

HISTORIC RESOURCE NOMINATION

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Landmarks Commission

City of Madison Planning Division
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
PO Box 2985
Madison, WI 53701-2985
(608) 266-6552



1.) Identification of Historic Resource

Resource type (choose one): Landmark Historic District

Common Name

N/A

Historic Name

Benjamin and Amy Butts House

Current Use

Building: Single-family residence

Location of Historic Resource

Street Address

633 East Johnson Street

Parcel Number(s)

070913310078

Legal Description

Original Plat, Blk 120, SW ½ of Lot 6

2.) Form Prepared By

Name and Title

Elizabeth L. Miller, Historic Preservation Consultant

Organization Represented

Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

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As the preparer of this document, I am signing below to signify that I believe this document is complete and contains true and accurate information.



Elizabeth L. Miller

February 1, 2025

Signature

Printed Name

Date Submitted

3.) General Historical Data

Original Owner

Charles Hawks

Original Use

Single-family residence

Architect/Builder/Designer

Unknown

Architectural Style

Vernacular: Side-Gable

Date of Construction/Period of Significance

1857/1892-1907

Moved or Original Site?

Original site

Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, poor, deteriorated, ruins)

Good

4.) Describe Present and Original Character and Features

Introduction

The Benjamin and Amy Butts House is located at 633 East Johnson Street, between Blair and Blount streets just east of the Capitol Square. It is a two-story, frame Side Gable residence erected in 1857 for Charles Hawks.¹ A two-story, frame, hip-roofed wing was appended to the rear of the house ca. 1894.² The rear wing was expanded to the southwest between 1908 and 1942.³ This narrow addition is capped with a flat roof. The house rests on a coursed stone basement and is clad with aluminum siding, installed in 1978.⁴ Originally, the house was finished with clapboards, which remain in place beneath the aluminum siding. The roofs are surfaced with asphalt shingles.

The Butts House faces northwest. It overlooks East Johnson Street, a busy, one-way road that is a major east-bound thoroughfare through the isthmus. The neighborhood is predominantly composed of two- and three-story single- and multi-family houses and apartment buildings dating from the late-nineteenth to the late-twentieth centuries. The Butts House sits close to the sidewalk. A narrow, planted terrace separates the sidewalk from the street. A concrete driveway runs along the northeast side of the Butts House, accessing the back yard to the rear (southeast) of the house, which is paved for parking. The Butts House is constructed close to the southwest property line and another late nineteenth century residence stands just a few feet from it across the property line.

Exterior Description

The house possesses a rectangular footprint that measures 24 feet along the front façade and 36 feet along the side facades (figure 1). It is composed of the original section (24 feet by 20 feet) across the front (northwest) of the plan, the rear wing (18 feet by 16 feet) in the southeast corner of the plan, and the addition to the wing (6 feet by 16 feet). The rear wing and the wing addition are not visible from the front of the house.

The northwest (front) façade of the house is symmetrical about the central entrance. The entrance consists of a replacement door in a reduced opening. A replacement, one-over-one, vinyl-clad window in a reduced opening appears on either side of the front door. Two more are regularly-distributed at the second story. The reduced window and door openings date to 1978, while the present window and doors are believed to have been installed ca. 2015.⁵ A hip-roofed porch extends across the front façade. It has a coursed concrete block foundation and wood flooring. A flight of concrete steps rises to the porch. The narrow, square porch posts and the porch railing with slender flat balusters and simple rails appear to date to circa 2010. Although the house had a full-façade front porch by 1898,⁶ the only component that may be original is the porch's roof structure. The concrete block foundation likely dates to the mid-1990s.⁷

The southeast (rear) façade consists of the wing (east) and the wing addition (west). The wing exhibits an off-center door in a reduced opening. A one-over-one, vinyl-clad replacement window in a reduced opening can be seen at each of the first and second stories. A door into the wing addition has been boarded up. A hip-roofed

¹ City of Madison Tax Rolls, Dane County, Wisconsin, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, Wisconsin.

² City of Madison Tax Rolls; *Plat Book of Dane County, Wisconsin*, (Minneapolis: C.M. Foote & Co., 1890), 34; and *Map of Madison, Wisconsin*, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1898), 7.

³ *Map of Madison, Wisconsin*, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1908), 17; and *Map of Madison, Wisconsin*, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1942), 53.

⁴ Building permit, 22 November 1978, City of Madison Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development.

⁵ Kirsten Polman, Owner, to Elizabeth L. Miller, Personal Communication, 7 January 2025.

⁶ *Map of Madison, Wisconsin*, (1898).

⁷ Building permits for reconstructing and repairing porch, 3 November 1993 and 26 May 1995, City of Madison Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development.

porch shelters the two doors. It displays plain square wood posts, a balustrade of narrow wood balusters, and wood flooring. A flight of wood steps leads up to the porch at the west end of this façade. A small, square, concrete chimney with a concrete cap rises through the ridge of the wing. It replaced an earlier brick chimney in late 1986 or early 1987.⁸

The original section (north) and the rear wing (south) can be seen on the northeast façade. One, one-over-one, vinyl-clad replacement window in a reduced opening is centered at each story in both sections. The southwest façade is nearly identical to the northeast façade, except that the windows in the addition to the wing are set off-center.

Interior

The interior was not accessible. A kitchen, dining room, living room and bedroom occupy the first floor. Three bedrooms and a bathroom are located on the second floor.

Alterations

Exterior alterations that post-date the period when Benjamin and Amy Butts lived in the house, 1892-1907, include: erecting the addition to the wing (between 1908 and 1942); cladding the exterior with aluminum siding (1978); installing replacement windows and doors in reduced openings (ca. 2015 and 1978, respectively); and replacing the front and rear porch posts, balustrade, steps and flooring (ca. 2010). The placement of the addition to the wing on the rear of the house minimizes its impact on the integrity of the house. The remaining alterations are largely cosmetic and the appearance of the house during the period of significance (1892-1907) could be restored. Overall, the house retains good integrity, and is able to convey its historic associations. Benjamin and Amy Butts would certainly recognize it.

⁸ Building inspection reports, 13 October 1986 and 5 June 1987, City of Madison Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development.

5.) Describe Significance of Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria

Per MGO 41.07 or 41.10:

- (a) The landmark/district is associated with broad patterns of cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community.
- (b) The landmark/district is associated with the lives of important persons, and/or with important events in national, state, or local history.
- (c) The landmark/district encompasses an area of particular archaeological or anthropological significance.
- (d) The landmark/district embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for its representation of a period, style, or method of construction, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
- (e) The landmark/district is representative of the work of a master builder, designer, or architect.

Summary

The Butts House is eligible for Landmark status under criterion (a), in cultural and social history, representing the early era in the development of Madison's African-American community. This era extended from the arrival of the first recorded Black resident of Madison in 1839, and through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the beginning of World War II, at which point there were 365 Black residents in the city of Madison. After World War II, the African-American community entered an era of faster growth, during which the community developed its current form, with its broad variety of businesses, institutions, and organizations. In 2020, the federal census enumerated just over 17,000 Black residents in Madison, accounting for about seven percent of the city's total population. The period of significance of the Butts House under criterion (a) coincides with the time that Benjamin and Amy Butts lived in the residence, 1892-1907.

The Butts House is also eligible under criterion (b) for its association with the life of Benjamin Butts (ca 1852-1930), a man who was a leader in the early days of Madison's African-American community. From at least 1870 until his death in 1930, Butts lived and worked in Madison. He was the owner of a highly successful Black business, a barbershop that he operated in the basement of the First National Bank at 5 North Pinckney Street (not extant) from at least 1876 until 1900. While Butts lived in the house at 633 East Johnson Street, he boarded African-American students at the University of Wisconsin as well as other Black newcomers to Madison, and he was a founding member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (1902, later known as St. Paul's A.M.E. Church, located at 627 East Dayton Street, not extant, current building 4525 Diamon Drive) and of Capital City Lodge #2 of the Prince Hall Free and Accepted Masons (1906, likely met in the church or in the Douglass Beneficial Society at 649 East Dayton Street. The latter is extant and listed in the NRHP). His wife Amy (Roberts) Butts was also a charter member of the church and of the women's auxiliary of the Capital City Lodge #2. In addition, Benjamin and Amy Butts helped establish the city's first African-American neighborhood in the 600-block of East Dayton Street, moving a residence to 639 East Dayton Street (not extant, one block south of 633 East Johnson Street) in 1906, where they would reside from 1907 until their deaths in 1930. Finally, the Butts House is the only resource associated with a leader in the city's Black community who was active in Madison prior to the 1890s. The period of significance for the house under criterion (b) coincides with the time that Benjamin and Amy Butts lived in the house, 1892-1907.

Criterion (a): Representing Madison's African American Community

The Butts House is significant in the cultural and social history of Madison, representing the early days in the development of the city's African-American community, 1839-1941. The original plat for Madison was surveyed for James Duane Doty in 1836, and it was named the capital of Wisconsin Territory in 1838. That year, James Morrison had the American House Hotel (not extant) erected in the new capital to accommodate territorial

legislators and travelers. Morrison had settled in what would become Iowa County in 1827, first mining lead and later serving as clerk of probate court. His family had accompanied him to Wisconsin and included at least one enslaved person. In 1839, Morrison's family, including an African American woman servant, then a free woman, joined him in Madison. She was the first African American resident of the city and remained there in Morrison's employ until about 1845.⁹ Unfortunately, her name has been lost to history.

Madison incorporated as a village in 1846 with a population of 626, of whom six were African Americans. In 1848, Wisconsin became the 30th state and Madison was named the capital. The Wisconsin Constitution prohibited slavery, and gave African-American men the right to vote and to own property. Despite these constitutional guarantees, African Americans in Madison were not able to vote until after the Civil War, and were generally limited to low-paying labor and service occupations, such as barbers, porters, cooks, domestic servants, and street cleaners, well into the twentieth century.¹⁰

The first African-American families to settle in Madison were J. and Elizabeth Anderson, and William and Catherine Mitchell, who arrived in 1848. J. Anderson was a barber, and the Mitchells were employed as cooks at the American House Hotel. In 1850, George and Carrie Williams came to Madison, along with Mrs. Williams' brother, William Noland, and his family. The Williams operated a barbershop and hairdressing salon at 120 South Pinckney Street in the Opera House (not extant) for many years. Noland was also a barber by training, but established a series of other enterprises including producing a locally-known medical tonic, milling rye coffee, keeping a saloon, managing a grocery and a bakery, and serving as a podiatrist and as a veterinarian. Noland was perhaps best known as the conductor of a popular band. He was also the first African American appointed to a state office when Governor Coles Bashford appointed him notary public in 1857. However, the Secretary of State refused to carry out the appointment because Noland was African American. With the addition of these families, the number of African Americans in Madison in 1850 reached 11, out of a population of 1,525. These families were financially successful and bought property in Madison, despite rampant anti-Black sentiment in the village. The *Daily Argus and Democrat* reported a lynching attempt on September 18, 1852 and there may have been more during the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Both the Andersons and the Mitchells relocated to Janesville in 1860, where Anderson opened a barber shop and the Mitchells established a successful restaurant. The Williams and Nolands remained in Madison and are regarded as the first permanent African Americans in the village. The Nolands' son, William S. Noland, is the first known African-American student at the University of Wisconsin, graduating in 1875. The 1850s was a period of tremendous growth for Madison and the village was chartered as a city in 1856.¹¹

Although more African Americans settled in Madison after the Civil War, among them Benjamin Butts, they remained few in number for many years. The 1900 census counted 19,164 persons in the city of Madison. Of these, only 69 were Black, living in 19 households dispersed around the city. The census indicated that 25

⁹ She is listed as a free woman of color between the ages of 10 and 23 in the 1840 federal census. Barbara Robinson Shade, "The First blacks in Madison were only step above slavery," *Capital Times*, May 14, 1979, 20-21; *History of Iowa County, Wisconsin*, (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 473 and 839; and Ancestry.com, *1840 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Lehi, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010).

¹⁰ Shade; and Jennifer L. Lehrke, Rowan Davidson, Robert Short, and Jason Tish, "City of Madison, Wisconsin: Underrepresented Communities Historic Resource Survey Report," prepared for the City of Madison Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development, 2017-2020, 19.

¹¹ David Mollenhoff, *Madison: A History of the Formative Years*, 2nd ed., (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 67, notes that anti-Black sentiment was widespread in the village period, 1846-1856; Robert C. Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 549; Shade; National Register of Historic Places, East Dayton Street Historic District, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin, Reference #88000217, 8-1; Lehrke, Davidson, Short and Tish, 19; and Harvey D. Long, "African-Americans at the University of Wisconsin (1875-1969)," <https://www.library.wisc.edu/archives/exhibits/campus-history-projects/african-americans-at-the-university-of-wisconsin-1875-1969/>, (retrieved December 22, 2024).

African-American men and women were workers, although 10 of the 25 had been unemployed for at least part of the previous year. Those who were employed mostly reported low-skilled or low-paying service jobs such as cook, teamster, day laborer, and carpet cleaner. A small group of Black families was beginning to create the city's first Black neighborhood, concentrated near the intersection of East Dayton and North Blount streets. This was one block south of the Butts House, and the presence of Benjamin Butts could have been a contributing factor in the choice of this location. In 1894, John and Martha Turner and their six children came to Madison. By 1898, they had bought a small house at 118 North Blount Street (not extant), close to the intersection with East Dayton Street, where they also housed several boarders. John Turner, who had been born enslaved in Kentucky, worked as a day laborer in Madison and dedicated himself to improving the lives of African Americans in the city. Although unable to read himself, he established the Douglass Literary Society (named for Frederick Douglass) to provide a venue for African Americans to discuss literature and ideas, and promote education. This organization founded the Douglass Beneficial Society, a charitable association for local Black families. In 1901, Turner moved a small building to 649 East Dayton Street (extant, later the John W. Hill Grocery, East Dayton Street Historic District, NRHP 1988) for the organization, which he called Douglass Beneficial Hall. Turner also started a Sunday school, which evolved into the African Methodist Episcopal Church, formally established in 1902 and later called St. Paul's A.M.E. Church. The congregation numbered 17, and charter members included the Turners, their former boarder William Miller, and Benjamin and Amy Butts. The congregation purchased the old Norwegian Lutheran Church (not extant) and moved the frame building to 631 East Dayton Street. William Miller married Anna Mae Stewart in 1904 and the couple bought two small houses at 643 and 647 East Dayton Street (both demolished), one for their home and the second to rent out. The Millers quickly became prominent leaders of Madison's Black community, proponents of education and civil rights, and active in their church. Several other African-American families moved buildings into or bought residences in the neighborhood, including the Alan Shephard and Louis Henderson rental at 641 East Dayton Street (1904, not extant), the Russell Bates apartment building at 104-114 North Blair Street (1904, not extant), the Albert Weaver House at 637 East Dayton Street (1905, not extant, Weaver also opened a grocery), and Benjamin and Amy Butts at 639 East Dayton Street (1906, not extant). In 1908, the Millers moved a large residence to 647 East Dayton Street (1908, extant, NRHP 1979) to house boarders. Another important Black association established during this time was the Capital City Lodge #2 of the Prince Hall Free and Accepted Masons, in concert with a women's auxiliary. Formed in 1906, these organizations likely met in the church or Douglass Beneficial Hall. Benjamin and Amy Butts were founding members.¹²

By 1910, the south side of the 600-block of East Dayton Street had become Madison's first Black neighborhood with 20 families, and religious, literary, and charitable organizations as well as businesses. The little community welcomed African Americans to Madison, renting to Black university students and families at a time when most white property owners would not rent to African Americans. The neighborhood stabilized in the 1910s, not growing but remaining active into the 1960s. Beginning in the 1960s, the East Dayton Street neighborhood went into decline, as buildings in the area were razed for parking lots and storage yards, and new housing opportunities became available in the expanding African-American neighborhoods of Bram's Addition and Burr Oaks along South Park Street. Other suburban neighborhoods were ostensibly open to Black families as well as, following the adoption of the city's equal housing law in 1963, which prohibited race-based housing discrimination. The last institution in business in the East Dayton Street African-American community was John W. Hill's Grocery at 649 East Dayton Street, which closed following his death in 1983.¹³

¹² Lehrke, Davidson, Short and Tish, 20-25; National Register of Historic Places, 8-1 to 8-3; Barbara Robinson Shade, "Reconstruction offered tantalizing hint of freedom," *Capital Times*, 18 May 1979, 8; Barbara Robinson Shade, "Racial blocks didn't deter black businesses," *Capital Times*, 21 May 1979, 9-10; "Benny Butts' Wife Dies on Sunday," *Capital Times*, 7 January 1930, 1; "Madison's Booker T. Washington: John Turner of Blount Street Has a Mission to Perform," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 11 March 1902, 3.

¹³ Lehrke, Davidson, Short and Tish, 20-25; and National Register of Historic Places, 8-1 to 8-3.

During the 1920s, African Americans had begun settling in the Triangle section of the Greenbush neighborhood between Park and Regent streets and West Washington Avenue, and farther south along South Park Street, creating two small neighborhoods. Racism was rampant and the Ku Klux Klan was active in the city from 1922 until 1927. Discriminatory housing and employment policies and practices limited opportunities for African Americans in Madison, but the Black community continued to grow as people arrived, mostly from the southern United States, seeking a better life. In 1930, the African-American population of Madison stood at 348. By 1950, it had nearly doubled, reaching 648. Increasing employment opportunities attracted more Black families to Madison in the post-World War II era, despite continued prejudice and segregation. Local efforts to address these issues dated back to the 1870s but it was not until the post-World War II era that notable change occurred. The Madison chapter of the NAACP, which originated in 1920, was reorganized in 1943. NAACP officers such as Velma Hamilton as well as local leaders such as James Wright and Marshall Colston energized the local movement for civil rights. Some progress was made, particularly beginning in the early 1960s, with the adoption of the city's equal housing law and an equal opportunities ordinance in 1963. This reflected the achievements of the national civil rights movement and the passage of the federal Civil Rights Act in 1964. During the same period, federal housing legislation led to so-called urban renewal projects, which razed housing judged to be in poor condition. The buildings in the Triangle were razed as part of an urban renewal project in the early 1960s. Black residents and businesses in the Triangle relocated to the African-American neighborhoods in Bram's Addition and Burr Oaks, further south on South Park Street. These neighborhoods expanded and became the center of the Madison's Black community, as it remains today, with businesses, organizations and institutions such as the South Madison Neighborhood Center, the Urban League, the Black Business Hub, Mount Zion Baptist Church, and Fountain of Life Covenant Church. The African-American population of Madison was just over 17,000 persons in 2020, according to the federal census.¹⁴

Criterion (b): The Life of Benjamin Butts

Benjamin Butts (ca 1852-1930) was born into slavery in Petersburg, Virginia. In 1864, the Fifth Wisconsin Infantry occupied Petersburg. Benjamin, known as Bennie, was intrigued by the soldiers, and his skill handling horses provided him an excuse to stay in the encampment. At the end of the Civil War, Colonel Thomas Allen, a brigade commander in the Fifth Wisconsin Infantry, is said to have invited Butts to "return to Wisconsin with him and hold his (Allen's) horses."¹⁵ Butts is reported to have agreed enthusiastically, leaving Virginia without notifying his family or friends, and arriving in Madison in 1865. Some sources claim he took the name Butts from Lieutenant Colonel Cyrus M. Butt, after living with Butt's family for a time. However, the latter served in the 25th Wisconsin Regiment, and then the 48th Wisconsin Infantry, both of which served in the western United States, and Butt was not discharged until 1866. Further, Butt lived in Viroqua, in Vernon County, making this explanation of Benjamin Butts' last name unlikely. It is possible that Butts was the surname of the family that enslaved Butts' family in Virginia. Bennie Butts listed his father's name as Benjamin Butts on his marriage application record in 1888. The earliest accounts credit Allen with bringing Butts to Wisconsin and make no mention of Cyrus Butt. Butts is believed to have gone to Richland Center shortly after coming to Madison, accompanying several soldiers to their homes there, where they helped him find work as a waiter at the American House Hotel in Richland Center.¹⁶

¹⁴ Lehrke, Davidson, Short and Tish, 21-25; National Register of Historic Places, 8-2; Shade, "Reconstruction offered tantalizing hint of freedom"; and Barbara Robinson Shade, "Blacks had to work extra hard to succeed," *Capital Times*, 22 May 1979, 7.

¹⁵ Barbara Robinson Shade, "Blacks found jobs and friendship in Madison after war," *Capital Times*, 17 May 1979, 24, citing an account of Butts' life by "Velma Bell." This was likely Velma (Bell) Hamilton, and was perhaps written when she was a student at Beloit High School or Beloit College, between 1924 and 1930, so she may have interviewed Benjamin Butts personally.

¹⁶ Shade, "Blacks found jobs and friendship in Madison after war"; Carol Krogan, "Vernon County Historical Society Weekly Column," 5 July 2020, https://www.vernoncountyhistory.org/sherrybutthouse/notes/cyrus_mary.php, (retrieved December 23, 2024); "Old Resident Has Picturesque Life," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 24 December 1918,

By 1870, Butts was living in Madison, boarding with the Virginia Wonzer family, and working as a clerk at the J. Lenz auction company. Wonzer's sons, Frank, John and L.P., were all barbers, living in the same building as their shop on Main Street near the intersection of Hamilton and Carroll streets. Butts appears to have learned the barbering trade from the Wonzers, who were also African American. He worked for Mahlon B. Barker, a white man, in Barker's barbershop on the second floor of a building at 48 Pinckney Street (not extant, address changed), boarding with him at his residence at 86 Gorham Street (not extant, address changed) in the early 1870s. When Barker passed away in early 1874, Butts took over the shop. By 1876, Butts had opened his own shop in the basement of the First National Bank building at 5 North Pinckney Street (not extant), which he would operate until 1900. Butts' regular customers included many prominent politicians and lawyers, chief among them Robert M. "Fighting Bob" LaFollette, as well as governors Lucius Fairchild (1866-1872), Cadwallader Washburn (1872-1874), William Robert Taylor (1874-76), William E. Smith (1878-1882), Jeremiah Rusk (1882-89) and George W. Peck (1891-1895), some of whom he shaved daily. Butts also accompanied Governor Rusk on a trip to Washington, D.C., as his valet in the late 1880s. He also shaved President Grover Cleveland when the president visited Madison in 1887. Butts' association with these politicians brought other employment opportunities, which he undertook in addition to running his own shop. He worked as a washroom attendant in the Wisconsin State Capitol building in 1877 and was the only Black person on the staff at the time. As late as the 1890s, Butts also served as a doorman and cloakroom attendant at government functions in the Capitol, and as a butler at private parties for the wealthy who lived on Mansion Hill. In 1900, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (SHSW, extant) building at 816 State Street was completed, housing the library and collections of the SHSW as well as the library of the University of Wisconsin. Benjamin Butts was hired as doorman, messenger and janitor of the new facility. Butts closed his barbershop before taking up his new position. He continued working at the SHSW until his death in 1930.¹⁷

During the 1870s and early 1880s, Benjamin Butts boarded either with his employer or in a boarding house (not extant) on West Washington Avenue. From at least 1883 to at least 1888, he lived at 741 East Gorham Street (not extant). On March 18, 1888, Butts married Amy Roberts (1867-1930) in Baraboo. Roberts was born in Vernon, Forest County, Wisconsin and moved to Baraboo with her family after 1880. Her father, Aaron Roberts (1848-1923), was a farmer and Civil War veteran. Benjamin and Amy Butts briefly lived at 721 East Gorham Street (extant, altered) and then moved into the house at 633 East Johnson Street that is the subject of this nomination in 1892. The Butts family continued to rent the residence until 1907. That year, they moved into a house that they had bought and relocated to 639 East Dayton Street (not extant), a block south of 633 East Johnson Street. Benjamin and Amy Butts lived there until passing away in 1930. The couple had five children, three of whom lived to adulthood. Their son Leo V. Butts (1898-1956) was the first Black athlete on the University of Wisconsin varsity football team, playing in one game in 1918. In 1920, he became the first African

4; and Ancestry.com, *Wisconsin, U.S., Marriage Records, 1820-2004* [database on-line], (Lehi, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2022).

¹⁷ Shade, "Blacks found jobs and friendship in Madison after war"; Ancestry.com, *1870 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Lehi, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2008); *Madison City Directory and Business Advertiser for 1871-72*, (Madison, WI: Atwood & Culver, 1870); "Old Resident Has Picturesque Life"; "Successor-Mr. Bennie Butts," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 6 April 1874, 4; *Madison City Directory, 1877-78*, (Madison, WI: Pryor & Co., 1876); "The Alumni Reception," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 22 June 1882, 4; "Benjamin Butts Wisconsin Legislature Assembly Portrait," photograph, 1877, Wisconsin Historical Society #45152, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM45152>, (retrieved 20 December 2024); "Farewell to Madison," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 10 October 1887, 4; "Dedication of New Library," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 9 October 1900, 6; and "Benny Butts, Well Known Madison Negro, Succumbs at Age of 80," *Capital Times*, 7 March 1930, 1.

American to graduate from the University of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy. Leo Butts subsequently worked as a pharmacist in Gary, Indiana.¹⁸

Benjamin Butts was a leader in the early days of Madison's Black community. From at least 1870 until his death in 1930, Butts lived and worked in Madison. He was the owner of a highly successful Black business, a barbershop that he operated in the basement of the First National Bank at 5 North Pinckney Street from at least 1876 until 1900. His regular clientele included prominent and well-to-do white men, such as Robert "Fighting Bob" LaFollette. As an accomplished barber, Butts also trained a number of other local "tonsorial artists," Black and White, including Charles H. Warnke (in the 1870s) and Emelius Sorenson (in the 1890s; Sorenson was still cutting hair in 1966). While Butts lived in the house at 633 East Johnson Street, he boarded African-American students at the University of Wisconsin as well as other Black newcomers to Madison, and he was a founding member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (1902) and of Capital City Lodge #2 of the Prince Hall Free and Accepted Masons (1906). His wife Amy (Roberts) Butts was also a charter member of the church and of the women's auxiliary of the Capital City Lodge #2. When they moved a house to 639 East Dayton Street, they helped create Madison's first Black neighborhood, which has been recognized as the East Dayton Street Historic District (NRHP 1988). Benjamin and Amy Butts remained involved in efforts to improve the lives of African Americans in Madison until their deaths. For example, Benjamin Butts sat on a committee of local African-Americans that worked with a group at the University of Wisconsin to bring W.E.B. Dubois to Madison to speak in 1922. One of Benjamin Butts' last public acts was to make a contribution to the Community Union, a group of social welfare organizations that provided health and relief services to needy families in the city in the 1920s and 1930s, demonstrating his continued dedication to lifting others up. Finally, the Butts House is the only resource associated with a leader in the city's Black community who was active in Madison prior to the 1890s. Although the Williams and Noland families were also significant in the African-American community prior to the 1890s, no extant resources have been identified associated with them.¹⁹

The History of 633 East Main Street

The house at 633 East Johnson Street is the primary resource remaining associated with Benjamin Butts. The residence was built in 1857 for Charles Hawks, a tailor, who may have lived in the house in 1858. Jeremiah and Rosa Quinlan/Quinley owned the property from 1859-1864 and again from 1868 until 1880. From 1864 until

¹⁸ Ancestry.com, *Wisconsin, U.S., Marriage Records, 1820-2004* [database on-line]; Aaron Roberts, Obituary, *Baraboo News-Republic*, 4 December 1923, 5; Findagrave, Benjamin Butts, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86367946/benjamin-butts>, (retrieved 26 December 2024); Lehrke, Davidson, Short and Tish, 167; *Madison City Directory and Business Advertiser for 1871-72*; *Madison City Directory, 1875-76*, (Madison, WI: Pryor & Co., 1875); *Madison City Directory, 1877-78*; *Madison City Directory, 1880-81*, (Madison, WI: Morrisey & Bunn, 1880); *Madison City Directory, 1883*, (Madison, WI: W.F. Curtis & Co., 1883); *Madison City Directory, 1885*, (Madison, WI: W. Hogg & Co., 1885); *Madison City Directory, 1888-89*, (Madison, WI: Angell & Hastreiter, 1888); *Madison City Directory, 1880-91*, (Madison, WI: Angell & Hastreiter, 1890); *Madison City Directory, 1894-95*, (Madison, WI: Angell & Hastreiter, 1894); *Madison City Directory, 1898-99*, (Madison, WI: Angell & Hastreiter, 1898); *Madison City Directory, 1900-01*, (Madison, WI: Angell & Hastreiter, 1900); Shade, "Blacks found jobs and friendship in Madison after war"; Ancestry.com, *1870 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]; Ancestry.com, *1880 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Levi, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2008).

¹⁹ Ancestry.com, *Wisconsin, U.S., Marriage Records, 1820-2004* [database on-line]; Aaron Roberts, Obituary, *Baraboo News-Republic*, 4 December 1923, 5; Findagrave, Benjamin Butts, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86367946/benjamin-butts>, (retrieved 26 December 2024); "Whites, Negroes Pay Tribute As Benjamin Butts is Buried," *Capital Times*, 11 March 1930, 8; "Masonic Funeral for Benny Butts," *Capital Times*, 8 March 1930, 10; "C.H. Warnke, Secretary of Eagles, Dies," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 22 December 1927, 1; "'Happy' Sorenson, Barber 70 Years, Is Still on the Job," *Capital Times*, 21 March 1966, 29; "Negro Church Observes Anniversary June 12-14," *Capital Times*, 6 June 1921, 7 (Amy Butts a "stewardess," Benjamin Butts an usher); "Du Bois To Speak in Gym Here Tonight," *Capital Times*, 18 January 1922, 4; and "Benny Butts Contributes," *Capital Times*, 22 October 1930, 1.

1868, the house belonged to Charles Hawks, although it appears that the Quinlans/Quinleys resided there. Jeremiah Quinlan/Quinley was a mason. Gottlieb Dais, a laborer, owned the property from 1880 until 1891. Dais lived in the residence in 1880-81, but had moved across the street to 632 East Johnson Street (not extant) by 1883. Dais and his wife Barbara rented the house out for the rest of his tenure. In 1891, Mary (Dais) Mack, a dressmaker, acquired the house from her parents. Mack lived in her parents' house at 632 East Johnson Street until at least 1919, renting 633 out. From 1892 until 1907, Benjamin and Amy Butts resided in the house. A series of tenants followed: Milo Woodbury (night watchman, 1907) and his widowed mother, Myra; Frank Haven (barber, 1909) and his wife, Adelaide; Cornelius McCarthy (fireman, 1911) and his wife, Helen; Johanna Burg (widow, 1914-16) and her son, Ole Burg; and Ira Reed (fireman, 1917-1919). Charles E. Bartle (sometimes spelled Bartel), employed at International Harvester, and his wife Catherine, bought the house from Mary Mack in 1919 and lived in the house until Charles' death in 1964. Catherine remained in the house until selling to William E. Friske in 1967. Since 1967, 633 East Johnson Street has been a rental. Friske sold to David and Mary Gunderson in 1979. William Theis acquired the property from the Gundersons in 1985. John and Beverly Golfinos purchased the house from Theis in 1988, and sold to Stephan Krajcir in 1990. Benjamin Falk and Susan Engen acquired the property from Krajcir in 1995, selling to Webster Street Investments LLC in 1999. The house was transferred to MSB Holdings LLC in 2006. In 2007, John and Robert Karsten bought the property. The current owners, Matthew and Kirsten Polman, purchased the house from the Karstens in 2022.²⁰

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²⁰ Building Permit Records, City of Madison, Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development; City of Madison Tax Rolls; *Madison City Directory, 1858*, (Madison, WI: Bliss, 1858); *Madison City Directory, 1866*, (Madison, WI: Suckow, 1866); *Madison City Directory, 1873*, (Madison, WI: Brainerd, 1873); *Madison City Directory, 1875-76*; *Madison City Directory, 1877-78*; *Madison City Directory, 1880-81*; *Madison City Directory, 1883*; *Madison City Directory, 1885*; *Madison City Directory, 1886-87*, (Madison, WI: W. Hogg & Co., 1886); *Madison City Directory, 1888-89*; *Madison City Directory, 1880-91*; *Madison City Directory, 1894-95*; *Madison City Directory, 1898-99*; *Madison City Directory, 1900-01*; Charles Bartle, Obituary, *Wisconsin State Journal*, 7 October 1964, 12; *Madison City Directory, 1907*, (Madison, WI: G.R. Angell & Co., 1907); *Madison City Directory, 1909*, (Madison, WI: G.R. Angell & Co., 1909); *Madison City Directory, 1911*, (Madison, WI: G.R. Angell & Co., 1911); *Madison City Directory, 1914*, (Madison, WI: G.R. Angell & Co., 1914); *Madison City Directory, 1916*, (Madison, WI: G.R. Angell & Co., 1916); *Madison City Directory, 1917*, (Madison, WI: G.R. Angell & Co., 1917); *Madison City Directory, 1919*, (Milwaukee, WI: Wright Directory Co., 1919); *Wright's Madison City Directory, 1921*, (Milwaukee, WI: Wright Directory Co., 1921); *Wright's Madison City Directory, 1964*, (Milwaukee, WI: Wright Directory Co., 1964); *Wright's Madison City Directory, 1967*, (Milwaukee, WI: Wright Directory Co., 1967); *Wright's Madison City Directory, 1970*, (Milwaukee, WI: Wright Directory Co., 1970); *Wright's Madison City Directory, 1974*, (Milwaukee, WI: Wright Directory Co., 1974); *Wright's Madison City Directory, 1979*, (Milwaukee, WI: Wright Directory Co., 1979); *Wright's Madison City Directory, 1983*, (Milwaukee, WI: Wright Directory Co., 1983); *Polk's Madison City Directory, 1986*, (Rockford, IL: Polk Directory Co., 1986); *Polk's Madison City Directory, 1990*, (Rockford, IL: Polk Directory Co., 1990); *Polk's Madison City Directory, 1995*, (Rockford, IL: Polk Directory Co., 1995); and *Polk's Madison City Directory, 2000*, (Rockford, IL: Polk Directory Co., 2000).

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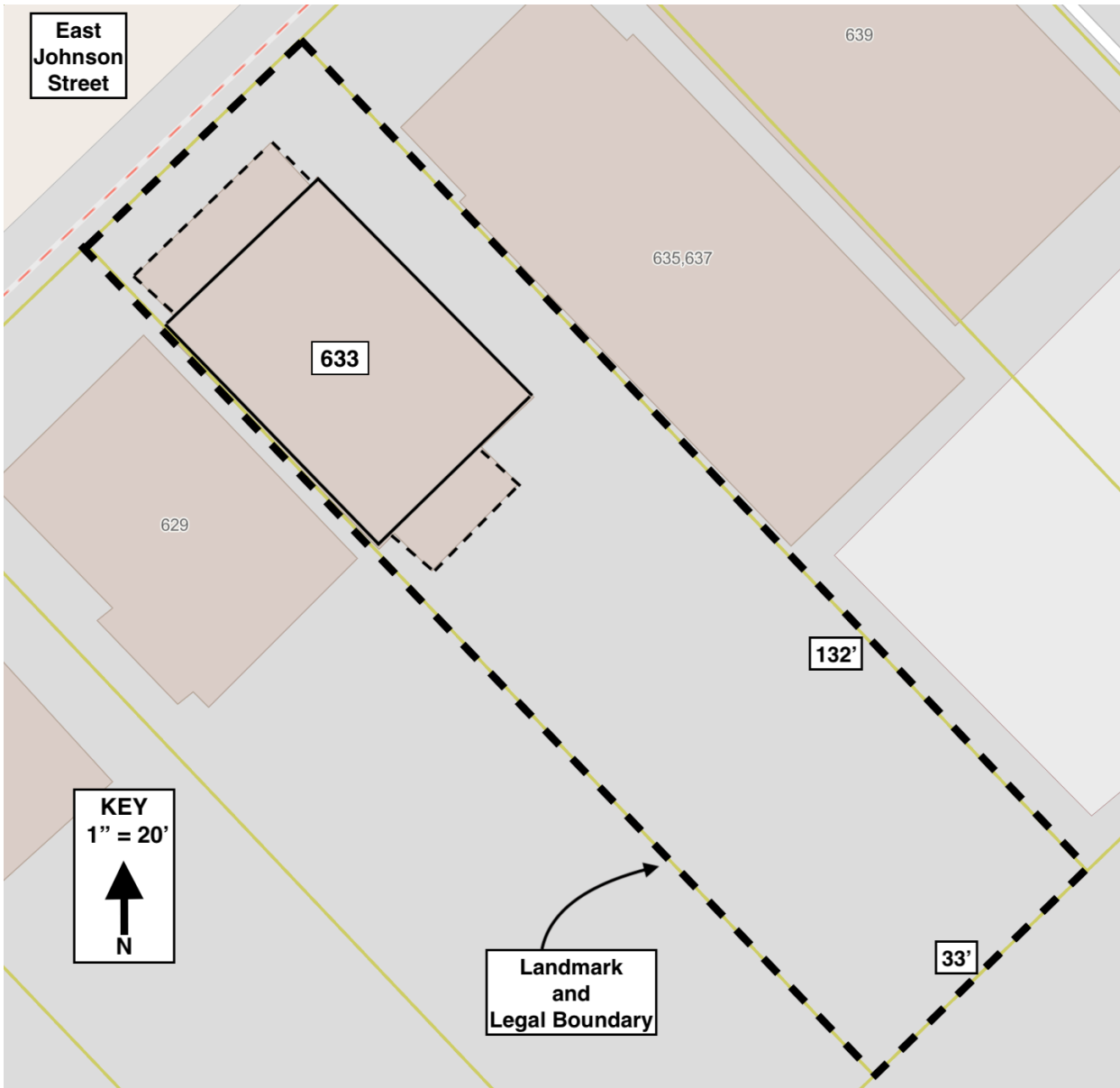
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7.) Additional Information

Landmark/Historic District Site Map

Map Showing Landmark Site Boundary and Legal Boundary, 633 East Johnson Street, S1/2 Lot 6, Blk 120, Original Plat of Madison.



Photographs

Photo 1

633 East Johnson Street, NW (front) and NE facades

Photographer: Elizabeth L. Miller

Date: December 20, 2024



Photo 2
633 East Johnson Street, SE (rear) and NE facades
Photographer: Elizabeth L. Miller
Date: December 20, 2024



Photo 3
633 East Johnson Street, SE (rear) and SW facades
Photographer: Elizabeth L. Miller
Date: December 20, 2024



Left: "Benjamin Butts Wisconsin Legislature Assembly Portrait," 1877, Wisconsin Historical Society #45152, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM45152>, (retrieved 20 December 2024).

Right: L.I. Robinson, "Portrait of Benjamin Butts," ca 1925, Wisconsin Historical Society #45156, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM45156>, (retrieved 20 December 2024).

