there, likely suggests there was no house at 832.

The build date of the house cannot be established with certainty. No building permits have been located. The 1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Vol.2, Pg. 68) shows no houses built near the intersection of N. Steele and N. 10th Streets. The parcel does not appear to have any alternative address, and the first appearance of the address in the Tacoma City Directory is 1904 with the Pratt family.

It is very likely that the 48-year-old John Pratt and his 22-year-old son, Frederick, built the house themselves and served as general contractors. John was a skilled carpenter and brick mason, having worked in those trades in England before immigrating to Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1887 where he continued them. Frederick assisted his father as he did once the family arrived in Tacoma.

John & Henrietta Pratt, 1904 – 1928

John Pratt (1855-1941) and Henrietta Vinall (1857-1927) were both born in Bristol, Sussex, England, in 1855/56 and 1857 respectively. They married in 1879. John worked as a gardener but eventually became a skilled brick mason. In 1887, they decide to immigrate to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, with their three surviving children: Frederick (1881–1977), Florence (1882-1918), and Sarah (1886-1979). While in Canada, they had two additional children: Charles (1887-1923) and Lillian (1889-1908). Henrietta is said to have had nine children of which five survived.

It's unknown why the Pratts decided to leave Winnipeg for Tacoma. By 1902 when the Pratts came to Tacoma, the city had thrown off the effects of the 1893 Depression. Many wood buildings, especially commercial buildings, schools and churches, were being enlarged and rebuilt in brick. Pratt have responded to recruitment efforts for skilled brick masons. By 1914, John is listed in the City Directory as "Contractor – Carpenter and Builder". Within a few years, Frederick and he operated a largely cement construction business, John Pratt & Son, and were laying sidewalks and curbs in the city. His original cast iron concrete stamp was found in the garage (see photo) with a sidewalk stamped in the sidewalk in front of 1004 N. Steele St, dated 1911, along with at least five others along the street.



However, family life was anything but settled. In May, 1907, Lillian Pratt (age 22) went missing one week before her wedding. Her body was found in January, 1908, near the present day location of St. Luke's Episcopal Church. With little indication of foul play, the death was ruled a suicide due to the two empty bottles of Aconite (monkshood), a dangerous herbal remedy used for managing asthma and inflammation, found at the site. According to family members she also was known to have suffered from terrible headaches, probably what we know as migraines now.

In 1904, Florence married Frank R. Simpson, a train engineer for the NPRR. They have two children, Luella V. and Maxine. However, Florence dies in 1918, perhaps of the Spanish Flu. In 1919, Frank marries Florence's sister Sarah, and they will have a son, Robert F. Simpson. Frank and Sarah will nearby at 825 N. Prospect. Soon after Henrietta dies, John Pratt will room with Frank and Sarah Simpson at 825 North Prospect from 1929 until his own death in 1941.

Oddly, that pattern is repeated. Initially Charles helped his father but eventually found work as a machinist at the NPRR Shops. In 1910 Charles married Beulah Stenby, and they have one child (Gordon Leland). They leave 832 N. Steele in 1913. Charles, however, dies unexpectedly in 1923 at the age of 34. Four years later, Frederick, Charles brother, marries Beulah in 1927. Frederick began working for the CMStP&P Railroad, moving eventually to the Spanaway area. Beulah dies in 1939, and Frederick marries Blanche J. Steuby in 1943. He dies in 1977.

Delbert L. and Luella V. (Simpson) Miller, 1929 – 1984

Interestingly the home remains in the family for five generations, mostly being passed through the females in the family. John and Frederick leave the house at 832 in 1928 after John's wife Henrietta dies in 1927. By 1929, Delbert L. & Luella V. Miller are living at 832. Luella V. is Frank and Florence (Pratt) Simpson's eldest daughter, who married Delbert in 1928. Delbert is a brake repairman working at the NPRR Shops. Luella worked as a bookkeeper and clerk for Dean Drug Company. Delbert and Luella had three children: Maxine, Kenneth and Mary. They resided at 832 N. Steele from 1928 until about 1984 when Luella was no longer able to stay in the house. Delbert died in 1976 and Luella in 1989.

Dennis K. & Lynne M. Young, 1986 – 2012

Delbert and Luella Miller's daughter Maxine marries Lawrence E Young in 1954, Lawrence E. served on the USS Helena in the Korean War and later was a Pierce County Sheriff's Deputy. Maxine and Lawrence E. have three children, two of whom are Lynne M. and Lawrence D. From 1986 to 1989 Lynne Young lived at the house along with her brother Lawrence D. Young and his daughter. In 1990 Lynne married Dennis K. Malm, who took "Young" as his last name. They continued to live at 832 N. Steele until 2012, after which the house was vacant.

Lawrence D. Young, 2017 – 2020

In 2017 Lawrence D. Young, U.S. Army and USAF Reserves, returned to the house and lived there until he sold it to the current owners in 2020. Lawrence D. Young was the last resident of 832 N. Steele directly related to John and Henrietta Pratt.

Architectural Style: National Folk, ~ 1850 to ~ 1930

With the expansion of railroads across the United States from 1850, milled lumber, shingles, windows, and other building materials became available and modest houses were no longer restricted to local materials. This availability gave rise to light balloon framing covered by wood sheathing that was easy and inexpensive to build. The simple gable-front house with modest porch across the front, recalling the Geek Revival movement of the 1830s to 1850s, became a common sight across American rural and urban areas. Most are one-room wide and 1½ to 2 stories with relatively steep roof pitches and perfectly suited for narrow urban lots. Decorative elements, such as porch detailing and patterned shingles were borrowed from the Queen Anne style, while later examples would borrow knee-braces and exposed rafter tails from the Craftsman style. The Folk Victorian style is distinguished from the National Folk by its often-ostentatious exuberance of Queen Anne and Italianate decorative detailing.¹

¹ Virginia McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 135-147, 397-405

Nominations to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places are processed according to the procedures and standards described in TMC 1.42 and 13.07. Submittal of a nomination form does not obligate the City to place a property on the Register or to extend financial incentives to a property owner. Documents submitted become public record. Additional requirements may be imposed by other City, state or federal regulations.

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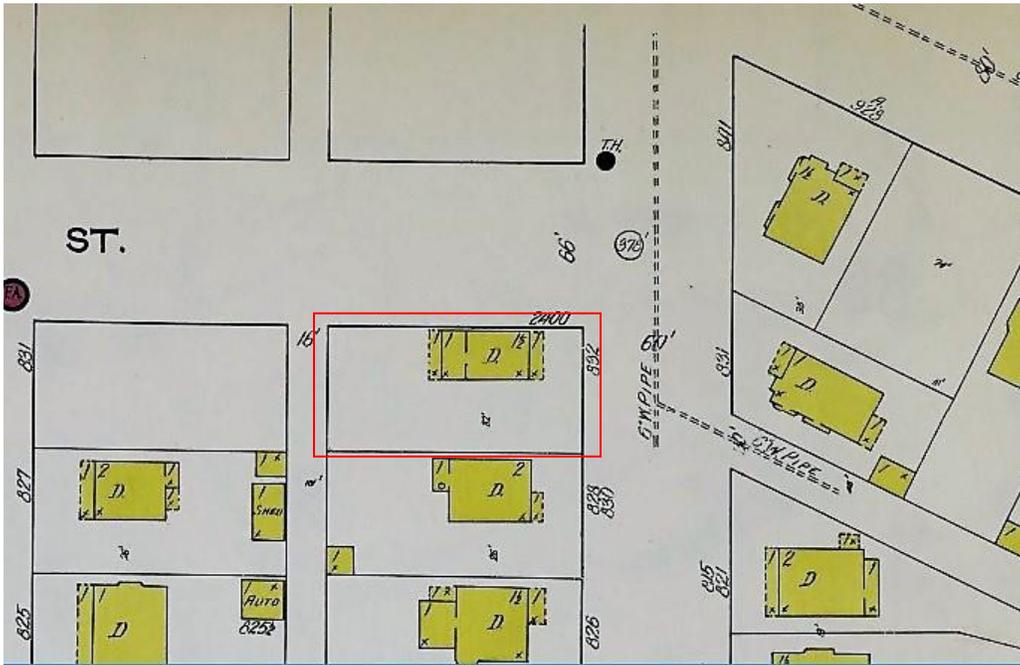


Figure 2. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1912, Vol. I, Sheet 88

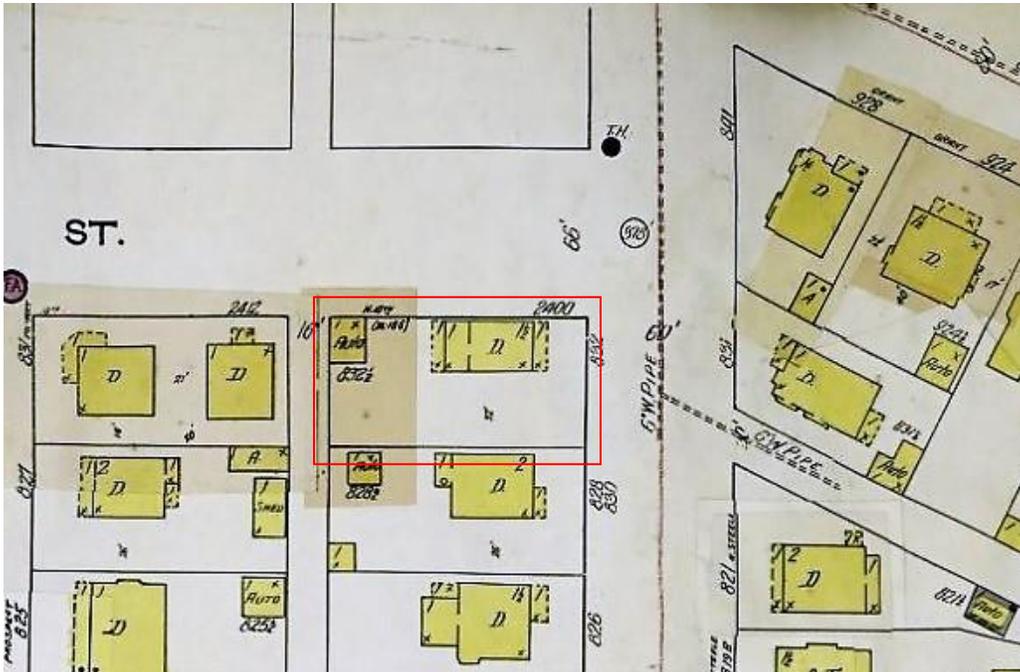


Figure 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1912 corrected to 1950, Vol. I, Sheet 88



Figure 4. John and Henrietta Pratt in front of 832 N. Steele St, ~ 1910 (Collection of Lou Ann Miller)



Figure 5. Henrietta and John Pratt, date unknown (Collection of Lou Ann Miller)

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**MISSING GIRL
FOUND DEAD**

**DISAPPEARED
MONTHS AGO**

LILLIAN PRATT'S REMAINS DISCOVERED IN BRUSH IN NORTH END.

PROBABLY DESTROYED SELF

Young Woman Left Home May 27, Week Prior to Day Set for Marriage.

The mystery surrounding the disappearance of Lillian Pratt, the 22-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Pratt, 832 North Steele street, was partially

LILLIAN PRATT.



Figure 6. Tacoma Daily News, 05/01/1908, pg. 4



Figure 7. Luella V. Miller, ~ 1940 (Collection of Lou Ann Miller)

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Figure 8. Lawrence D. Young, 2020, on front porch (Collection of Lou Ann Miller)

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Figure 9. Front (East) Façade, 2021 (Collection of Scott Armstrong)

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Figure 10. Main, front gable decorative “collar tie with drip” truss in the pitch and dormer gable clad in alternating sections of staggered-butt and saw-tooth wood shingles. (Collection of Scott Armstrong)



Figure 11. Original restored Boston-patterned cedar gutters, front porch roof (Collection of Scott Armstrong)

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Figure 12. Spindle work brackets, front porch (Collection of Scott Armstrong)

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Figure 13. Front door detail, 2021 (Collection of Scott Armstrong)

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Figure 15. North Façade, 2021 (Collection of Scott Armstrong)

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Figure 16. South Façade, 2021 (Collection of Scott Armstrong)



Figure 17. Garage, 2021 (Collection of Scott Armstrong)



Figure 18. Interior staircase (Collection of Scott Armstrong)



Figure 19. Front parlor; coal-burning fireplace with original cast iron coal basket, grate, and screen (Collection of Scott Armstrong)



Figure 21. “J. Pratt Contractor”, sidewalk stamp with 1913 plate, and stamp examples from 1004 N. Steele (left) and 934 N. Grant Street (right) (Collection of Scott Armstrong)