United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



240

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

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Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House Maricopa, Arizona Name of Property County and State 5. Classification **Ownership of Property Category of Property Number of Resources within Property** (Check as many boxes as apply.) (Check only one box.) (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.) Contributing Noncontributing building(s) private 1 buildings X public - Local district sites public - State site structures public - Federal structure objects object 1 **Total** Name of related multiple property listing Number of contributing resources previously (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing) listed in the National Register N/A 0 6. Function or Use **Historic Functions Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.) (Enter categories from instructions.) DOMESTIC / single dwelling WORK IN PROGRESS HEALTHCARE / medical business/office 7. Description **Architectural Classification Materials** (Enter categories from instructions.) (Enter categories from instructions.) LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY foundation: Concrete/Concrete Block AMERICAN MOVEMENT / bungalow/craftsman walls: Stucco Wood shingles roof: other: Wood windows

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House
Name of Property

A.1...

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Dr. Lucius Charles Alston House is a 1920s Late Craftsman Style bungalow located in the Washington Park Neighborhood, the once thriving hub of the black community in Mesa, Arizona, just north of the town center. The 1285-square-foot house sits on a concrete foundation with exterior walls of painted stucco, and a wood shingle roof on a lot that is less than an acre with a driveway that runs on the south side of the property. The Alston House is typical of the Craftsman Style, characterized by its high-pitched gables that are parallel to the front and sides of the house, and its large, deep front porch supported on stucco and concrete columns with an arch that extends the entire width of the porch. The Alston house is structurally sound after a complete restoration meeting Secretary of the Interior standards for rehabilitation. There have been no major changes to the original house plan, with the exception of a second story added more than 50 years ago. The setting of the Alston House in Washington Park has physically changed little in the last 50 years. Many families have left the community, but there are still 40-year residents maintaining a presence in the neighborhood. A new parking area has been added to the north of the house for use by the new office owners. This neighborhood is in transition, as the City of Mesa and several other community organizations have committed to the restoration of the Alston house and a future commitment to the upgrading of the community center across the street from the home.

Narrative Description

Description

The Alston House is an 1285-square-foot (first floor, 973 sf; second floor 312 sf) 1920s Vernacular Style with bungalow features. A later second-story addition was done sometime in the 1940s. It is centrally located in the Washington Park Neighborhood, the once thriving hub of the black community in Mesa, Arizona, just north of the town center. The house sits on a restored concrete foundation with exterior walls of wood frame with stucco that have been repaired and painted to match the original color and stucco texture. The original wood French casement windows have been replaced with new wood windows to match the originals. Old aluminum windows were removed and replaced with new wood windows. A small portion of one window was discovered and was used as a pattern for both design and color. The roof is a new wood shingle roof based on the original roof discovered under asphalt roofing removed during restoration. The home is located on a lot that is less than an acre with a driveway that runs on the south side of the property. A new parking lot to serve the new office use has been constructed on the adjacent property to the north. No changes were made to the original lot. The Alston House is characterized by its medium-pitched gables. The front is characterized by its large, deep front porch supported on columns with an faux arch that extends the entire length of the porch. The Alston house is structurally sound after its recent restoration. The original integrity of the Alston house has not remained intact but has been restored. There have been no major changes to the house since its original construction, with the exception of the second story that was added more than 50 years ago. Although most residents remember the second floor as always being there, it has not been accurately dated. The fixtures in the toilet, the framing, and connections to the original home indicate that it was constructed shortly after the

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

main floor of the home. The setting of the Alston House in Washington Park has physically changed little in the last 50 years. Slowly, Mesa is losing this neighborhood as many of its original residents have passed away and their families have moved on to different neighborhoods. Washington Park continues to hold on to a few remaining homes and families, pivotal for creating the lively and influential black community in Mesa. The City has committed to maintaining the character of this neighborhood by funding the complete restoration of this important piece of Mesa's history.

Site Features

The Alston House sits on less than an acre of land on Pima Street on rectangular Lot 29 of Block 106 in Mesa, Arizona. The house faces Pima Street and is located between University Drive and 5th Street east of Center Street. Currently, the house has no trees or landscaping. This would not have been the case when the Alston family lived in the home. They would have had trees and a nice yard with flowers. It was a very comfortable place to live. Local residents indicated that at one time there was a garage outbuilding and one medium-sized tree. The outbuilding was not replaced during the rehabilitation. It appears that the original gravel drive was converted to concrete sometime in the 1960s. The intention of the City is to landscape the site with features that match and blend into the surrounding neighborhood.

Architect/Builder

The architect and builder are unknown. However, it is speculated that George Strelen built the house in 1922 as it appears on the Sanborn Map in 1923. Any previous resident of the home is not known; however, Dr. Alston and his family are known to have been living in the home by 1929 according to information obtained from his daughter and several residents in the area whose parents used to go to Dr. Alston.

Vernacular Style with Bungalow Influences

The general floor plan for the home was simple and neat. Bungalows were generally one or one and one-half stories and had a kitchen, living room, dining room with built-ins, two bedrooms, one bathroom, and a porch. The front door often was a direct entry into the living room. The style often exhibited a compact interior complemented by a focus toward the outdoors embodied by the large porches. The movement emphasized "handmade" over the mass-produced and over-decorated Victorian style.

Exterior Features

The materials of construction are concrete foundation supporting the perimeter walls with a wood post-and-beam system supporting the raised wood floor. The exterior walls are painted stucco over wood lath siding and wire mesh. The roof is comprised of wood shingles over wood framing. There are several features that are unique to the structure. There is no fireplace in the Alston house, even though typical construction of a bungalow would include a fireplace. The use of circular clay tile vents at the front and side gables of the house to provide attic ventilation is typical of California Mission style. These have been maintained in the rehabilitation. Trim, style, and color all match the original materials.

Major exterior features of the home include a pitched gable and a large number of windows. The exterior walls were repaired where damage was apparent. The textures of the repairs match the existing. The home was repainted to match the most recent color. Window colors were used from historic colors discovered from and existing window. The eaves are box cornices made of stucco. The central medium-sized porch is constructed of raised, poured concrete. The unique aspect of the porch is a scored pattern created in it to make it look more like flagstone panels. The central entryway is made of a wooden frame and faces Pima Street. A missing front door has been replaced with one typical of the period. All nonconforming features were removed during the

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Maricopa, Arizona County and State

rehabilitation, including evaporative coolers and metal roof patches. The overhead power drop to the house was restored and maintained, as most of the homes in the neighborhood are served with overhead power. All windows were replaced with new wood windows replicating the original from the one partial remaining window.

Interior Features

The Alston House exhibits several unique interior features that include wood floors. The wood floors were termite-ridden and had to be removed. Once the floors were removed it was discovered the floor framing was too close to the earth below the floors. The subfloor was repaired, and a slurry concrete was poured around the wood framing that allowed the existing floor height to remain. A new wood floor was then installed. The kitchen maintains the original built-in cabinets and ironing board closet, which were refurbished and reinstalled. The built-in china cabinet in the dining room exhibits several drawers and wooden doors with divided lights, which also were repaired and reinstalled. A sample of the original paint color is visible on the closet wall of the first-floor bedroom, to the left of the entry door. The color was kept in place. In addition, the first-floor bedroom retains the original plaster diamond-embossed decoration (crown frieze) around the top of the wall. Its original color was brown and green. In addition, there are a few original brass light fixtures in the first-floor bedroom and dining room; all were refurbished and re-installed and are now in working condition. On the eastern wall of the bedroom there is a large diamond-embossed decoration that mirrors the border along the top of the wall; all were maintained and are visible. All of the interior plaster walls and ceilings were repaired and repainted.

The house exhibits just one cove ceiling, creating the illusion of a higher ceiling. In addition, it has a simple arched entryway into the dining room that echoes the arch of the front porch. One bath was rehabilitated into a handicapped-accessible restroom for office use. The original sink was refurbished and reinstalled. The small upstairs bath was maintained and all fixtures cleaned and left in place, but not usable. Access to the upstairs by the non-code-conforming stairway was maintained. The upstairs area will be available for viewing, but will not be used as office space due to non-code-compliant floor loading. Stairway and railing are original.

The first-floor interior spaces have been completely rehabilitated for use as office space. Minimal interior walls were removed. The first floor of the home is now ADA-accessible including a new accessible restroom. New doors, hardware and lighting were installed, as well as a new HVAC system providing heat and air conditioning. The existing walls and ceiling areas were all insulated. New electrical wiring was installed throughout. An original floor heating grate was refurbished and replaced. It is not operable.

Additions and Alterations

The Alston house has a large second-story addition that was originally a sleeping porch. The addition does not exhibit the same craftsmanship as the main house. It is easily distinguishable from the original house because of its awkward scale and design. It does have a traditional hip roof with a new wood shingle roof to match the main house. The surrounding earth was re-graded and sloped away from the foundation to provide better lot drainage. The concrete driveway that was added at a later date has been kept.

Threats

Damage from termites or the general deterioration of the uninhabited house is no longer a major threat, as the house has been completely rehabilitated. The greater threat to the Alston House comes from the potential redevelopment of this established neighborhood. Washington Park has been slow in keeping up with the trends. The homes of Washington Park are not recognized for their important vernacular style. Revitalization

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

of this former vital neighborhood could encourage further sensitive development, and restoration of the Alston House is a first important step toward revitalization. The home's continued use by community organizations will help to stabilize this area so that future generations are able to continue the preservation of Washington Park.

Integrity

Design, Workmanship, and Materials

The design and craftsmanship is typical of the vernacular style of the era. It was constructed with sturdy materials that could withstand the test of time. The designer of the home was familiar with the Bungalow Style but adapted it to the desert climate.

Location

The home remains in its original location on lots 29 & 30 of Block 106 on Pima Street.

Setting

The neighborhood setting of the Alston House has changed in the last several decades. The historically vibrant neighborhood has experienced the loss of its established residents due to relocation and death. The dirt streets have been paved but remain wide. Many of the homes on the street are from the same era as the Alston House so the street retains the feeling of the 1930s and 1940s.

Feeling

The Alston House still feels like a comfortable and inviting home. The home retains many of the unique builtin features incorporated during its original construction. The arched entryways are inviting and evoke a feeling of times past. All of these elements were maintained in the restoration of the property. Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Maricopa, Arizona

Name of Property County and State 8. Statement of Significance **Applicable National Register Criteria Areas of Significance** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property (Enter categories from instructions.) for National Register listing.) SOCIAL HISTORY / minority community Property is associated with events that have made a ETHNIC HERITAGE / black significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. **HEALTH / MEDICINE** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high **Period of Significance** artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack 1929-1958 individual distinction. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. **Significant Dates** 1922-1923 **Criteria Considerations** (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.) Significant Person Property is: (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.) Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. **Cultural Affiliation** removed from its original location. a birthplace or grave. D a cemetery. Architect/Builder a reconstructed building, object, or structure. a commemorative property.

Period of Significance (justification)

within the past 50 years.

The period of significance begins in 1929, the first year in which Dr. Alston is known to have resided at the property. The end year, 1958, coincides with Dr. Alston's death.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

less than 50 years old or achieving significance

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House
Name of Property

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Dr. Lucius Charles Alston House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A because of its association with the development of the black community in Mesa and black history after World War I. The Alston House is also nominated under Criterion B because of Dr. Alston's significance as an influential member of Mesa's black community. The Alston family home is located just north of the town center in the black neighborhood known as Washington Park. In his early days of practicing medicine in Mesa, Dr. Alston ran his practice out of this modest vernacular bungalow styled home. The context for Dr. Alston's life is impressive. In the early 20th century he earned a medical degree, which was unusual for a black man at this period in history. Dr. Alston served in the United States Army overseas during World War I. After the War, Dr. Alston and his family moved to the predominately white, Mormon city of Mesa. He was able to establish himself and positively impact the small but thriving black community in Mesa.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

History

History of Early Mesa

Mesa was settled by Mormon pioneers looking to create a master-planned city for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. These early pioneers arrived with a plan. They first settled below the mesa in what would later become known as Lehi. They quickly built homes, churches, and everything else they would need to live a simple and pious life. Eventually they moved to the top of the mesa. It was here that they built their wide roads, looking to the future development of their cities, and re-dug the irrigation canals left behind by Native Americans.

The Mormon farmers created Mesa in the image of Salt Lake City, with "generous lots, broad streets, public squares, groves, and gardens" (Luckingham, 127). They were able to bring water from the river to irrigate their land and crops. They quickly learned that it was possible to grow cotton and citrus here, as it was in the South. In all, their settlement encompassed one square mile, what is now called the Town Center.

However, Mormon settlers were not the only people interested in living in this area. Native American tribes had been living in the area for thousands of years. Mexicans moved to the area as early as the 1800s. Their language, culture, and food continue to greatly impact the area.

In addition to Mexican settlers, there were both Chinese and Japanese settlers in the Mesa and Lehi area. Many of the Chinese settlers worked on the new railroad line and in the local mines. The Japanese settlers farmed the land since the turn of the century.

S Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House Name of Property Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

Black History: Arizona

It is estimated that black people of African descent lived in Arizona for at least 500 years. They arrived as slaves with the Spanish settlers, and many, over time, intermarried with the indigenous people of the Americas.

After the 1860s and the Civil War, many freed slaves traveled to the West from Southern states in search of new land and opportunities. These adventurers were some of the first people to live in the territory. Between 1870 and 1900, the black soldiers and cowboys of the Southwest established themselves as an integral part of Arizona military and ranching history.

The Army had black servicemen living at Fort Huachuca and working for the military's Infantry and Cavalry. These black soldiers became known as Buffalo Soldiers, still commonly associated with Arizona and the Southwest.

During the summer of 1905, Alexander McPherson became the first black American to move to Mesa. McPherson was retired from the U.S. Cavalry and helped to build the Roosevelt Dam. As early as the 1880s, black people began to migrate to the Phoenix area. Many came to make the best of their new freedom. They moved west to escape the white supremacy they were facing in the antebellum South (Reich, 668). Dr. James Livingston, a veterinarian, moved to Mesa and began homesteading north of the town center on Pima Street.

The decades of the 1920s and 1930s brought many more black Americans and their families to Mesa. Many came to pick cotton in the fields. At the start of World War I, Mesa's small black community was greatly impacted by the economic bust. It slowly recovered in the 1920s (Luckingham, 128).

Development

Railroad

The completion of the Salt River Valley Railroad line, connecting Mesa and Tempe, encouraged growth in Mesa. It created the connection between Mesa and the greater railroad network (Luckingham, 127). Then in 1925, the railroad Main Line stopped in Mesa, causing the population and city to grow. The railroad enabled Mesa to become part of the greater Phoenix area. The style of homes being built in Mesa changed dramatically after the railroad lines arrived. Original homes in Mesa were modest, built with local materials, such as adobe. In a short time, wood and brick were used and people began replicating popular styles of the East Coast, including the Queen Anne and Victorian style homes (Luckingham, 128).

Working in Arizona

Many black Americans moved to Arizona after the Civil War in search of a new life and brought with them skills in farm labor. Many found manual labor jobs working in Mesa's cotton and citrus orchards. However, more and more skilled and professional workers were moving to Arizona to escape the racial violence and intolerance in the Southeast.

Daily Life in Washington Park

Racial tensions excluded Mesa's black citizens from mainstream life. They were forced to create their own social system and maintain close familial and relational ties.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

The residents of the black community known as Washington Park had their own churches, shops, and stores. In 1918 Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Mesa's first Baptist church, opened. The church was often the focal point of the black community.

Black men could not walk into a white barbershop and get a shave and haircut, so makeshift shops opened along roadsides to provide these services.

The children of Washington Park all knew each other. Students ran in large groups and created their own fun on warm summer evenings. Black children swam in the local canals that ran diagonally north of the neighborhood. They were not allowed to swim in the local swimming pool at Rendezvous Park.

Racial Tensions

Black Physicians in the United States

Many early black physicians, approximately two-thirds, lived in the South at the beginning of the 20th century. However, many moved away during the Great Migration (mass exodus of blacks from the South to areas that offered more promise and opportunity).

Black medical students had a difficult time finding a place in medical school. Most had to move out of the South to attend medical school, secure a position in a hospital, or find clientele that could afford to have medical attention (Reich, 670).

Many of the smaller black medical colleges were only open for a short time. For example, Dr. Alston attended The University of West Tennessee. Founded in 1900 by Dr. Miles Lynk, it was open to students from 1904 to 1923. Due to lack of funding and medical reforms, many of the smaller medical schools had to shut their doors. In the early twentieth century, all but two black medical schools in the South — Meharry Medical College and Howard University — were closed to students (Reich, 671).

Black physicians had a very difficult time finding internships at white hospitals. Even hospitals willing to hire black doctors were often unwilling to provide internships for recent medical school graduates. Teaching hospitals that served primarily black citizens were used to train white doctors since black patients were often seen as "expendable." Most black doctors did their internships at one of the three integrated hospitals: Cook County Hospital in Chicago or Harlem and Bellevue Hospitals in New York City (Reich, 671).

Many black physicians moved from the South after graduation from medical school. Often it was tough to pass the medical examination board due to racially biased examiners. If they did manage to pass the medical examinations, they often had a tough time finding a job and competed with white physicians for paying black patients. Due to lack of opportunities for black physicians in the South, "by 1930, 40 percent of the nation's 805 black physicians resided in areas outside the South, where 80 percent of the nation's almost 12 million African Americans still lived" (Reich, 671).

Dr. Lionel F. Swan was born in Trinidad and graduated from Howard University in 1939. He experienced employment restrictions and racial discrimination during his time practicing medicine and serving in the Army. Dr. Swan recalled, "At the time I was informed that the Army was not giving commissions to black

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

doctors." He also experienced discrimination in Alabama. "In Birmingham black doctors had no major hospitals where they could hospitalize their patients. If one had seriously ill patients, one had to get one of his white colleagues to put them in the hospital" (Swan, 173).

Segregation in Mesa

Arizona became a state on February 14, 1912, but it was a long time after that before all of its residents shared equal freedoms.

Mexicans and blacks experienced racial segregation in Mesa in "public places such as restaurants, hotels, motels, parks, theaters, swimming pools and dance halls" (*Our Town*, 58). However, the most significant act of segregation was the one that forced the black community north of the actual city of Mesa. In reality, Washington Park was not even in Mesa; it was outside of the town limits.

What is now called Washington Park was called "Northtown" by the black community. The area was named after the racially segregated Booker T. Washington School that once served the students in this community. The Escobedo neighborhood is what remains of the original Mexican neighborhood called Verde Vista.

The barriers to residential segregation began to fall following the 1948 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Shelley v. Kraemer*, which struck down restrictive covenants against selling residential property to blacks.

Racial Segregation of Mesa's Schools

In the beginning, Mesa "reacted a bit tolerantly at first towards the education of its Colored citizens" (Harris, 64). However, in 1909, the Territorial Legislature enacted, over the governor's veto, a bill granting local school districts the authority to establish separate school facilities for blacks. This authority was later written into the state's new constitution at the time of statehood in 1912. By 1920, Mesa schools were segregated. The old Irving School, built in 1936, was replaced by the Booker T. Washington Elementary School, built for black and Hispanic students. Mesa was unique in that it had integrated high schools.

The legal structure of segregation in Arizona began to crumble under pressure from lawsuits beginning in 1953, when segregation in the Phoenix Union High Schools was declared unconstitutional in the state courts. The Phoenix Elementary School District had instituted "voluntary" integration in 1952, which was successful enough that the number of schools with black students rose from three to 15 out of 24 by 1954. This was followed in early 1954 by Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Charles Benstein's decision that the state's segregation statutes were an unconstitutional delegation of authority to local school districts. Perhaps legal and social trends influenced the decision of Mesa's school district to desegregate its schools. The district announced its decision on May 12, 1954, just five days *before* the U.S. Supreme Court announced *its* decision in the landmark case Brown vs. the Board of Education.

Blacks in Phoenix

Black Phoenicians faced very similar struggles to black people living in Mesa. The major difference between the two is that the Phoenix black population was larger and more organized. However, the center of both of these communities was the local church.

Segregation was alive and well in the early part of the century. Jim Crowism segregated all "students of African ancestry from students of European descent" (Whitaker, 198). As a result, black Phoenicians

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

organized their own social, economic, and political lives. In addition, they also had their own newspapers to record the lives and the goings-on of the community. The *Arizona Gleam* was the first black newspaper, followed by the *Arizona Index*, the *Arizona Leader*, the *Arizona Tribune*, and the *Black Informant* (Whitaker, 200).

The job situation was just as difficult in Phoenix as it was in Mesa. Black women generally worked in the home or as domestic workers in white households. Black males worked in whatever manual jobs they could obtain such as janitors, waiters, chauffeurs, and field laborers.

In Phoenix, black residents were faced with racism and prejudice. However, unlike the South, they encountered little racial violence, and there was relatively little fear of the KKK or the Knights of the White Camellia.

Black Progress in Arizona

A Move for Change in Phoenix

The black people in Phoenix did not let themselves be subjugated by the white Phoenicians. They began to organize themselves for change in the black churches. The Depression brought many hardships for the black community, but it provided an opportunity for them to organize and create social self-help organizations. (Whitaker, 203). "In response to their exclusion from the white businesses, they continued to open and maintain their own businesses. In response to segregated schooling, they made the most of what was available to them while continuing to rage against systematic efforts to maintain black marginality. In response to being unwelcome at social events sponsored by whites, African Americans conducted their own celebrations, festivals, and carnivals [...]" (Whitaker, 203). Black Arizonians opened the Booker T. Washington Hospital, a hospital that served the black people in the community that were underserved by the white hospitals.

Black Associations

Black Phoenicians were well organized and had many Civic, Literary, and Mutual Aid associations including Colored Republican Club (CRC), Black Women's Republican Club (BWRC), Colored Odd Fellows, the Colored Knights of Pythias, Black Veterans of Foreign Wars, NAACP, National Urban League, and Phoenix Protective League (Mjagkij, 565). People socially connected in Mesa were in contact and affiliated with these groups.

A Change in Identity

Changes in How Black Americans Viewed Themselves

Eric Walrond wrote extensively during the Harlem Renaissance of the idea of "the New Negro." The table below shows the gains black Americans made in the 56 years following the Civil War.

Excerpt from a table, by Eric Walrond, page 135.

"Negros' Progress Since the Civil War"

	1866	1922	Gain in 56 Years
College and Normal	15	500	485

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

	1866	1922	Gain in 56 Years
Schools			
Students in public school	100,000	2,000,000	1,900,000
Teachers in all schools	600	44,000	43,400
Annual expenditures for education	\$700,000	\$28,000,000	\$27,300,000

"What is the outlook for the negro? [...] He is coming to realize the great possibilities within himself, and his tendency is to develop those possibilities. [...] The new negro who does not want to go back to Africa, is fondly cherishing an ideal — and that is, that the time will come when America will look upon the negro not as a savage with an inferior mentality, but as a civilized man. The American Negro of today believes intensely in America. At times, when the train is whirling him back to dearly loved ones 'below the line,' he is temped to be bitter and morose and, perhaps, iconoclastic. But he is hoping and dreaming. He is pinning everything on the hope, illusion or not, that America will some day find its soul, forget the negro's black skin, and recognize him as one of the nation's most loyal sons and defenders." (Walrond, 136).

History of Mesa's First Black Doctor

Lucius Charles Alston was born September 2, 1892, in Louisburg, North Carolina. He was the son of William H. Alston, born approximately 1870, of Halifax, South Carolina. William H. Alston was one of 11 children. William married a woman from North Carolina.

In 1900, the William Alston Family appears in the census in Goldmine, North Carolina. William H. was 31 years old and his wife was 29 years old. Lucius was one of two children, but the only one living in 1900. The 1900 U.S. census has an incorrect birth date listed for Lucius; he would have been 8, not 9, at the time of the census. Fifteen-year-old Edmond Alston, a cousin, also lived with the William Alston family in Goldmine, North Carolina.

In 1910, the Alston family appears again in the U.S. census from Goldmine, North Carolina. However, William H. Alston, 41 years old, is married to his second wife, Alice. She is 24 years old, only five years older than the 19-year-old Lucius. From the census, we know that both Lucius and his father worked on a farm.

In 1918, Lucius C. Alston graduated from the University of West Tennessee with a medical degree. At this time, it was very difficult for a black man to go to medical school, and this was a substantial accomplishment.

The University of West Tennessee, founded by Dr. Miles Lynk, was in operation from 1904-1923 and closed due to lack of adequate funding.

In World War I, Lucius Alston served as Private First Class in the Army's 802nd Pioneer Infantry, which was organized at Camp Sherman in Ohio (July 1918). In August of the same year, Alston and the entire black 802nd infantry were deployed overseas, most likely to France, serving as support staff. The unit served with

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

the First Army from September to November 1918; in July 1919, they returned to the United States and were demobilized at Camp Gordon in Georgia.

Dr. Alston married Velma Young, a nurse. Together they had one child. Oddly, the Alston family did not appear in the 1920 census. However, it is known they were in Colorado during 1920; Lucius Charles Alston Jr. was born July 14, 1920 in Colorado. The Alston family moved to Mesa, Arizona in 1929, and they appeared in the 1930 U.S. census.

Veora Johnson remembers Velma Alston as being "nice, prestigious," and Gladys Boston refers to her as being "very fair skinned" and not having to work in the cotton fields. There are very few personal references to Dr. Alston as a man; most people remember him only as a doctor.

In 1930, The Alston House was valued at \$1500. When compared to the other homes in the area, this house was one of the most expensive and one of the nicest homes in the Washington Park neighborhood.

The Alstons lived a quiet and comfortable life in Mesa, Arizona. They attended Calvary Church. Lucius Alston Jr. was a member of the local Boy Scout Troop 66 with his close friend Walter Venerable. The Alstons attended local performances at the school and church. In such a small neighborhood, everyone knew each other and socialized together.

Walter Venerable recalls swimming in the canal that ran along the north side of Washington Park with Lucius Alston Jr. because they were not allowed to swim in the pool at Rendezvous Park. The trees shaded the canal and people called it the beach.

Initially, upon moving to Mesa, Dr. Alston practiced medicine from his home on Pima Street. According to Veora Johnson's oral history, "his business was open to all people." He refused no patient and would take many alternative forms of payment. At first, he had his office in his home where he would see his patients. Many people from Mesa remember being seen by Dr. Alston in that front room.

In 1941, Dr. Alston had moved his practice to an office located at 9 S. McDonald Street. He is listed as a physician and a surgeon in the Telephone Directory of Phoenix and Vicinity October 1941 (page 79) and in the Mesa City Directory in 1948-1949 (Mesa City Directory, 2).

Then, by June of 1949, Dr. Alston's practice had moved to 18 E. 4th Street, according to the Directory Phoenix and Vicinity. Again in 1952, Dr. Alston's practice is listed as being located at 18 E. 4th Street (Mesa City Directory, 55).

Walter Venerable tells an interesting anecdote in his oral history. When he was young, he could lie in his bedroom, look out the door, and see the back door of Dr. Alston's practice. He would see white people line up to see the doctor in the middle of the night, because they knew he was the best doctor in town. They were too ashamed of what someone might think of them seeing a black doctor. Mr. Venerable also tells the story of a white coworker who said, "I have instructed my wife, if I ever come down with pneumonia, there's only one doctor in town that I want her to take me to." He was referring to Dr. Alston.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

The black community was very tight-knit. Angie Booker lived next door to the Alston family. In her oral history, she recalls that Dr. Alston "was a very nice neighbor, a very nice person." When she was 12, she had a bad case of pneumonia. Dr. Alston came to her home to treat her.

Being the only doctor in a very small community, the Alston Family was well known. However, they had a tendency to be quiet people who kept to themselves. Angie Booker recalls very little about them on a personal level, but she does remember they attended the Calvary Church like herself. Gladys Boston does not remember Dr. Alston being involved in any social organizations but does recall him standing outside of a church, looking in the door but not going inside.

In the poor black community, the Alston family lived a more comfortable life than most. They had a nice, well-kept house and many luxury items. Louetta Freeman remembers that Dr. Alston and her father were the first two in the community to own telephones. They would allow people to come to their houses to make phones calls. The Alston Family and Walter Venerable's family were the first in the neighborhood to own a radio.

In 1947, Velma Alston had a sister living in Mississippi. She was married to Dr. George, head of La Borian hospital in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. They visited Arizona in August 1947 on their way to Los Angeles for a medical convention.

Dr. Alston passed away in Los Angeles, California, on September 16, 1958. His funeral was held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, September 20, 1958, in Mesa, Arizona. Dr. Alston was survived by his wife Velma and son Lucius Jr.

Dr. Alston greatly impacted the black community in Mesa. Many of the people he treated still tell stories of the doctor. He delivered many babies, including Phillip Wayne Mandley, whom he later diagnosed with polio and admitted to the Crippled Children's Hospital in Phoenix. Ruby Goodson, who still lives in Mesa, suffers from chronic nosebleeds that are caused by a blood disorder. She recalls Dr. Alston treating them while he was alive. Dr. Alston treated Gladys Boston for a stomach condition that was exacerbated by eating salty, canned food. Although now recovered, Gladys still tells her son Bruce, "Dr. Alston always said don't eat anything from a can."

After Dr. Alston passed away, Velma continued to live in the house on Pima Street for several years. As a child, Cozetta Blake recalls visiting the Alston House to play Velma's piano. Dr. Alston had passed away and Velma lived alone. She would allow Cozetta to come play her upright piano that sat on the south side of the east wall in the living room. Cozetta went on to take piano lessons from Ms. Copper, another woman in the community, but she credits her lifelong love of music to Mrs. Alston and her piano.

Velma Alston moved to live with her son in Los Angeles, California. After her departure from Mesa, Ms. Veora Johnson managed the Alstons' property. Veora was a prominent member of the black community in Mesa and served as the principal of Irving Elementary. Velma Alston passed away in December 1979 in Los Angeles, California.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

Lucius Alston Jr. and Walter Venerable were childhood friends. He recalls Lucius Jr. was living in Los Angeles and working for the post office. He had one daughter but never married. Lucius Jr. passed away December 18, 1988, in Los Angeles, California.

A Future for Alston House

In 1959, a year after Lucius Charles Alston passed away, his property was divided between his wife Velma and his son Lucius Jr. Velma passed away in December 1979. After the death of Velma, Lucius Jr. inherited the two lots, 29 and 30, that have come to be known as the Alston House. He officially took ownership of the property on July 19, 1982. He passed away December 18, 1988. For the period of time between 1988 and 2001, it is not known who had control of the property. It is assumed that Vivian Clark, the daughter of Lucius Alston Jr., was maintaining it. Official documents show that in March 2001, Vivian Clark became the estate's "domiciliary foreign personal representative" (Proof of Authority 2001, page 2). On April 25, 2001, Vivian Clark transferred the Alston House deed including lots 29 and 30 of block 106, to East Valley Habitat for Humanity, Incorporated.

City of Mesa Acquires the Property

After receiving the home, East Valley Habitat for Humanity had intended to rehabilitate the house and use it as an office. However, East Valley Habitat for Humanity merged with Valley of the Sun Habitat for Humanity, thus negating the need for more office space.

As a result, the City of Mesa and Habitat for Humanity, Valley of the Sun, entered into a landmark deal to trade properties. On December 19, 2005, the Mesa City Council voted four to three in favor of trading properties with Habitat for Humanity. On April 25, 2007, six years after Vivian Clark donated the house to Habitat for Humanity, the City of Mesa and Habitat for Humanity traded pieces of land. The City of Mesa acquired lots 29 and 30 of Block 106 on Pima Street. This included the lot with the Alston House. Habitat for Humanity acquired Lot 69, Block 110 at Tuskegee Place and Lot 97 of Alma Estates Unit Two. All properties included in the land swap were located in Mesa, Arizona.

In 2007, the City of Mesa received a Heritage Fund Grant through the Arizona State Parks to restore the property. The home restoration was completed in March 2010.

Utilization of the Alston House

The Alston House will be utilized as an office headquarters for two local, Mesa-based, nonprofit organizations: the Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens (MAHC) and the Dr. Martin Luther King (MLK), Jr. Celebration Committee.

The goal of the nonprofit partnership is to "rehabilitate the Alston House so that it serves as a physical location for both nonprofits, enhances the surrounding community by returning the property to productive use and as a local neighborhood center, and expands the capacity of both organizations to meet their missions and serve the community" (Memorandum of Understanding). Both parties will be equally responsible for raising the funds needed for future maintenance while they develop their own programs and determine how their space will be used.

The Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens and Dr. Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Celebration Committee signed a lease agreement to utilize the Alston House for the nonprofit organizations for three years. Upon

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

completion of the three-year term they may renew the lease for additional one-year terms. The Alston House is approved for use as office space, a meeting center, and a neighborhood center.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House
Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

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Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
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Pre	evious documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:
	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been	X State Historic Preservation Office
	requested)	Other State agency
	previously listed in the National Register	Federal agency
	previously determined eligible by the National Register	Local government
	designated a National Historic Landmark	University

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr Name of Pro	. Lucius Charles,	House				Maricopa, Arizona County and State
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #			Other Name of repository:			
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name/title	Anne Mullins, I	Historic Preservation Offic	er / Ashle	y Blum,	Intern / Ron Pete	rs, Preservation Architect
organizatio	on City of Mesa	, Historic Preservation Off	ice		date June 21	, 2010
treet & nu	umber 55 N. Ce	enter			_ telephone _(4	80) 644-2181
city or town	n <u>Mesa</u>				state AZ	zip code 85201
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Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

22

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona County and State

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

City or Vicinity:

Mesa

County:

Maricopa

State: AZ

Photographer: Victor Linoff

Date Photographed: June 9, 2010

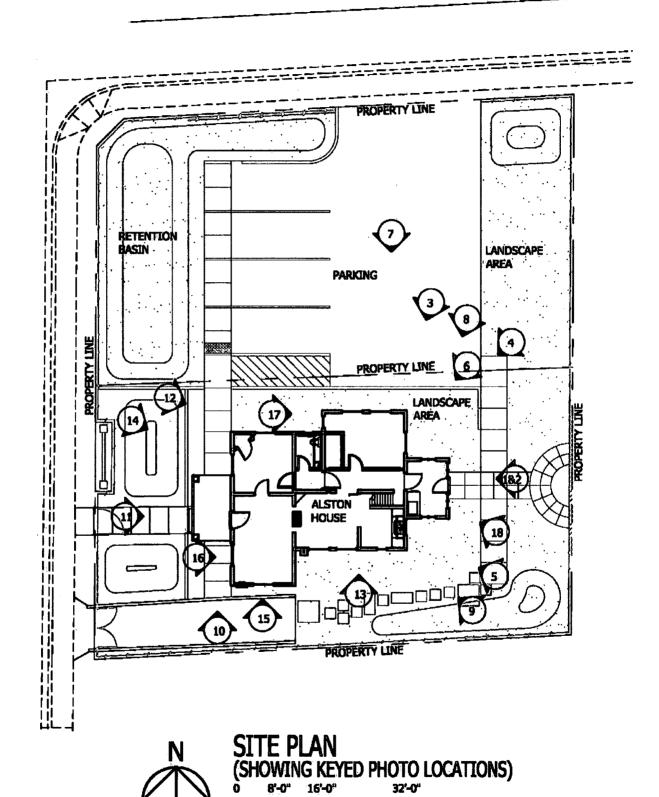
Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 18. East Side Elevation
- 2 of 18. East Side Elevation
- 3 of 18. NE Corner
- 4 of 18. NE Corner
- 5 of 18. SE Corner
- 6 of 18. North and West Corner View
- 7 of 18. North Side
- 8 of 18. NW Corner
- 9 of 18. SE Corner View
- 10 of 18. SW Corner View
- 11 of 18. West Elevation
- 12 of North Side Windows
- 13 of 18. South View of Windows Upper Level
- 14 of 18. West and East Corner View
- 15 of 18. Window Detail
- 16 of 18. Window Detail 2
- 17 of 18. Window Detail 3
- 18 of 18. East Elevation Showing Stucco Encased Vent

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State



SCALE: 1" = 16'-0"

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House

Name of Property

P OFFICE TOBLET ROOM COFFEE AREA OFFICE SECOND FLOOR ECEPTION / OFFICE AREA FIRST FLOOR- 973 SF SECOND FLOOR- 312 SF **EXISTING WALLS REMOVED FIRST FLOOR**

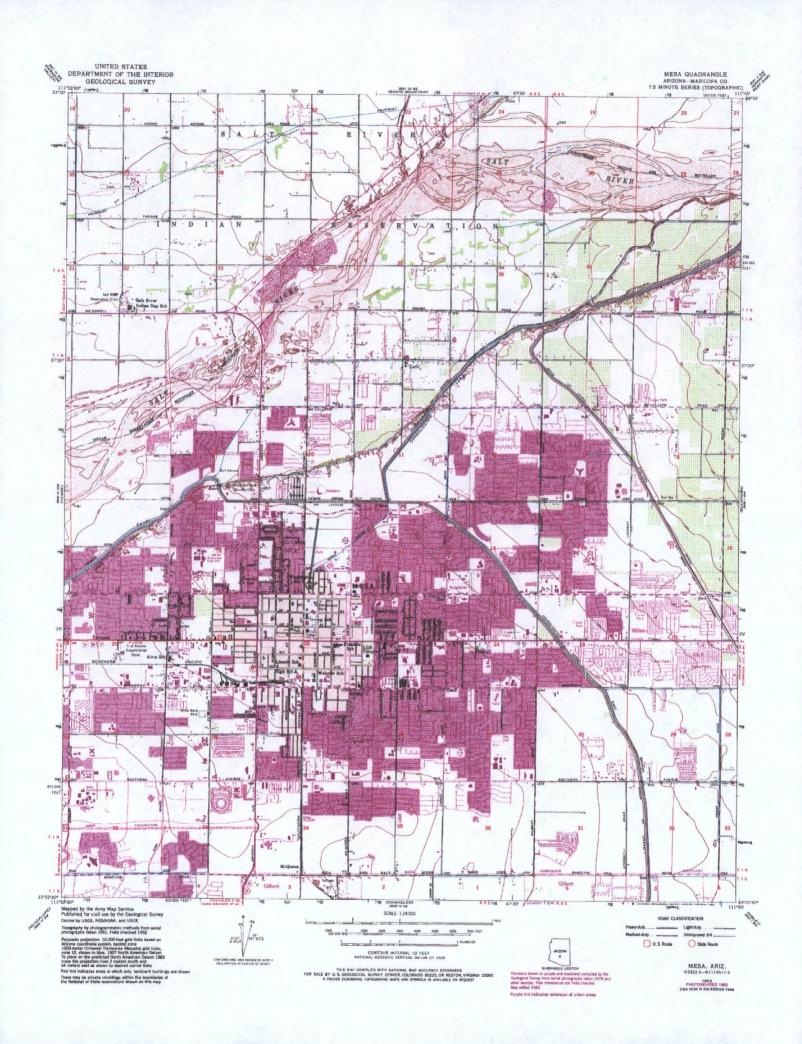


(Expires 5/31/2012)

Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House Name of Property	Maricopa, Arizona County and State
Property Owner:	
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)	
name City of Mesa	
street & number 55 N. Center Street	telephone (480) 644-2181
city or town Mesa	state AZ zip code 85201

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION
PROPERTY Alston, Dr. Lucius Charles, House NAME:
MULTIPLE NAME:
STATE & COUNTY: ARIZONA, Maricopa
DATE RECEIVED: 3/16/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/06/12 DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/23/12 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST: 5/02/12
REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000240
REASONS FOR REVIEW:
APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N
COMMENT WAIVER: N
ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 5.1.12 DATE
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS: Entered in The National Register of Historic Places
RECOM./CRITERIA
REVIEWERDISCIPLINE
TELEPHONEDATE
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N
If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the
nomination is returned to the hominating atthority, the

















Alston House Maricopa Co., Az



















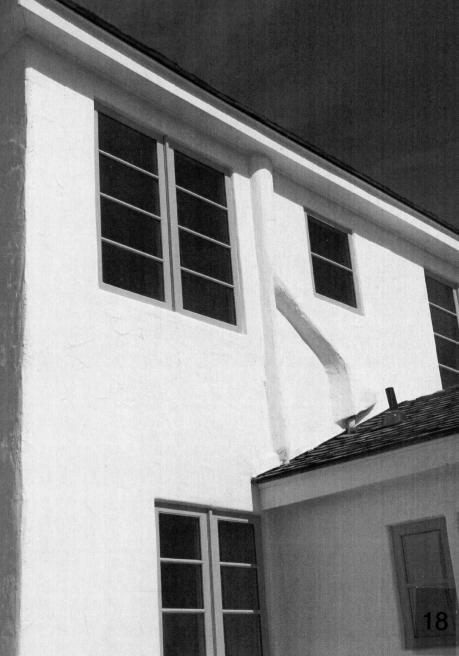


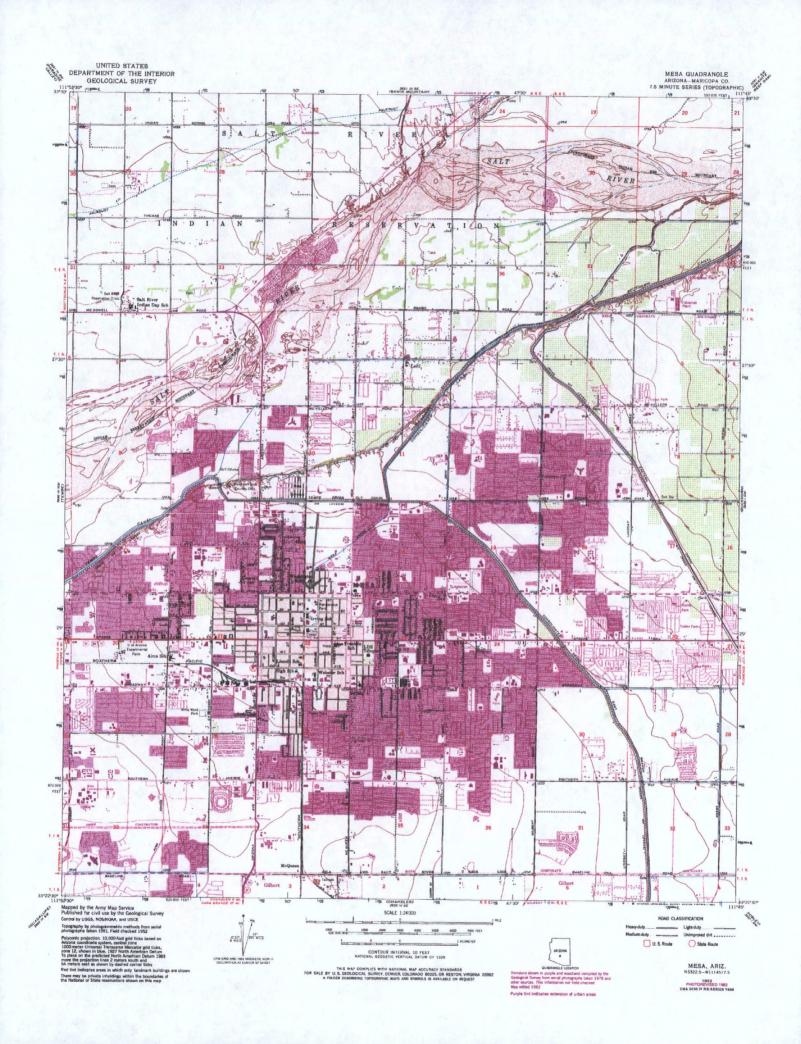
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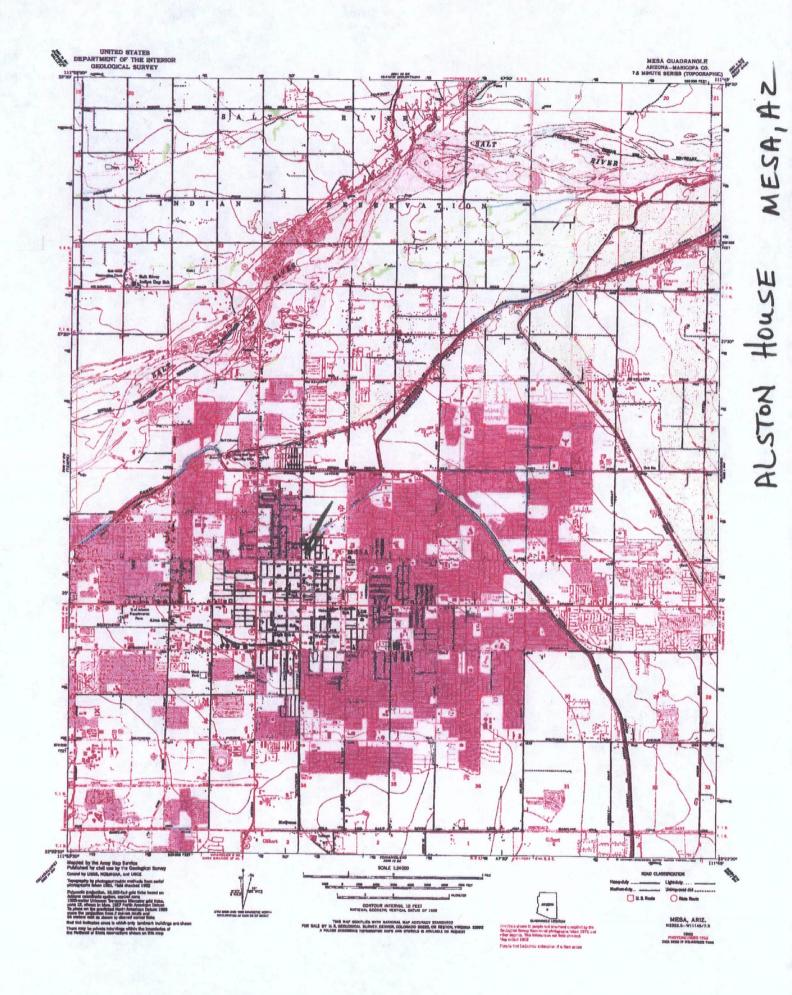


Alston House Maricopa Co., Az-Photo 16 & 18









Alston House Mancopa Co., Az

H. C.