

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1301 E Lockey
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **314 Miller St.**

Historic Address (if applicable): **314 Wood St./ 62 Wood St.**

City/Town: **Helena**

Site Number: **24LC2432**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Lewis and Clark**

Historic Name: **James A. Mack House**

Original Owner(s): **Edward Zimmerman**

Current Ownership Private Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Minkoff, Allen F**

Owner Address: **314 Miller St., Helena, MT 59601**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **10 N** Range: **03 W**

$\frac{1}{4}$ **NW** $\frac{1}{4}$ **NW** $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section: **31**

Lot(s): **3 & 4**

Block(s): **28**

Addition: **Helena Original Townsite** Year of Addition: **1869**

USGS Quad Name: **Helena** Year: **1998 (scanned)**

Geocode: **05-1888-31-2-27-09-0000**

Historic Use: Domestic/single family

Current Use: **Domestic/single family**

Construction Date: **1865** Estimated Actual

Original Location Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov

NAD 27 or NAD 83(preferred)

Zone: **12 T** Easting: **420491** Northing: **5159423**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date: **7/28/86**

Historic District: **Helena South Central Historic District**

NRHP Eligible: Yes No

Date of this document: **9/6/2016**

Form Prepared by: **Delia Hagen**

Address: **660 River Court, Missoula, MT 59801**

Daytime Phone: **(406) 360-0120**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: yes no

Criteria: A B C D

Date: **9/6/2016**

Evaluator: **Kate Hampton**

Comments: Identifying Montana's African American Heritage Places project

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Architectural Description

Property Name: James A. Mack House

Site Number: 24LC2432

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style: **Other:** If Other, specify:

Property Type: **Residential** Specific Property Type: **Single-family dwelling**

Architect: **unknown** Architectural Firm/City/State:

Builder/Contractor: **unknown** Company/City/State:

Source of Information:

The property commonly known as 314 Miller Street occupies a quasi-rectangular parcel on the northeast side of Miller Street which runs northwest-southeast. The house is located on the western portion of the block. The block is bound by S. Ewing Street to the northwest, Miller Street to the south, and S. Rodney Street to the southeast. It hugs the southeastern portion of the parcel, and is one of two buildings on the property. City sidewalks run along the south side of the parcel. Landscaping includes a gravel driveway which lines the west boundary, a large garden on the south portion of the property, mature trees and a grassy, open backyard.

The one-story, T-shaped, brick veneer, frame, residential building features one main bay with a gable-front roof and a shed kitchen extension at the northeast corner. Two rear additions combine under an intersecting gable roofline at the northwest corner of the building. A foundation is not visible beneath the original portions of the house, as the brick extends to grade, and possibly below. A wet-laid, uncoursed stone foundation supports the northwest addition(s). Three-tab asphalt shingles cover the roof slopes. With the exception of the garage which is clad in T1-11 plywood, all exteriors are clad in painted brick. Every window and door opening in the building has a wood frame and features a carved lunette, brick sill, and double-coursed arched brick lintel unless otherwise noted.

South (front) elevation

The façade of the building faces southeast to Miller Street. A raised, wood entrance deck accessed by four wood steps spans the façade of the main bay. The primary entrance is an ornate wood door located on the east side of the facade. The wood entrance door features a fixed light with stained glass detailing, a corbeled console and decorative carving, a bottom window rail, three central square panels, and a large rectangular panel which frames a foliated wreath. A transom light and lunette with carved detailing is located above the entrance. The main bay's west side displays a large window opening containing a pair of wood-framed windows covered by original four-light wood-framed storms.

The rear addition's south elevation contains an entry at its east side, accessed via four steps leading to a wood deck that spans the bay. The entry features an ornate wood door similar to that on the main bay, with a carved lunette and transom above. Wood fills the transom light. A tall narrow window opening appears to the west side of the elevation, filled with an original wood frame window sheltered by a four-light, wood-frame storm.

West (side) elevation

The building's west elevation features two distinct bays, the original, side-gabled expanse of the original house to the south, and the gable-end elevation of the addition(s) to the north. Three arched window openings appear evenly-spaced across the south bay, and include a large opening contains a pair of windows off-center to the north, flanked by single window openings. Two additional window openings are set halfway below grade within window wells, providing light to the basement level. Like the windows at the main story, they are arched openings containing wood-frame windows covered by four-light storms.

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The west elevation's north bay presents two evenly-spaced window openings at the main story, with the northernmost being slightly smaller and set higher than the one to the south. A small window opening punctuates the foundation wall at the basement level, off-center to the south.

North (rear) elevation

The building's north elevation contains three bays, the central, gable-end bay and the side-gabled west bay of the addition, and the shed extension set back to the east. The east, original, kitchen extension bay features a single one-over-one-light double hung window to the west. The central, gabled bay contains a single small arched window opening high in the gable end and another larger opening off-center to the west at the main level. A one-light-over-one-panel entry door, with transom above, fills an arched opening at the central and west bay intersection. A modern wood deck spans the central and west bays, and is accessed by six wood steps at its northwest corner.

East (side) elevation

The east elevation features three bays, each containing a single, tall, narrow flat-arched window opening. The window appears off center to the north within the south bay, off-center to the south in the central, shed kitchen extension bay, and centered in the north bay.

Garage

Clad in T-111, a modern (1980), wood-frame, front-gable garage occupies the northwest corner of the property, and faces south. Accessed by the gravel driveway to the west edge of the parcel, a large 12-panel, four-light garage door fills the south elevation. Both the north and west elevations are featureless, while the east elevation contains a pedestrian door to the south and a one-light, wood-framed window to the north.

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History of Property

Property Name: James A. Mack House

Site Number: 24LC2432

HISTORY OF PROPERTY

This property was first platted in 1869 as Lots 3 and 4 of Block 28 of the Helena Original Townsite. Soon after its platting it was in the possession of Edward Zimmerman, a local Jewish hotelier, who in November of 1869 was awarded title to the property by a probate judge. Lewis and Clark County tax records indicate that the extant house was built in 1865, and it may well date to that time: when the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company first mapped the neighborhood in 1884, the current house occupied the southern portion of the property, which was then known as 62 Wood Street.

In the ensuing years, as the town of Helena boomed, the city renumbered Wood Street, and the property that had been 62 Wood became 314 Wood. The brick house it contained was by then the home of James A. Mack, a prominent member of Helena's African-American community. Kentucky-born Mack, who'd lived in Helena since at least 1875 (when, at the age of 23, he married Emma D. Mays, 19), acquired 314 Wood in 1880 from Zimmerman. That year, Mack was likely living at 314 Wood when census takers enumerated the family, which by then consisted of James—who worked as a porter at the Cosmopolitan Hotel—and Emma and their four-year-old son Andrew. The Macks may have already begun what would become a tradition at their house, ie. renting rooms to lodgers in order to supplement the household income: although the census is not definitive, there may have been three white men in their early 20s living with the Mack family in 1880.

James Mack occupied 314 Miller through the late 1890s (the 1897 city directory still showed him living there), and during his tenure shared his home with a shifting array of people. In 1889, for instance, 314 Wood housed not only Mack (and likely wife and son) but also James Boyd, a carpenter, Nellie Boyd (presumably James' wife), and Henry Smith. Three years later found Miss May Folkerson at the home, which was by then commonly known as 314 Miller. In the mid-1890s, Lafayette L. Grisson lived there, possibly with his wife Kitty and daughter Hattie (born ca. 1890).¹ After short periods at other Helena addresses, Ohio-born Grisson, a barber, lived at 314 Miller again in 1899.² In the interim, members of Grisson's extended family may have remained on Miller Street: in 1897 and 1898 city directories listed Nancy Jackson, widow of Samuel, at 314 Miller. Several years later Jackson (born in Missouri ca. 1837) was living with Grisson, and Kitty and Hattie, at 213 Ewing and was identified as Grisson's mother-in-law.

Although James Mack remained at 314 Miller through the late 1890s, he actually conveyed title to the property to Nancy Jackson in 1893. By that time, James' wife name was listed as Jennie—he may have remarried sometime after 1880. Nancy Jackson held title until 1899, and the end of her ownership seems to have marked the end of the property's association with Helena's African-American community. Jackson and Grisson et al subsequently moved to Ewing Street, and by 1908 city directories listed Grisson at 19 Cutler. In 1911, both James Mack and Lafayette Grisson died, and Mack, at least, was buried in Helena at Forestvale Cemetery.

Late in 1899, Charles Gabisch (or Gabish) acquired the house at 314 Miller, and he and his wife Anna would own it for the next 30 years. During that time, they modified the property extensively. The house was expanded with the a new front/side porch, an addition to the NW corner addition, and rear porches, and two outbuildings—including a large 1.5 story "shed" (torn down in the 1950s)—were constructed. Charles and Anna conveyed the property in 1930 to Louis Guaglio, and the Gauglio family, too, would be long term owners. After Louis died, title passed to his heirs Natal Guaglio (of Helena), Mrs. L.M. Noel (of Helena), and Mrs. Roy Cargo (of Yakima, WA) in 1941, and they seem to have owned it for another 60 years. In 2001/2002, heirs of Natal Guaglio and the estate of Alma Noel deeded 314 Miller to U.S. Bank. It was thereafter bank-owned for about 4 years before being acquired in 2005 by Susan Bell and David Wyatt. Wyatt

¹ In 1888, Grisson, then 26, married 19 year-old Kittie Louise Brown, born in Kentucky of unknown parents, in Helena. For both the bride and the groom, the marriage certificate listed "color" as "orange." According to the 1900 census, Kittie was born in Missouri. Mother-in-law Nancy Jackson (63, MO)

² In 1896 city directories listed Grisson at 21 Division and in 1897 at 310 Cutler. Among the places Grisson worked as a barber in this period were 126 Broadway and 34 N. Main.

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History of Property

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conveyed it to the current owner and occupant, Allen Minkoff, in 2012. Judging from Sanborn maps, the house footprint hasn't been modified since before 1930. A detached garage was built on the property in 1982.

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Information Sources/Bibliography

Property Name: James A. Mack House

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INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ancestry.com, various military and death records

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Hagen, Delia. "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: African- American Heritage Places in Helena, MT," 2016.

Helena, City of, Town Plats

1869 Original Townsite

Lewis and Clark, County of. Clerk and Recorder's Office, property title records.

Lewis and Clark County, Clerk of Court Office, marriage records.

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R.L. Polk & Co. *Polk's Helena City Directory*. Helena, Mont.: R.L. Polk & Co.

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Statement of Significance

Property Name: James A. Mack House

Site Number: 24LC2432

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date: **7/28/86**

NRHP Eligibility: Yes No Individually Contributing to Historic District Noncontributing to Historic District

NRHP Criteria: A B C D

Area of Significance: **Ethnic Heritage & Social History** Period of Significance: **1880-1889**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Purchased, and possibly constructed, in 1880 by James Mack, a black man from Kentucky, the Mack-Jackson house is significant under NRHP Criterion A (local level) as a residential property associated with the history of African-American people in Helena, MT. Successively owned and occupied by two African-American families—that of James Mack and that of Nancy Jackson--during the heyday of the black community in Helena, the 314 Miller also housed other community members during the same period, including the locally prominent Lafayette Grisson. Grisson, a well-known barber who had a series of barbershops in town, was Jackson's son in law and occupied the property with his wife and daughter in the 1890s. The Mack-Jackson house is thus associated with the heyday of Helena's, and Montana's, African-American community, ca. 1875-1910. The property's period of significance is the period during which it was owned and occupied by African-American people, ie. 1880 through 1899.

The Mack-Jackson house represents these significant historic themes in a number of specific ways. Located adjacent to the southeast edge of downtown, it was one of multiple homes in that State Street neighborhood that housed a cluster of extended African-American families. Like many black families in Helena, the home's owners took in boarders to help make ends meet and provide lodging to the African-American community. And like other black families in the region, its residents migrated to Helena in the late 19th century from border-states, like Kentucky and Missouri. Lafayette Grisson's stint as a barber was also representative of the community, for that field was primary among African-American male occupations in Montana.

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Integrity

Property Name: James A. Mack House

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INTEGRITY (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association)

The John A. Mack house retains sufficient integrity to convey its associations with Helena's African American community and in particular the tenancy of John A. Mack and his family during the late 19th century. Standing it in its original location within a historic neighborhood, its integrity of location and setting are excellent. Alterations to the design since Mack's tenure, but within the period of significance for the South Central Historic District includes an addition to the NW corner addition. A mid-century porch was added across the south and west elevations, but has since been removed and replaced with modest decks. A modern garage also stands on the property. Despite these changes, the original, brick, gable-front portion of the building remains dominant and definable, and the property remains a single-family residence, enhancing the integrity of association and feeling. Its integrity of materials and workmanship, including original windows within arched openings and brick exterior, remain largely intact.

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Photographs

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Feature #
Facing: E-NE

Description: South and west elevations

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Photographs

Property Name: James A. Mack House

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Feature #
Facing: N-NW

Description: South and east elevations

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Photographs

Property Name: James A. Mack House

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Feature #
Facing: N

Description: South and east elevations

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Photographs

Property Name: James A. Mack House

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Feature #
Facing: S

Description: North and west elevations

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Property Name: James A. Mack House

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Feature #
Facing: SW

Description: North elevation

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Photographs

Property Name: James A. Mack House

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Feature #
Facing: NE

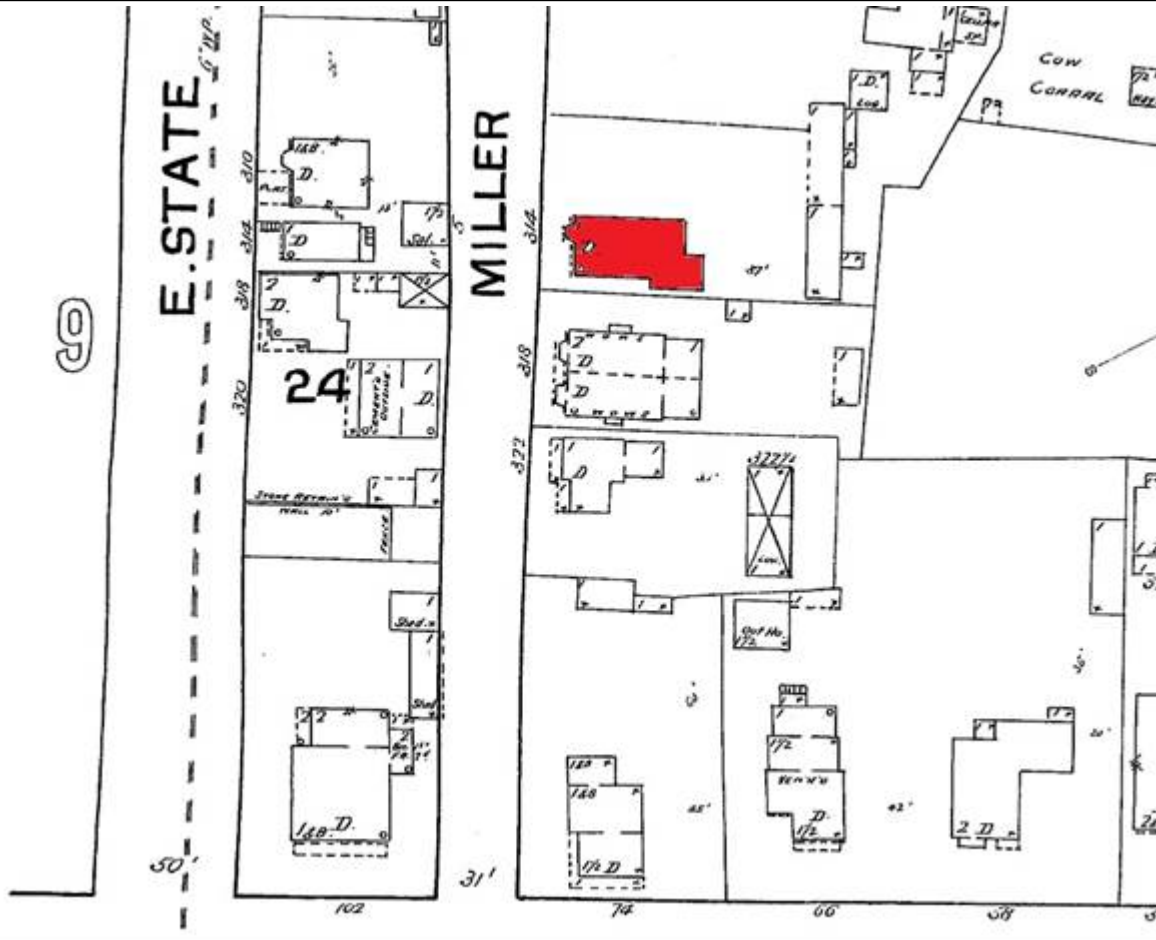
Description: 314 Miller Street, garage, view to NE

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Historic Maps

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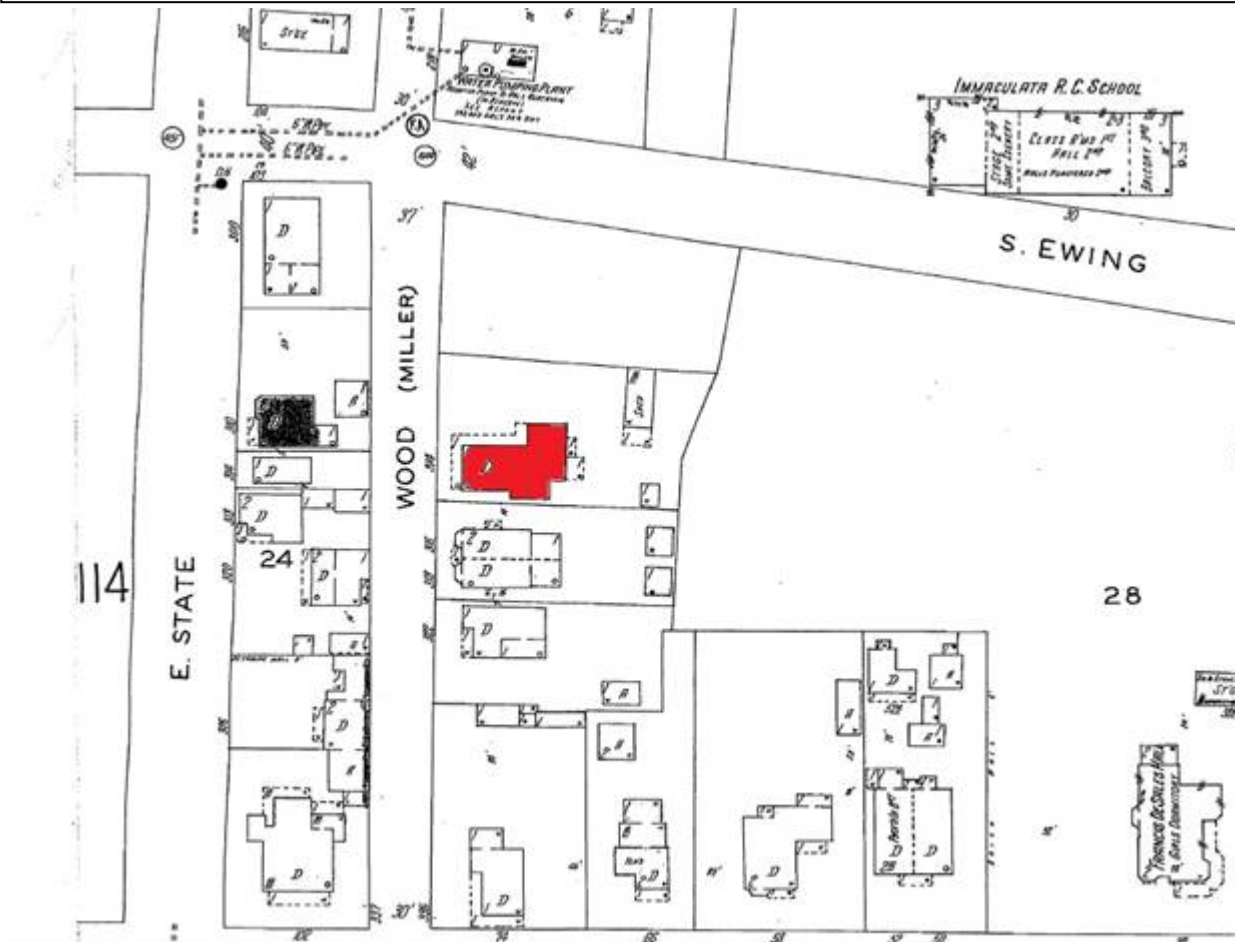
1890 Sanborn Map, Helena, MT, Sheet 10, 314 Miller highlighted

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Historic Maps

Property Name: James A. Mack House

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1930 Sanborn Map, Helena, Sheet 115, 314 Miller highlighted

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Site Map

Property Name: James A. Mack House

Site Number: 24LC2432

SITE MAP - MT HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD FORM



PROPERTY:

314 Miller St
Lewis and Clark County
Helena, Montana
GeoCode:
05-1888-31-2-27-09-0000
LAT 46.583661
LON -112.037780

LEGEND:



NAD_1983_StatePlane
Montana_FIPS_2500 meters
Scale: 1:400



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Proj Mgr: D. Hagen MKD 03_314MillerSt
Drawn by: SMA Date: 1/12/2018
Proj: 15-06-04 Aerial: 2013 ESR0

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MONTANA COUNTIES



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Topographic Map

Property Name: James A. Mack House

Site Number: 24LC2432



Map created using the Digital Atlas July 6, 2016
<http://msl.mt.gov/GIS/Atlas>

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