Henry Kirklin Property

city of Columbia

Henry Kirklin Property

Property Information

107 Switler Street

Ward 1

Former 2 lot property

107 SWITZLER ST

Columbia, MO, 65203

$ 99,000 Bedrooms 3 Baths 1.0 Sq 1,036

Monthly Estimate*

$ 692

Get Pre-Approved →

4 Photos

Single Family Home for sale in Columbia, MO for $99,000 with 3 bedrooms and 1 full bath. This 1,036 square foot home was built in 1920 on a lot size of 0.17.

Listed for sale Jan 8, 2024

- Cute bungalow with lots of potential in Central Columbia. 3 bedroom/1bath with living, kitchen, and dining room. Very large lot. Home has been rented for many years and is ready for your imagination. Great first home buyer/sweat equity, investment, or flipper. Home does have historical significance as the home of a famed Columbian Henry Kirkland's Mother and designation on the African American Heritage Trail. Additionally, in 1991, thousands of Joseph Douglass photography negatives were discovered in a crawl space under this house. David Haberstitch, of the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American History, said in 2018 the collection is, ''undoubtedly one of the largest collections of a cumulative aggregation of community photography in the nation.‘’ House sells ''as is''.

- Christina and Martin Smith, Jamestown MO
- Purchased July 1, 2013 from Andrews Rentals, LLC.


PRIVATE
PROPERTY

Historical Information

Appreciation to Deb Sheals for her research and the following images.

Making Money on a Two-Acre Farm

By J. T. ROSA, JR. University of Missouri

PROBABLY the champion gardener of Missouri is Henry Kirklin, of Columbia. He has more medals, certificates, blue ribbons, etc., won at state and national exhibits, than any other gardener I know of. And, besides, he has been making a good living at the gardening business. One of the most interesting lay-outs for really intensive garden work is Kirklin's two-acre patch, situated only a few blocks from the heart of Columbia, a bustling little city of 12,000; and a most interesting talker on garden topics is Henry Kirklin.

A negro, now well along in years, he has a most interesting history. He delights in sitting in a sunny corner of his hotbed yard and telling the visitor about his garden work with pride born of long experience. His place is indeed a stimulus to anyone who grows vegetables, and it is a demonstration of what can be done with a little piece of land. For many years, Kirklin was head gardener for the Horticultural Department of the University of Missouri, where he made a reputation for his skill in handling vegetables and fruits, and where he made many warm friends among faculty and students whom he assisted in their laboratory and garden work.

Kirklin believes that a grower operating on such a small piece of land as his must depend on specialties, and the most profitable specialties at that. One of his specialties is growing vegetable plants for sale to town gardeners. These plants are grown under 120 standard hotbed sash, located in a warm, sunny frame yard. So great is the demand for these plants, that Kirklin is able to fill only a part of the orders.

The plants are grown, as far as possible, from carefully selected home-saved seed. He grows the plants in small boxes so that the purchaser can carry them home without disturbing the roots and set them in his own garden whenever convenient. Empty cigar boxes are gathered up by hundreds for use in this way. Each box will hold from one dozen to 20 plants.

Only a few standard varieties of each kind of vegetable are grown, but some of these varieties represent years of careful selection. The plants are so handled in the frames that they come on, ready for use, at just the right season for setting in the garden. Kirklin says that nothing can beat the plant-growing business, when the space occupied, the cost, and the time required are taken into consideration. Of course, conditions must be made right, and hotbeds containing young vegetable plants require skillful handling. Some frames are used again to produce late plants, such as fall Cabbage and Celery. The others are planted the last of May with hills of melons and Cucumbers, which thrive luxuriantly in the fine rich hotbed soil. Along the northern edge of each row of frames a row of early Tomatoes is set, about six inches from the frame wall, and three feet apart. These plants are staked and mulched with manure, and often average a cash return of $1.50 or more the plant.

Another specialty of Kirklin's is early Strawberries. About three-fourths of an acre is in a plantation each year. One year, $2,100 worth of berries were sold from this area. Ideal conditions are maintained in the berry plantation. The first year, the plants are irrigated liberally, in order to produce a thick, wide row of husky plants. All weeds and grass are kept out by careful handwork, and each fall the rows are well mulched with clean straw, a part of which is removed in the early spring and is used later for mulching Tomatoes. Lack of labor is not a serious factor with Henry, for he is located in the heart of the negro quarter, and the colored folk are glad to work for him. Two old standbys have worked for Henry for years, and are well posted on his method of handling plants. Women and children are hired for berry picking, hand cultivating, etc., as needed.

A Glimpse Into the Kirklin Garden.

Another specialty is late or winter Celery, about one-fourth acre being grown each year. The plot used for this crop has been manured and fertilized to a high state of fertility, and splendid crops are grown on the same land year after year. Few gardeners in this part of the Corn belt grow good Celery on account of the hot, dry summers. The varieties are White Plume and Winter Queen. Seed is sown in April, in a large open bed which is shaded by a lattice frame about three feet above the ground. Practically all the plants are transplanted about June 15 to other shaded beds.

About the middle of July, the stocky, well grown plants are set in the open, in trenches several inches deep. These trenches, four feet apart, are prepared by spading in a liberal quantity of well-rotted manure. Thus m
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easy. Water is supplied
the Celery plants durin
growing season. In fac
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This is Henry, himself.

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garden area, and since the
elevation is twenty to thi
cient pressure is obtained
Every crop, even bush fruits, are irrigated as necessary, through the season at practically no cost.

One of Henry's exhibits is a collection of medals and awards won in many fairs as well as at the Jamestown Exposition in 1907, and at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904.

Among the home gardeners of Columbia, Henry is looked upon as an oracle, for he has had such success himself, and is capable and willing to tell others of his methods, many people go to him for suggestions and advice. His place is visited each year by the vegetable gardening classes in the university, and an interesting hour is spent in studying his operations, some of which, in their painstaking care, smack of the old world gardener.

Kirklin has been offered positions in other states time and again, but he has always preferred to stick to his little intensive truck patch.

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HENRY KIRKLIN, GARDENER

"Black Ground Jes' Natu'ly Seems to Like Black Folks"

By W. L. Nelson

YES, I'm a negro, as all you folks see; but when Henry has got berries or vegetables to sell don't nobody mind 'bout the color of his hands, which is fast black. I wish I could get this fact rivveted in yo' minds—that it's what you do that counts. Who raises the strawberries, tomatoes or other good eatin's don't make no difference to the ladies and gentlemans who wants the best. Listen to me: there ain't any race question mixed up with the soil. Black ground jes' natu'ly seems to like black folks. Look here at these things; they done growed for me. The same sort o' stuff is jes' itchin' for a chance to grow for you if only you'll git out an' dig."

From the same pulpit where Sundays and nights for from six to eight weeks each fall the local negro pastor exhorted his hearers to save their souls, Henry Kirklin, a negro gardener of Columbia, Missouri, who had been sent out by the State Board of Agriculture to do farmers' institute work among the people of his own race, was preaching the gospel of the soil. While in his homely and often witty way he told of what he had done, he called attention to the big glass jars filled with premium products from his own place. The collection included the finest of celery, tomatoes weighing more than two pounds each, asparagus such as we had never before seen, strawberries of which fourteen filled a quart measure, and "other things too numerous to mention," as they say on the country sale bills.

Though the meeting was one for negroes, it had been announced that white friends would be welcome. A score or so went; some through curiosity, no doubt. When "question time" came a number of these, impressed with the fact that the humble lecturer was no novice, but one from whom they might profitably gain knowledge, were not too proud to seek information.

"How did I keep the cutworms from bitin' off my tomato plants las' spring when it was cold an' damp? Well, weren't no trouble at all. I rolled a little piece o' paper round each plant when I set it out. With this paper reachin' about one inch in the groun' an some more above, Mr. Cutworm couldn't bother. He ain't lookin' for no newspaper, and not generally for people that reads and keeps up with what the agricultural men is doing."

Mole Pastures

So went the meeting, one of the best parts of which was the "after meetin'," which with many questions and answers was continued long past the announced closing hour.

The next time we saw Henry was the following spring, when we took the long walk out to his place to get plants, which we, profiting by a past disappointment, had taken the precaution to engage in midwinter immediately after he returned from his institute work. We found him busy as the proverbial cranberry merchant. Not less than a dozen customers were waiting for plants. Each man took his turn. When our time came he turned to his book, in which his son-in-law had "done writ down the order," and taking note of what we were to have, soon put the potted plants in our possession. So well did they grow in our gardenette, a plat of ground so small that it is hardly worthy to be called a garden, that on June thirtieth we had tomatoes, and from that time on throughout the entire season the yield of more-than-a-pound Ponderosas exceeded our needs.

Lima Beans to Left, Cowpeas in Center, Corn to Right

So thoroughly established is the quality of Kirklin plants that he is never able, after keeping what he needs for his own use, to meet the demand. Each season he sells several thousand tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, sweet potato, pepper and celery plants. Several hundred selected tomato plants are individually potted and usually sell at sixty cents a dozen. Others are placed in cigar boxes and sell at 40 cents for fifteen.

Run-of-the-bed plants bring thirty cents a dozen. They are grown under glass and are carefully hardened off in the usual way. "No, sah; you don't need to shade Henry's plants from the sun; jes let' her bile." Noticing that the area under each frame was subdivided into spaces about two feet square, we asked why. The reply was: "Them's my mole pastures. S'pose Mr. Mole get in one and begin plowin' round, I'll kill him right there 'stead of havin' to dig up the whole bed."

Ingenuity and originality mark Henry's work. From a spring-fed pond on the most elevated part of his place he pipes water over the three and a half acres devoted to truck growing. Gravity gives him a pressure of thirty pounds to the inch. Pipes are so placed that with hose he can reach every plant. In a dry time the soil is always stirred after the plants are watered, so that no crust ever forms. This is one of Henry's unwritten rules. His fa'mette mixture is a little moisture and a dust mulch, while his main reliance is a responsive soil and never-ending cultivation. Every year he uses from sixty to seventy tons of well-rotted manure, and in addition some commercial fertilizer.

One thing this negro farmer has demonstrated: He has made it plain that it is possible to secure a living and more

Strawberries in Early Spring—Notice Straw Mulch

from a very little piece of land. Of course the market and the man must both be there. In one year from two-thirds of an acre he has sold 4017 quarts of strawberries for $675. This was his best year, but four years show total returns of $1600. Last year 2000 bunches of celery brought him $170. Some other sales were 2550 bunches of radishes at five cents a bunch; 3116 heads of lettuce at five cents a head; more than 800 cantaloupes at ten cents each, and several thousand ears of sweet corn at eight and one-third cents a dozen. He also has a record of having in one year sold $400 worth of tomatoes from 400 plants. One rule to which he adheres is that no second-rate stuff is to be sold. "Henry Kirklin, Gardener"—the sign in front of his little home—must stand for quality. Fruits or vegetables not up to his standard are fed to the chickens, pigs, horses or cow. Customers know that it is safe to place telephone orders with Uncle Henry, for he will send out nothing that isn't good. His business has been built on honesty and honor. This is why his two horse-drawn delivery wagons are always busy.

So much for what Henry Kirklin has done; but who is he, and how did he learn what he knows? Let's see. When thirteen years of age he went to work for a farmer and nurseryman near Columbia. He worked the first year for 30 cents a day, the next year he received 40 cents a day, the next 50 cents, and so on until the sixth year, when he was getting 82½ cents a day. At the end of the sixth year he left his first location and secured employment with the horticultural department of the University of Missouri. Here he remained for eleven years, during

"The Same Sort o' Stuff is Jes' Itchin' for a Chance to Grow for You if Only You'll Git Out an' Dig"

which time he proved a most valuable man and incidentally learned much that has since been of great value to him. Sometimes he facetiously declares that he is the only negro who ever taught in the University of Missouri—and he was pretty near a teacher, even if his name was not in the faculty directory. So thoroughly had he, in his work in the nursery, mastered the art of grafting, pruning and other horticultural work, that he took to his state duties as readily as a duck takes to water. So efficient was he that he was able to give practical instruction in almost everything that has to do *with ordinary orchard management.*

Strawberry Houses

In 1883 Henry, who has always been possessed of more initiative than are most of the men of his race, decided to strike out on his own hook. He did this by buying half an acre of ground on the outskirts of Columbia, paying for the purchase out of money that he and his wife had saved. With three sash and some rough lumber he made his first hotbed. As he had no horse, for three years he used a wheelbarrow in peddling vegetables over Columbia. A strap passed over his shoulders served to lighten his load. Later he made a push cart, making it of waste lumber and two buggy wheels.

By the year 1900 his business and his family had both grown until he felt the need of more land. From a big landowner, who knew him and who had confidence in him, he bought for $300 three acres of land adjoining his original holdings, giving his note in payment. The next year was "the dry year" in Missouri, and despite the fact that he worked far into the night carrying water in buckets, to save his strawberries and other crops, he made nothing. But he persevered. After he had marketed his berry crop of 1902 he proudly walked into the bank of which the man who held his note was president. He carried an old-fashioned shot bag full of money. When the money was counted it was found that there was enough to pay note and interest, with a balance of $80 "to the good."

Now, a dozen years later, he is comfortably fixed, his holdings, all clear of debt, being valued at between $10,000 and $15,000. To each of his four married daughters he has given a comfortable home in which to live, but, being cautious, he continues to "hold the papers," as he expresses it. Three of these houses he speaks of as his strawberry houses, as they were paid for out of strawberry money. His son-in-law work with him, and in time the active management may be given over to them. Just now, however, Uncle Henry is planning not to retire, but to enlarge his plant to keep up with his growing business. His plans include what will be practically a glass and concrete winter plant, with steam heat.

Many prize vegetables have come from the Kirklin acres. At the Jamestown Exposition in 1907 Uncle Henry was awarded the gold medal prize and diploma for the best exhibit of vegetables grown by a negro. He has also won premiums at other fairs and expositions.

While denied the privilege of much book learning Henry Kirklin is yet an educated man. The school in which he was educated gives no diplomas, but its course is thorough and the work exacting. And in Uncle Henry's work, at least, colleges are ready to accept it with full credit. As proof of this, two leading educational institutions for colored people have recently offered him the position of teacher of agriculture. Both positions he declined. He prefers to be Henry Kirklin, Gardener.

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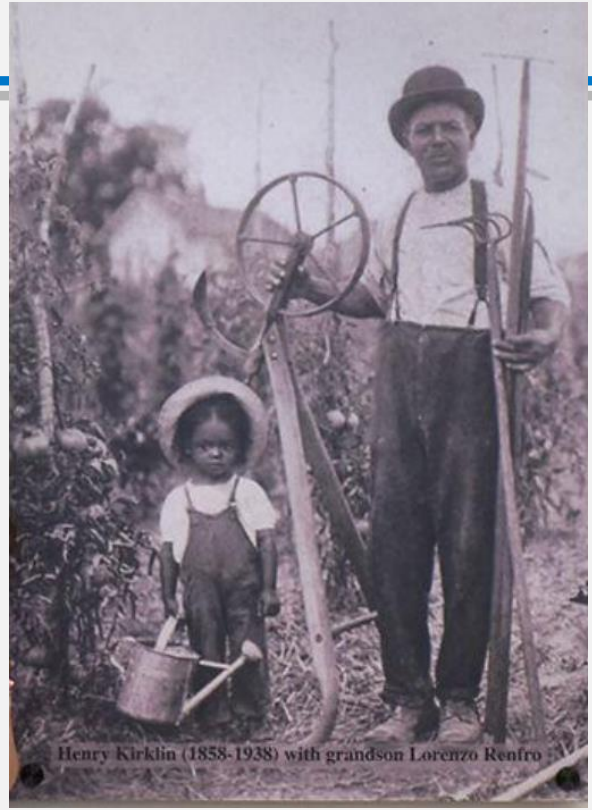
GOES TO PHILADELPHIA

Henry Kirklin Will Tell Convention of Negro Citizens of His Methods.

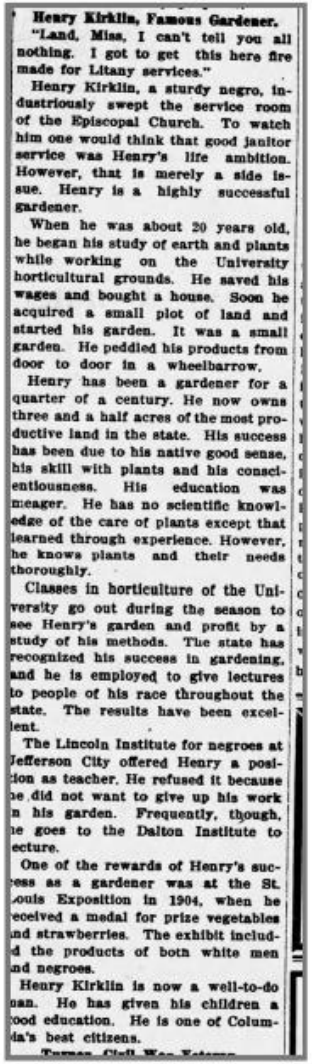
Henry Kirklin, colored, the well known truck gardener, departs today for Philadelphia where he goes as a delegate to the meeting of the National Colored Men's Business League, an annual gathering of negro citizens of the United States who conduct businesses of their own. He has been appointed a delegate from this part of Missouri to the last three or four conventions, but on account of business has not been able to attend. This year he received a letter from Booker T. Washington asking him to attend the convention and tell those present of his methods in gardening, his treatment of the soil and other things of interest relating to his business. Negroes from the West and Middle West who will attend the convention will meet at Jacksonville, Fla., and proceed to Philadelphia in a body.

- 1913: Invited by Booker T. Washington to present his methods at National Colored Men's Business League conference.



Henry Kirklin (1858-1938) with grandson Lorenzo Renfro

1915 article



Henry Kirklin, Famous Gardener.

"Land, Miss, I can't tell you all nothing. I got to get this here fire made for Litany services."

Henry Kirklin, a sturdy negro, industriously swept the service room of the Episcopal Church. To watch him one would think that good janitor service was Henry's life ambition. However, that is merely a side issue. Henry is a highly successful gardener.

When he was about 20 years old, he began his study of earth and plants while working on the University horticultural grounds. He saved his wages and bought a house. Soon he acquired a small plot of land and started his garden. It was a small garden. He peddled his products from door to door in a wheelbarrow.

Henry has been a gardener for a quarter of a century. He now owns three and a half acres of the most productive land in the state. His success has been due to his native good sense, his skill with plants and his conscientiousness. His education was meager. He has no scientific knowledge of the care of plants except that learned through experience. However, he knows plants and their needs thoroughly.

Classes in horticulture of the University go out during the season to see Henry's garden and profit by a study of his methods. The state has recognized his success in gardening, and he is employed to give lectures to people of his race throughout the state. The results have been excellent.

The Lincoln Institute for negroes at Jefferson City offered Henry a position as teacher. He refused it because he did not want to give up his work in his garden. Frequently, though, he goes to the Dalton Institute to lecture.

One of the rewards of Henry's success as a gardener was at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, when he received a medal for prize vegetables and strawberries. The exhibit included the products of both white men and negroes.

Henry Kirklin is now a well-to-do man. He has given his children a good education. He is one of Columbia's best citizens.

Turner, Civil War Estamp

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THE
PLANT
MAN

Mizzou Botanic Garden hosts campus community garden space

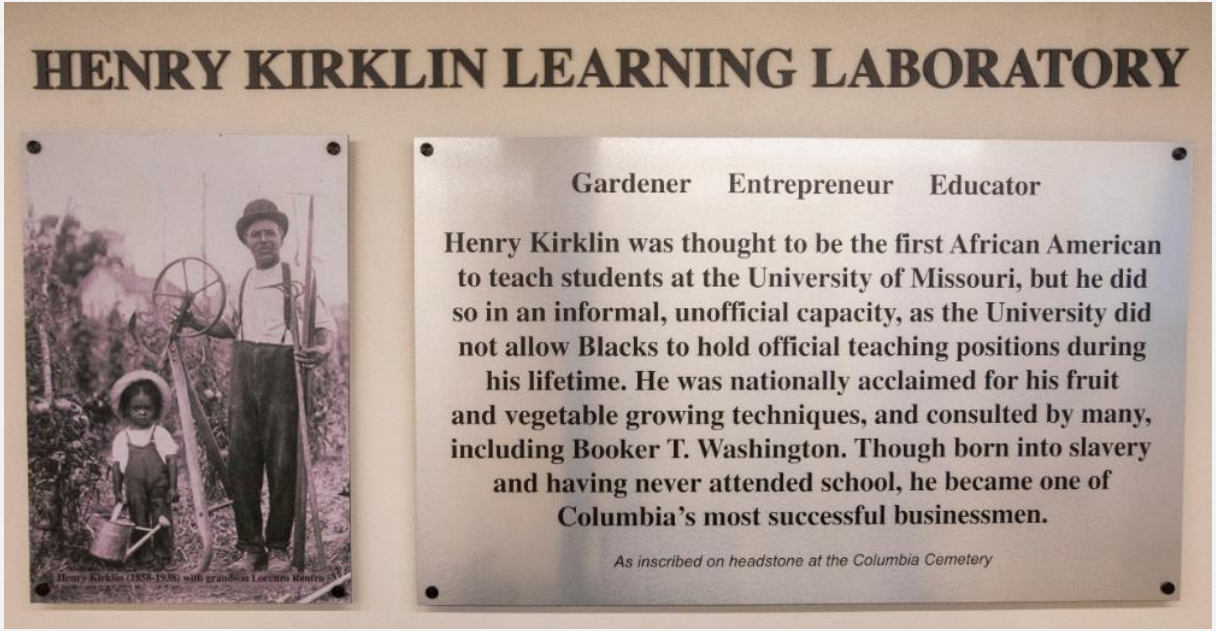
The Henry Kirklin Community Garden is the first of several planned spaces where Mizzou community members can get their hands dirty for a good cause.

African American Heritage Trail

HENRY KIRKLIN (1858-1938) was a prize-winning, internationally acclaimed horticulturalist. Born a slave in Columbia, he was freed at age 5. At age 14, he worked at Joseph B. Douglass nursery, learning from European gardeners. Later, as a gardener and greenhouse supervisor at the University of Missouri, he taught students his fine art of pruning and grafting. Kirlin is thought to be the first black to teach at MU but unofficially; blacks were denied teaching positions then. Early on, he built a garden at his mothers home at 107 Switzler Street and gradually acquired additional land for his multi-acre, magnificent garden. From there, he sold produce and plants to Columbians and local businesses. He was among Columbia's most successful businessmen, which earned him the right to vote. His list of accolades is lengthy.

2020

MU celebrates Henry Kirklin with dedication of learning lab



Conclusion

- Group anticipates raising $50,000-$75,000 dollars.
- Options for use varies…
  - Affordable housing
  - CCUA use of land
  - Other?