

Spokane Register of Historic Places

83 0875

Nomination Form

City/County Historic Landmarks Commission
Fourth Floor - City Hall
Spokane, Washington 99201-3333

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Ham-McEachern House

and/or common Oatman Residence

2. Location

street & number Southwest corner of Pine & Fifth Streets

city, town Latah _____ vicinity of _____

state Washington _____ county Spokane

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied (summers)	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Almeda McEachern Oatman

street & number 707 West 5th Avenue

city, town Spokane _____ vicinity of _____ state Washington

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Spokane County Courthouse

street & number W. 1116 Broadway

city, town Spokane _____ state Washington

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title	a)	National Register of Historic Places
	b)	State Register of Historic Places
	c)	Spokane County Cultural Resource Inventory
date	a)	2-8-78
	b)	8-26-77
	c)	1978
depository for survey records	a)	Wash. State Office of Archaeology & Historic Pres.
	b)	Wash. State Office of Archaeology & Historic Pres.
	c)	Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office
city, town	a)	Olympia
	b)	Olympia
	c)	Spokane

_____ federal _____ state ☒ county _____ local

state Washington

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

While there are older homes within the city limits of the small rural community of Latah, none can compare with the architectural skill and excellent condition of the Ham-McEachern House. The house exhibits the charm of Queen Anne styling popular in Eastern Washington prior to 1890, combined with the placidity of small town landscaping.

The Ham-McEachern house is located in the residential district in the northwest section of Latah. The house occupies four large lots, each 60 feet by 120 feet, on the corner of Pine Street (north-south) and 5th Street (east-west). The house faces Pine Street with its secondary facade on 5th. At the rear of the house is a vacant bushy area sloping down to Spruce Street. This area, before the turn of the century, was the site of the town jail. The former jail has been relocated to the Oatman property and is currently used as a shed. The two lots on Pine Street are landscaped.

The Ham-McEachern house is a two story, balloon frame house with shiplap siding ornamented by overlaid patterns on window surrounds and assorted scroll and spool details in gables and porches. A major feature of the house is the use of fancy butt shingles in a continuous band, connecting porch roofs at the second floor level. The building has an irregular floor plan and a complex roof plan. Irregularity is added by three bay windows, front porch, and additions at the rear of first and second floors. The building is predominantly cross-gabled and the juncture of the two gables is linked in front by a truncated hip roof covering the front porch. The entry porch is just north of the main gable facade; its roof forms a second floor open porch.

The several bay windows (one each on the north, south and east facades), have bellcast pediment roofs, shingled in a variegated pattern. The porch roof, upper gable face and main roof all have the same green shingles, contrasting with the white body and trim color. The bays protrude squarely from the face of the structure. The central window in the west bay contains a large light with upper and side lights; narrow flanking lights are of colored glass. Windows on the sides of the bays are narrow and double-hung; the balance of the windows are double-hung with a single light in each sash. The two-panel front door is a replacement for the original. Window ornament in the bays includes a saw-toothed relief pattern immediately below the decorative cornice. Drop pendants from the relief are circular and decorated with a five-pointed star, and bracket the window openings. Rectangular panels decorate the area below the window opening. Each rectangle has narrow plank siding layed diagonally; in the longer panels the diagonals reverse to create a chevron pattern. Eaves of the small bays are supported by pairs of scroll sawn brackets. Other cornices are boxed and decorated but are not supported by brackets.

Ornamental detail is enhanced by diminutive cresting above the bays. Cresting is of a fleur-de-lis pattern and finials are located on the corner and center of each row. In the principal gable face, scroll sawn bargeboards begin above the bays and move upward to the peak, being joined at the apex by a row of turned fixtures resembling a small balustrade. The uppermost triangular segment of the gable decoration is pierced by an inverted scalloped, arc.

The interior of the house is relatively unaltered and features a foyer opening onto the front parlor and dining room. The rear parlor (living room) is to the rear of the front parlor and opens into the kitchen through an archway. The dining room opens into the kitchen through a second archway. The stairs to the basement are located through a door in the south arc. On the north rear is the pantry and first floor bathroom. The upper floor has four bedrooms, three of which open on to the stair hall. The rear or west bedroom can be entered either from the north bedroom or the bath at the rear of the house. The bath is accessible only from the rear and south bedrooms.

SPOKANE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM

Continuation sheet Ham-McEachern House

Item number 7

Page 2

Rooms are finished in plaster with fir floors. The foyer is ornamented with California redwood stairs and windows. Wainscotting is also redwood. The decorative features of the doorway surrounds are terminated by square bordered rosettes. Changes are few. In the early 20th century, an exterior rear veranda on the southwest corner was converted to the bath and pantry off the kitchen on the first floor and the bath and large closet of the second floor. Kitchen alterations circa 1925 include a sink and linoleum.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1886

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The small towns of Eastern Washington were vital and active centers of commerce and social life. From the 1890's to the 1920's, many of these small towns have faded out of existence. Latah, about 20 miles southeast of Spokane, is an exception. The best remnant of Latah's vital years is the Ham-McEachern residence, a fine Queen Anne house in an excellent state of preservation. It was built in 1886 by D. T. Ham, co-founder of Latah's first store, who became one of the most influential political and business leaders in Washington just after the turn of the century. The next major owner of the property was William McEachern, Latah's first banker. The home has been closely related to Latah's and Spokane County's commercial and political history. Today the house is the outstanding residence of the community.

Latah is a small wheat farming town located on what was the old stage route from Spokane Falls to Colfax. The town developed after 1880, replacing the original post office community of Alpha. Founded on B. F. Coplen's homestead, interest in Latah was attracted in part by Coplen's discovery in 1878 of a substantial number of Columbia elephant bones (eventually reassembled and placed on display in the Chicago Museum of Natural History). The promotion of land sales began after this healthy burst of fame.

Coplen's homestead provided most of the original town lots. The Ham-McEachern house was located on the northwest edge of the original plat of the town of Latah. The town's spurt of growth had brought Edwin Ham and his son David T. Ham to the community in 1883. They built the first store (general merchandise) shortly thereafter. This humble beginning created one of the most influential fortunes in the area.

The firm first spread its commercial enterprise further into the Palouse Hills, a region of rich wheat land. Father and son prospered after the arrival of the railroad in 1887. It enabled them to compete in many other small communities such as Elberton (National Register - 1977) in Whitman County, 25 miles to the south. More importantly, the line also connected them directly to the Coeur d'Alene silver mines. Also by 1887, David Ham began to live part of each year in Spokane where he became a land developer. His interests extended to many of the earlier buildings including the original Rookery and Lindelle Buildings. He was also the developer of Fairmount, the most prominent cemetery in the city.

A major political figure in Eastern Washington, D. T. Ham grew from a handsome young man with a rather overwhelming walrus moustache to a distinguished figure marked by his grey King George V beard. He was reputed to run the Republican party in Spokane and Eastern Washington prior to World War I. Ham's political acumen gained victories for his party and its factions. In 1925, his skill was rewarded by his appointment as U. S. Marshall for Eastern Washington. President Harding's favor was repeated by Coolidge in 1929. During the 1930's he was also a County Commissioner of Spokane. Among his many other interests, he had time to assist in the founding of the Eastern Washington Historical Society; he was president of that organization in 1920-21.

SPOKANE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM

Continuation sheet Ham-McEachern House

Item number 8

Page 2

From his birth in Minnesota in 1857, through his family's journey west in covered wagons, to his last years as U. S. Marshall, David Ham led one of the most exciting lifetimes ever afforded a public figure in the area. Ham's death in 1937 terminated the career of one of the region's outstanding pioneers.

Ham owned the house from the time of its construction in 1886 until 1905. The next prominent owner of the home was William McEachern. McEachern founded the Bank of Latah in 1889, erecting the present building in 1906. His own personal fortune and that of the bank grew with the influx of European immigrants into Central and Eastern Washington after 1900. The railroad and improved roads had accelerated the growth of rich farm communities. These towns, and their merchants' wealth, grew proportionately with improved transportation until the Great Depression. McEachern's financial skill was demonstrated by the longevity of his firm in the midst of crisis; while many other independent banks in the area failed, McEachern's Bank of Latah closed only during the Bank Holiday of 1933. He personally continued operation of the bank until 1935.

McEachern played a key role in the community, taking part at various times in city government and church activities as well as developing local interest in orchards and gardening. His wife, Annie Tuck McEachern, was the planner of the extensive landscaping of the home, now somewhat reduced. Their daughter, Edna McEachern, was a musical prodigy who played a significant role in development of musical interest in Latah. With a doctorate in music from Columbia University, she returned to the community in summers and during her later years.

The home is presently owned by another daughter of the McEacherns -- Almeda McEachern Oatman. Mrs. Oatman is resident in the house during the summer months. Her present will bequeaths the home to the Southeast Spokane County Historical Society.

The home is a significant remnant of the symbols of success acquired by prosperous businessmen in rural Washington. Its reserved styling, rare in many residences built by equally affluent property owners elsewhere in the state, and its placement on spacious grounds, serve to demonstrate rural elegance in the late 1800's.

9. Major Bibliographical Reference

"Business Activity at Latah", Spokesman-Review, Feb. 13, 1898.
"Business Near Latah Good", Spokesman-Review, Aug. 21, 1897.
Dow. "The Town of Latah", Spokane Falls Review, Jan. 1, 1890
"David T. Ham Taken By Death", Spokesman-Review, July 19, 1937

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 2.5

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Ham-McEachern property consists of four adjacent lots, each 60 feet by 120 feet, on the southwest corner of Pine and Fifth Streets in Latah, Washington.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state _____ county _____

state _____ county _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Taken from material prepared for National Register nomination form by
Elizabeth Felenhauer and Patsy Garrett, 1977.

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____

12. Signature of Owner(s) Almeda McEachern Oatman

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: 9-8-83

Date Heard: 9-20-83

Commission Decision: Recommend Designation

Council/Board Action: Designation Approved

Date: OCT 4 1983

We hereby certify that this property has been listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places:

Mayor, City of Spokane ☒ or ☒ Chair, Spokane County Commissioners

Chair, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

City/County Historic Preservation Officer

