

ITEM: 524 Main Street Probable Cause Determination

APPLICANT: Ryan Costner
881 Lilac Place
Lafayette, CO 80026

OWNER: Chris and Edward Brynn
3549 Breezy Point Drive,
Okemos, MI 48864

PROJECT INFORMATION:
ADDRESS: 524 Main Street
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lots 11-12 Lou D Parbois Tracts & N 12 1/2 Ft Lot 1
Blk 1 Acme Terrace Id 19873 Combined Here Per
Owner Request 5/18/89
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: ca.1911-1925

REQUEST: A request to find probable cause for a landmark
designation to allow for funding of a historic structure
assessment for 524 Main Street.

VICINITY MAP:



SUMMARY:

The applicant requests finding probable cause for landmark designation to allow for funding of a historic structure assessment for 524 Main Street. Under Resolution No. 17, Series 2019, a property may be eligible for reimbursement for a historic structure assessment (HSA) from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) if the Historic Preservation Commission finds *“probable cause to believe the building may be eligible for landmarking under the criteria in section 15.36.050 of the Louisville Municipal Code.”* Further, *“a finding of probable cause under this Section is solely for the purposes of action on the pre-landmarking building assessment grant request, and such finding shall not be binding upon the HPC, City Council or other party to a landmarking hearing.”*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Information from Gigi Yang, Louisville Historical Museum

The history of 524 Main contributes to our understanding of Louisville's early coal mining history, French and Italian immigrants, and development around the Acme Mine and Frenchtown. The Geitz family is notable for their residence and property ownership for 40 years and their connection with the development of the Parbois Tract and Acme Terrace Additions. Multiple generations of the Vinson family also illustrate small business ownership and how business owners contributed to the community in the 1960s-1990s.

Nicholas and Mary Geitz Ownership, 1913-1957

John Qualla sold Lots 11 & 12 to Nicholas Geitz (1883-1952) in 1913. Nicholas Geitz was born in Italy in 1883. He came to the U.S. in 1902 at age nineteen and began working as a coal miner in Louisville. He met Mary (Marie) Staffieri (1898-1978) who was born in France and came to Louisville as a young girl in 1904. Mary Geitz appears to have been extremely industrious and actively engaged in the social and civic life of Louisville throughout the 1920s into the 1950s. She was elected as a delegate to the Democratic Assembly for multiple years in 1928, 1936, 1940, and 1942. In the 1930s, she played on the Hi-Way Mine women's softball team and was the team manager in 1933-34. During the Depression, she taught classes for obtaining US Citizenship, was active in the WPA Home Economics Meeting and was the Supervisor in charge of sewing, canning, housekeeping, nursing and weaving. In 1942, she completed First aid training courses taught by Dr. Cassidy and L.C. Graves and also completed a Motor Mechanic class to make automobile repairs and drive for the Boulder Red Cross. After WWII, she was an officer and active member of the VFW in Louisville. Nick and Mary's daughter, Elinor (1916-2004) grew up in Louisville and distinguished herself as a talented violinist and trained to become a nurse in 1943. She was noted in the *Louisville Times* as the first Louisville woman sent for overseas service during the war. Elinor Geitz served with the Army for 17 months in England and returned to the US in 1945. While in England, she married Ellsworth Cross and after returning to the US, they had one son. In 1939, when Dominic Staffieri platted the Acme Terrace Addition, he sold the first Lots 1&2 of Block 1 to his grand-daughter, Elinor. He had previously transferred

tract 718 to Elinor in 1938 which extended the Geitz property at 524 Main so that it was partially in the Parbois Tract and in Acme Terrace. Elinor continued to work as a nurse at least until 1946. She later moved to California.

William J and Wilma Jean Kimmett Family Ownership, 1957-1960

William and Wilma Jean Kimmett purchased the property from Mary Geitz and her daughter Elinor in 1957. The Kimmetts previously lived in Arvada and moved to Louisville around 1955 with their three children. Bill Kimmett coached the Louisville Little League baseball team and later ran for City Council in 1977.

James W. Vinson Ownership, 1960-2012

The Kimmett family moved to a new house in Louisville in 1960 and sold 524 Main to James William Vinson and Joyce Ann Vinson. JW Vinson (1937-2022) grew up in Louisville and joined the Navy in 1956. James Vinson Jr. worked as a coal miner until about 1947 when he and his wife Ruth Grass started Vinson Concrete and From the 1950s to the 1990s, the Vinson family installed gutters, curbs, and sidewalks throughout Louisville, including the Frenchtown neighborhood where the family lived. They were members of the Elks Lodge and participated in numerous civic projects, often donating materials and labor to improve parks and other small community projects. Contractors. The family business would employ three generations of Vinsons.

In 2012, James Vinson sold the property to Edward Brynn who is the current owner.

Please see the attached Social History Report for a more detailed history.

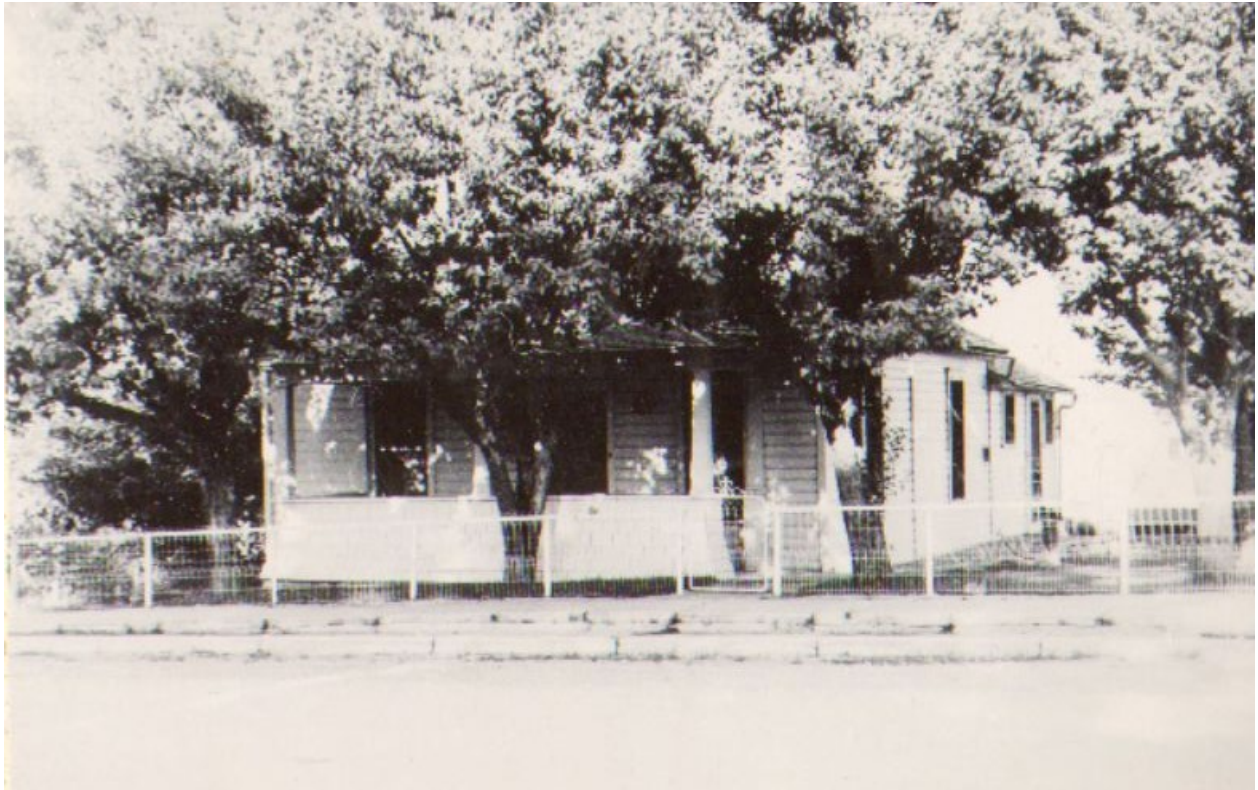


Photo of 524 Main Street, Boulder County Assessor Card from 1948.



This undated photo taken from the top of the Acme Mine dump shows Main Street (Second Street) heading north. The house in the bottom right corner appears to be the location of 524 Main today. Photo is likely c. 1911-1928.



Present day photo of 524 Main Street.



Present day photo of 524 Main Street.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY:

524 Main Street is not included in the PaleoWest "100 Architectural Inventories for the City of Louisville" (2023). "Stories in Places: Putting Louisville's Residential Development in Context" (2018) identifies 524 Main Street as a National Folk House Architectural Type constructed in 1908. No further analysis is included on the building. The National Folk House Architectural Type is described as:

National folk house forms were associated with railroads and worker housing in general (McAlester 2017:134–147). They were popular from the 1870s to 1930s and are the dominant residential type in Louisville from that time. Housing forms and styles were strongly influenced by the presence of railroads, in that railroads facilitated the transport of construction materials. Balloon frame construction used standardized lumber sizes and wire nails that could be ordered and then shipped in large quantities to towns located adjacent to rail lines, including Louisville...The most basic and common forms are gable-front, gable-front-and-wing, and side-gabled. National houses are generally simple, although builders and owners sometimes applied Victorian, Greek Revival, Craftsman, or other stylistic elements for decoration...The gabled roofs of standard National houses are usually relatively lower-pitched in comparison with those of Folk Victorian houses, with which they could potentially be confused....

The structure appears to have maintained much of the original building footprint since the Boulder County Assessor Card from 1948. Prior building permit records include a re-roof.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND CRITERIA FOR FINDING PROBABLE CAUSE FOR LISTING AS LOCAL LANDMARK:

Under Resolution No. 17, Series 2019, a property may be eligible for reimbursement for a historic structure assessment (HSA) from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) if the Historic Preservation Commission finds "*Probable cause to believe the building may be eligible for landmarking under the criteria in section 15.36.050 of the Louisville Municipal Code.*" Further, "*A finding of probable cause under this Section is solely for the purposes of action on the pre-landmarking building assessment grant request, and such finding shall not be binding upon the HPC, City Council or other party to a landmarking hearing.*"

Staff analysis of the criteria is as follows:

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
<i>Landmarks must be at least 50 years old</i>	524 Main Street was constructed ca.1908 making it approximately 118 years old. Staff find the age of the structure meets the criteria.
<i>Landmarks must meet one or more of the criteria for architectural, social or geographic/environmental significance</i>	<u>Social Significance</u> - <i>Exemplifies cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the community.</i> The social history of 524 Main Street includes association with: - Housing for community members that contributed to Louisville through mining, social, and cultural activities, including participation in City Council, etc. Staff find that the structure meets the cultural and social heritage of the community and there is probable cause to meet the criterion for social significance. <u>Architectural Significance</u> – <i>Represents a built environment of a group of people in an era of history that is culturally significant to Louisville.</i> - Reflects the mining history and immigrant community at the time. Staff find that the location of the structure does have probable cause to meet the criteria for architectural significance in its current form.

<i>Landmarks should meet one or more criteria for physical integrity</i>	Physical Integrity - <i>Shows character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, region, state, or nation.</i> • Interesting building character shaped by its social history. <i>Remains in its original location, has the same historic context after having been moved, or was moved more than 50 years ago.</i> • 524 Main Street appears to have maintained its historic footprint from 1948, possibly earlier. Staff find probable cause that the structure meets the criteria for physical integrity.
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PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN:

The [Preservation Master Plan](#) was adopted in 2015 and includes goals and objectives for the historic preservation program. A finding of probable cause would meet the following goals and objectives:

Goal #3: Encourage voluntary preservation of significant archaeological, historical, and architectural resources

Objective 3.3 - Encourage voluntary designation of eligible resources

Objective 3.4 - Promote alternatives to demolition of historic buildings

Goal #5: Continue leadership in preservation incentives and enhance customer service

Objective 5.1 - Promote availability of Historic Preservation Fund grants and other incentives

FISCAL IMPACT:

The finding of probable cause allows for a grant of up to \$7,500 for a Historic Structure Assessment (HSA) from the Historic Preservation Fund.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends a finding of Probable Cause under the criteria in section 15.36.050 of the LMC, making the properties eligible for the cost of a historic structure assessment. The current maximum amount available for an HSA is \$7,500. Staff recommend HPC approve a grant not to exceed \$7,500 to reimburse the costs of a historic structure assessment.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 524 Main Street - Social History



524 Main St. History

Legal Description: LOTS 11-12 LOU D PARBOIS TRACTS & N 12 1/2 FT LOT 1 BLK 1 ACME TERRACE ID 19873 COMBINED HERE PER OWNER REQUEST 5/18/89

Year of Construction: circa 1911-1925

Summary: The history of 524 Main contributes to our understanding of Louisville's early coal mining history, French and Italian immigrants, and development around the Acme Mine and Frenchtown. The Geitz family is notable for their residence and property ownership for 40 years and their connection with the development of the Parbois Tract and Acme Terrace Additions. Multiple generations of the Vinson family also illustrate small business ownership and how business owners contributed to the community in the 1960s-1990s.

Development of the Parbois Addition, Parbois Tract, and Acme Terrace Addition

Several properties on South Main Street make up what is called the Parbois Addition and the Parbois Tract. Desire Parbois (1861-1933) was born in France and came to the U.S. in 1888. He was a coal miner and farmer. He and his wife, Josephine (who was also from France) had several children who married into other Louisville families. In the early 1900s, according to County records, Parbois sold numerous properties on South Main Street and these properties are what make up the Parbois Addition. These properties were very near to the Acme Mine and particularly its mine dump, which was at the end of Main Street by what is now the Elks Lodge parking lot. The Parbois Tract is identified on some maps as the unplatted area south and east of the Parbois Addition.

The Acme Terrace Addition was first platted in 1939 by Domenico (Dominic) Staffieri (1869-1945) who owned property south of the Parbois Tract. The Acme Mine was in operation from 1895-1928 and much of the Acme Terrace location was covered by the mine dump. It wasn't until 1933 that the dump was dispersed, opening up the land for development.

Early Property Ownership

In 1910, Desire Parbois sold Lots 11 and 12 of the Parbois Tract to John Quella for \$150. This southernmost lot of the Parbois Addition extends into the northern edge of the Acme Terrace Addition. It is unclear whether Quella built a house on the property before selling the lots to Nicholas Geitz in 1913. Boulder County records note the date of construction for 524 Main as 1911; however, this date cannot be confirmed and other documentation and records appear to be contradictory. A review of county assessor cards for neighboring houses shows that almost all of the homes in the Parbois Addition were built around 1908 and they are shown on the Drumm's Map of 1909.



The current location of 524 Main is indicated with the red circle, showing the proximity to the Acme Mine dump and with no building at that location on the 1909 Drumm's Map.

Nicholas and Mary Geitz Ownership, 1913-1957

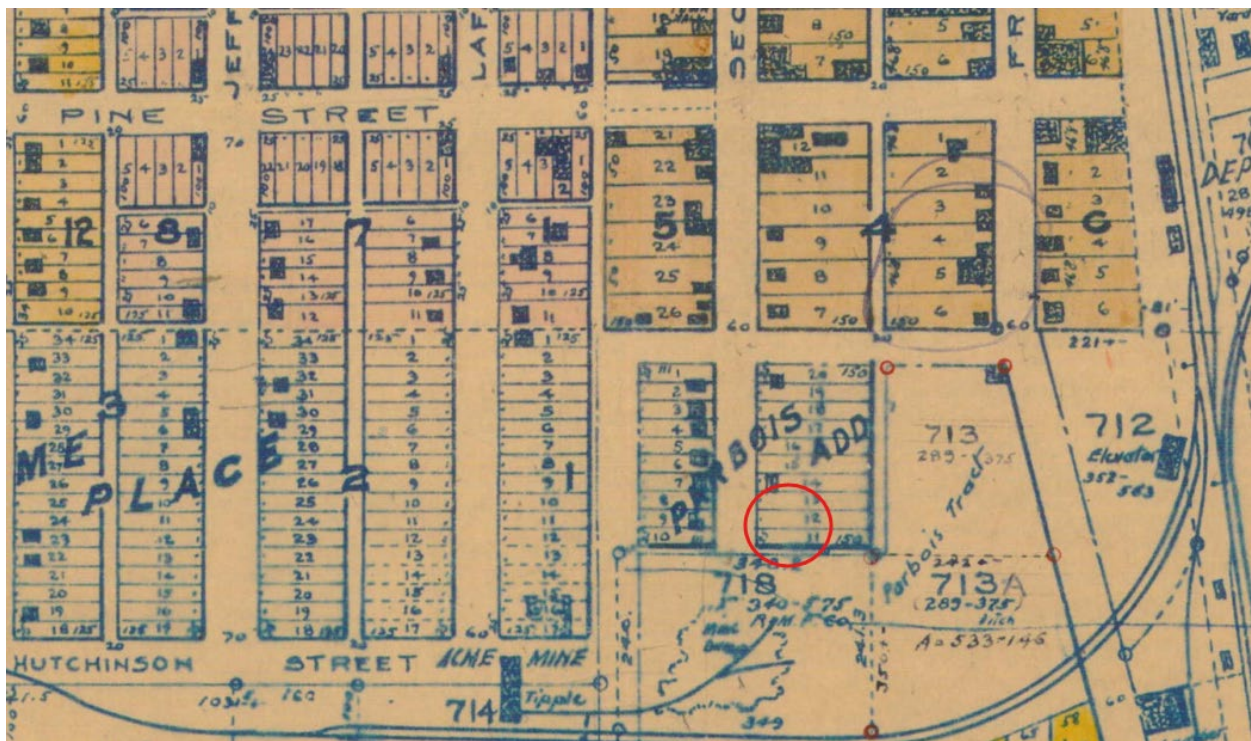
John Qualla sold Lots 11 & 12 to Nicholas Geitz (1883-1952) in 1913. The original deed is for Nick Gezze and over the years, variations in the spelling of his last name include Gizzi, Gitz, Gietz, and Geitz. Geitz appears to be the most frequent spelling and is the name on his gravestone in Boulder.

Nicholas Geitz was born in Italy in 1883. He came to the U.S. in 1902 at age nineteen and began working as a coal miner in Louisville. He met Mary (Marie) Staffieri (1898-1978) who was born in France and came to Louisville as a young girl in 1904. Mary's father, Dominic Staffieri was Italian but worked as a

chef in France before coming to Louisville with his wife Cecilia and daughters, Mary and Annie. Mary's mother, Cecilia, was French. Dominic worked in the coal mines and the family likely gravitated towards the community of French immigrants living near the Acme Mine in the neighborhood that became known as Frenchtown. Mary's two younger siblings, Celia, and Joseph Staffieri were born in Colorado.

Nick Geitz and Mary Staffieri married in 1915 and their only child, Elinor, was born in 1916. It is unclear where the Geitz's were living in the early years of their marriage. Directory listings from 1916 and 1918 show them living at 532 Second St. which prior to changes in house numbering would appear to be at the north end of Main Street. In the 1918 directory, they are living with Mary's father, Dominic in north Louisville.

The earliest listing for the Geitz's living near the Acme Mine is the 1920 census and the 1921 Directory which lists them at 21 Second St. which would have been at the south end of Main. A Drumm's Map from 1925 still shows no building at the location of 524 Main. However, a United Methodist parish map c. 1920-1925 and an early but undated photo of Main St. show a house that appears to be on Lots 11 & 12 in the Parbois Addition.



1925 Drumm's Map of Louisville that still shows no development on Lots 11 & 12.



United Methodist Parish Map c. 1920-25.



This undated photo taken from the top of the Acme Mine dump shows Main Street (Second Street) heading north. The house in the bottom right corner appears to be the location of 524 Main today. Photo is likely c. 1911-1928.

Despite discrepancies between maps and directories, the construction of the house at 524 Main can be estimated to be c. 1911-1925 with 1911 being the earliest date of construction recorded on the Boulder County Assessor card from 1948, and 1925 being the estimated latest date for the United Methodist parish map which shows a building at that location. From the 1928 City Directory on, Nicholas and Mary Geitz are shown living at 15 Main which is an early house number that became 524 Main in 1940.

Little is known about Nick Geitz other than that he worked as a coal miner for 48 years, including as a loader at the Centennial Mine. The 1940 census shows him still working as a coal miner at age 53 and making \$700 per year. Nick Geitz died from a stroke in 1952 at age 69.

Mary Geitz appears to have been extremely industrious and actively engaged in the social and civic life of Louisville throughout the 1920s into the 1950s. She was elected as a delegate to the Democratic Assembly for multiple years in 1928, 1936, 1940, and 1942. In the 1930s, she played on the Hi-Way Mine women's softball team and was the team manager in 1933-34. During the Depression, she taught classes for obtaining US Citizenship, was active in the WPA Home Economics Meeting and was the Supervisor in charge of sewing, canning, housekeeping, nursing and weaving. In 1942, she completed First aid training courses taught by Dr. Cassidy and L.C. Graves and also completed a Motor Mechanic class to make automobile repairs and drive for the Boulder Red Cross. After WWII, she was an officer and active member of the VFW in Louisville.



Nick and Mary's daughter, Elinor (1916-2004) grew up in Louisville and distinguished herself as a talented violinist and trained to become a nurse in 1943. She was noted in the *Louisville Times* as the first Louisville woman sent for overseas service during the war. Elinor Geitz served with the Army for 17 months in England and returned to the US in 1945. While in England, she married Ellsworth Cross and after returning to the US, they had one son.

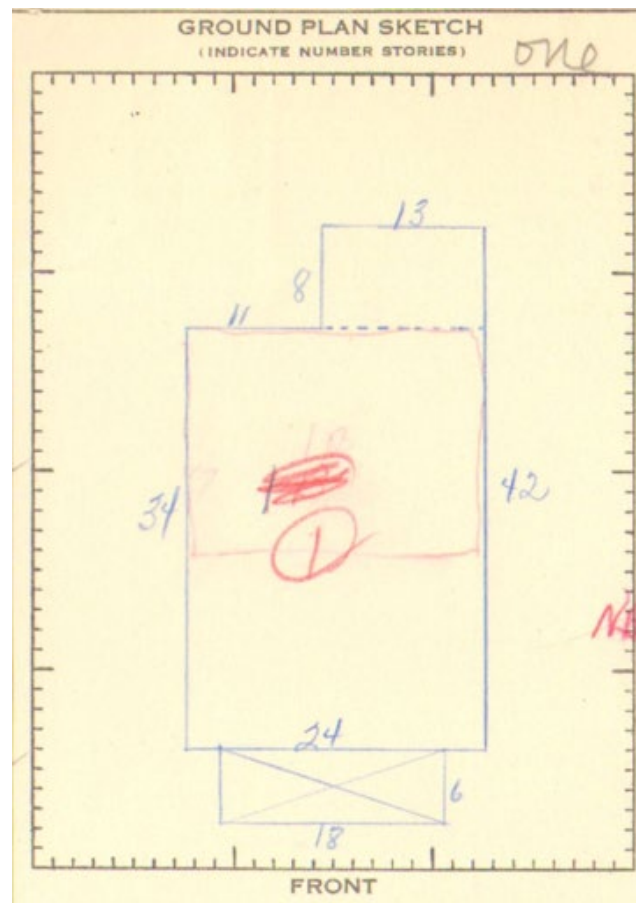
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Elinor Geitz as a young woman.

Following Nick Geitz's death in 1952, Mary Geitz soon moved to California to be near her daughter. She rented the house in 1955 to Frank Zaitz, a Louisville High School football and basketball coach. The Zaitz family moved to Westminster in 1957 after Frank Zaitz resigned after accusations of drinking and gambling.



1948 Boulder County Assessor photo and floorplan of 524 Main.



William J and Wilma Jean Kimmett Family Ownership, 1957-1960

William and Wilma Jean Kimmett purchased the property from Mary Geitz and her daughter Elinor in 1957. The Kimmetts previously lived in Arvada and moved to Louisville around 1955 with their three children. Bill Kimmett coached the Louisville Little League baseball team and later ran for City Council in 1977.

James W. Vinson Ownership, 1960-2012

The Kimmett family moved to a new house in Louisville in 1960 and sold 524 Main to James William Vinson and Joyce Ann Vinson. JW Vinson (1937-2022) grew up in Louisville and joined the Navy in 1956. After he was discharged in 1960, he married Joyce Ann Taylor and they began their married life at 524 Main. James W. Vinson was also known as "JW" since his grandfather and father were also named James Vinson. His grandfather lived in Illinois and died at a young age in 1920. His grandmother, Maggie Africh, remarried and moved to Colorado where she raised her four children – James Jr. (1912-1996), Ida (1915-1999), Josephine (b.1918), and Clifford (b. 1920).

James Vinson Jr. worked as a coal miner until about 1947 when he and his wife Ruth Grass started Vinson Concrete and Contractors. The family business would employ three generations of Vinsons, including his son, JW Vinson and grandson, James W. Vinson Jr. (b. 1961).

From the 1950s to the 1990s, the Vinson family installed gutters, curbs, and sidewalks throughout Louisville, including the Frenchtown neighborhood where the family lived. They were members of the Elks Lodge and participated in numerous civic projects, often donating materials and labor to improve parks and other small community projects.



Photo of James Vinson, Jr. from the Oct. 12, 1988 edition of The Louisville Times.

In 2012, James Vinson sold the property to Edward Brynn who is the current owner.



Current Boulder County Assessor image of 524 Main.

The preceding research is based on a review of relevant and available online County property records, census records, oral history interviews, Louisville directories, and Louisville Historical Museum maps, files, and obituary records.