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NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name James Baldwin Residence **multiple property listing**: no

other names/site number

## 2. Location

street & number 137 West 71st Street ☐ not for publication

city or town New York ☐ vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10023

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this [x] nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [x] nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

R. David Mackey 7/14/2019

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

DSHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

[X] entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

9/3/19 aff

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

**Category of Property**
(Check only one box)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

**Number of Resources within Property**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | buildings |
| 0 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

**Name of related multiple property listing**
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions)

RESIDENTIAL/multiple dwelling

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions)

RESIDENTIAL/multiple dwelling

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement

**Materials**
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls brick
roof unknown
other

**Narrative Description**
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8 Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [x] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria considerations**
(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] **B** removed from its original location.
- [ ] **C** a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] **D** a cemetery.
- [ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- [ ] **F** a commemorative property.
- [x] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**
(Enter categories from instructions)

Literature

Social History: LGBT, Civil Rights

**Period of Significance**
1967-1987

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

James Baldwin

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**
H. Russell Kenyon -1961 redesign

**Narrative Statement of Significance**
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography**
(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
  # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Rec.

**Primary location of additional data**

- [x] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository:

**James Baldwin Residence** — Name of Property

**New York, New York** — County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of property** .05 acres

**UTM References**
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 18 | 586039 | 4514551 | 3 | | | |
| 2 | | | | 4 | | | |

☐ See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wanett Clyde, Amanda Davis and Andrew Dolkart Contact Kathleen LaFrank, NR Coordinator, NYSHPO

organization NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project date May 2019

street & number 71 West 23rd St, #903 telephone

city or town New York state NY zip code 10010

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

**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.470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 from to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



The James Baldwin Residence, 137 West 71st Street, is located on the north side of West 71st Street between Columbus Avenue and Broadway in the Upper West Side neighborhood of Manhattan, New York City, New York County, New York. The building is located on a residential street characterized by a mix of five-story row houses, apartment buildings ranging from approximately six to fifteen stories, and churches. Immediately to the west (left) of 137 West 71st Street is a nine-story apartment building. Farther west is a six-story apartment building, several row houses, and, at the corner of Broadway, the twelve-story Dorilton Apartments (NR listed). Immediately to the east (right) of 137 West 71st Street is another nine-story apartment building. The remainder of the block to the east consists of apartment houses, apartment hotels, row houses, and a Lutheran church. To the south, on the south side of West 71st Street, is a mix of five-story row houses, apartment buildings, and the Roman Catholic Church of the Blessed Sacrament. The nominated building occupies approximately two-thirds of its lot and has a small yard at the rear. The building was constructed in 1890, completely designed on both the exterior and interior in 1961, and retains its integrity to the period of Baldwin's residence (1965-1985).

The Baldwin Residence is a five-story, two-bay building with a Modern style façade that is clad in glazed white brick. The entrance, located to the left on the ground floor, is sunken just below ground level and reached by a stair flanked by iron railings. The entrance itself consists of an aluminum frame with a glass door flanked by single-pane sidelights and is set within a wide grey granite surround. Above the entrance within the surround are aluminum address numbers. To the right of the entrance is a wide rectangular opening filled with glass blocks and protected by a fence set a few feet back from the window. On each of the upper four floors there is a single double-hung metal window to the left, above the entrance bay, and a wide rectangular opening with three metal double-hung sash windows to the right. Modest projecting stone bands run across the façade at the sill level on each of the upper floors. The rear elevation retains its 1890 brick cladding and has a similar configuration of single and triple windows. The eastern portion of the rear elevation is a projecting, two-story wing that once accommodated the kitchen and butlers' pantry. The wing is articulated by single and paired rectangular window

☐ See continuation sheet

openings with stone lintels and brick sills. There is a wide rectangular entry door (probably a replacement) connecting Baldwin's basement apartment with the garden.

When the house was redesigned in 1961, it was divided into ten apartments: two on the ground floor and two on each of the upper floors. The entire interior has very simple finishes in both the public spaces and the apartments. The ceiling heights of all apartments and hallways remain the same as during Baldwin's occupancy. Layouts and finishes in the public spaces are largely intact. Wall and ceiling finishes in most apartments were extremely modest and remain unchanged. Apartments lacked decorative trim, molding or other distinguishing features. The apartments themselves have continuously been divided to a modest degree since they were established. Today, it remains a residential building with multiple rental apartments.

The building is entered through a vestibule with an original grey terrazzo floor; the rectangular terrazzo panels are separated by thin silver-colored frames. The walls of the vestibule are covered in small, square, glass tiles. A glass door with aluminum frame, glass transom, and sidelights, echoing that of the front entrance, leads from the vestibule into the hall. The terrazzo used in the vestibule continues in the hall; however, the walls in the hall are unornamented plaster. There are two apartment doors in the hall on the ground floor and on every floor above. A narrow stair with terrazzo steps leads upstairs. The stair has a silver-colored (possibly aluminum) handrail that curves outward at the bottom.

James Baldwin's mother, Emma Berdis Jones, lived in Apartment 1B, on the floor above his apartment. Baldwin's sister, Gloria Baldwin Karefa-Smart, lived in Apartment 4A. Both apartments retain their overall original configuration. James Baldwin lived in Apartment B, an approximately 600-square-foot, two-room L-shaped apartment at the rear of the ground floor that spanned the width of the building. One entered Baldwin's apartment from the rear hall door hall into the living room, which also had a galley kitchen to the right of the

entry. The kitchen was removed at an unknown date. His bedroom was located in the rear room of the apartment, in the western half of the space. During Baldwin's residence, the bedroom had a single window and a door leading to the rear yard; both survive, although the door appears to have been replaced with a wider one.

Today, his apartment retains its original spatial layout, even though the wall between the living room and bedroom has been removed; its location is indicated by a clear break between the two spaces and a dropped beam supported by columns. Like the rest of the building, Baldwin's apartment was a simple, plain, undecorated space with plaster walls. It was primarily distinguished by its access to the garden, which survives. In the 1990s, Baldwin's apartment was connected the front apartment through a narrow opening that was originally a small, shared hallway wall. This did not disturb the original configuration or overall layout of the Baldwin space. The original entrance door to this apartment, although not currently used, survives in the entrance hall. At the same time, a narrow staircase was added on the western wall of Baldwin's former living room area leading to the second floor. This provided private internal access between the Baldwin apartment and the 1961 redesigned second floor apartments and hallway. Thus, Baldwin's entire apartment, although functionally readable and spatially intact, is now part of a duplex that incorporates the first and second floor of the house.

Integrity

The exterior of the James Baldwin Residence is virtually unchanged since Baldwin's period of residence and retains a high level of integrity to the period of significance. On the interior, the building remains an apartment building that is generally intact in terms of functional divisions and minimal decorative treatment. The apartments of his mother and sister retain their overall original configuration. The 600-square-foot two-room space that James Baldwin occupied is clearly identifiable and understandable, despite the loss of the dividing wall between the two rooms. The original entrance to the apartment has been preserved. Each room is intact in

size and configuration; the relationship between them is apparent, and the bedroom retains its important access to the garden (see photos of Baldwin in the garden).

**Summary**

The James Baldwin Residence at 137 West 71st Street on Manhattan's Upper West Side is exceptionally significant under Criterion B and Criteria Consideration G in the areas of literature and social history for its association with prominent American author and activist James Baldwin (1924-1987) during the final period of his life, 1965-1987, when he owned this house and it served as his primary American residence. James Baldwin made profound and enduring contributions to American literature and social history. As a gay black author, civil rights activist, and social commentator, Baldwin transformed, and continues to transform, discussions about race and sexuality in America and abroad. Baldwin was an ever-present figure in the literary, political, and social circles of his time. A gifted orator, he spoke critically and engagingly with everyone from heads of state to everyday people. His biographer, Douglas Field, has noted that "Despite his repeated claims that he was an artist, not a spokesman, Baldwin became the most prominent writer to chronicle and critique the U.S. Civil Rights movement."[1] Baldwin was born in Harlem and lived in several city apartments in Harlem and Greenwich Village (some of which have been demolished or altered) during his early life and career. However, due in large part to racial tensions in the United States, and especially to personal persecution in his native New York, Baldwin lived and worked primarily in France after the 1940s. Despite his physical exile, much of his work continued to center on New York and on America's ongoing struggles with race. In the late 1950s, Baldwin began his active involvement with the civil rights movement. He began returning to the United States; made a number of trips to the South; met Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Bayard Rustin, and other civil rights leaders; and took part in the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and in the 1965 voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery. As a result of these encounters and other experiences, Baldwin decided to return to America to work actively in the civil rights movement. His extensive body of work in the last period of his life focuses on themes of great relevance to the major questions that America faced in those decades, and his establishment of a permanent residence in New York corresponds with his decision to speak and write

[1] Douglas Field, *James Baldwin* (Tavistock, U.K.: Northcote House Publishers, 2012), 9.

publicly about the civil rights movement in those decades. He was also close to his family, including his mother, his sisters Gloria and Paula, and their children, and when he purchased and moved into this building on the Upper West Side in 1965, his mother and other relatives also lived there, some of them continuing in residence after his death. This building is the American residence associated with him for the longest period of time during his adult life and the place most closely associated with his activities involving African American and gay civil rights.

The building itself was constructed in 1890 as a single-family house; in 1961, a few years before Baldwin's purchase, it was completely redesigned in a modern aesthetic and divided into apartments by architect H. Russell Kenyon. Baldwin lived in the rear ground floor unit, with access to the backyard, while his mother and sisters lived in units on the upper floors. The exterior of the building retains an outstanding level of integrity to the period of Baldwin's residence and the interior retains its general spatial divisions into apartments and many of its spare and minimal modern finishes. Baldwin's small, two-room basement apartment retains its size and general configuration, as well as its connection to a rear garden, and is recognizable as the apartment he lived in.

During the period he was associated with the building, the house was also a vital hub for black civil rights activists and jazz and literary figures (including author Toni Morrison, who briefly lived here), who he and his family often entertained and engaged with in discussions of some of the most important political and social issues of the day. In addition, during the period of significance, eight of Baldwin's works were performed or televised and he published fourteen written works, including novels, essays, plays, screenplays, dialogues, and a book of poetry. Baldwin's pioneering children's book, *Little Man, Little Man: A Story of Childhood* (1976), featured his niece and nephew and used the West 71st Street house, where they lived, as inspiration.

Baldwin generally eschewed labels and did not self-identify as gay. However, the publication of his second novel, *Giovanni's Room*, in 1956 was groundbreaking for its prominent inclusion of same-sex relationships and attraction. Already an accomplished novelist following the success of his first novel, the semi-autobiographical *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), Baldwin's intersectional influence as a gay man of color made him an important and unapologetic voice on issues related to race and a more fluid understanding of sexuality. His influence was especially noteworthy to the black community and the black LGBT community, an influence that is still felt today. Subsequent works, especially those he wrote during his association with the West 71st Street residence, included gay and bisexual characters, as well as interracial relationships, all taboo subjects at the time. In the 1980s, during his residence on the Upper West Side, Baldwin spoke publicly on such topics as homosexuality, racism within the LGBT community, and homophobia to city-based journalists and to the New York City chapter of Black and White Men Together, a gay organization.[2] On December 1, 1987, Baldwin died of stomach cancer at the age of 63 in Saint-Paul de Vence, France. His funeral was held at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in Manhattan, where crowds of people gathered to honor him; Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison and Amiri Baraka also paid tribute. More than thirty years after his death, Baldwin's work and commentary continue to be relevant and referenced in discussions regarding marginalized communities. The building at 137 West 71st Street, Baldwin's New York City residence from 1965 until his death, is the most important American building associated with the last stage of Baldwin's literary career and the most important building associated with his contribution to black civil rights and LGBT civil rights.

**Early Life in Harlem**

James Arthur Baldwin (1924-1987) left an indelible impact on the world during the sixty-three years of his life. His contributions to the literary, civil rights, black history, and LGBT spheres have been profound and enduring. Born in 1924 at Harlem Hospital and reared in Harlem, "Jimmy," as he was affectionately known, was raised by

[2] Since 1985, the group has been known as Men of All Colors Together (MACT).

his mother until he was three. At that time, she met and married David Baldwin, with whom she had eight more children. The young Baldwin's early life was one of poverty.[3] This distinction, though always mentioned as a defining characteristic of his life, was not initially so apparent to him, as almost everyone in Baldwin's Harlem circle was equally destitute. He, like many children from poor families, worked from an early age. He recalled, "I hit the streets when I was about six or seven, like most black kids of my generation, running errands, doing odd jobs."[4] Along with these external influences, there were innate personality traits that presented themselves and caused difficulties for the young Baldwin.

Aware of his own intelligence and the external forces that might prevent him from making use of it, his life was full of strife; yet, this did not stop his irrepressible talents from making an impact on those around him. Unquestionably gifted, his mind and the attention it garnered from his white teachers was alarming to his family. Two of Baldwin's earliest champions were women: his school principal, Gertrude Ayer, the first black principal in New York City, and his teacher, Orilla Miller, a white Midwesterner, who, in addition to her involvement in his schooling and directing his first play, took Baldwin to plays and political gatherings. "Bill," as Baldwin would call her, became a lifelong friend.[5] In his 1976 essay, "The Devil Finds Work," he recounted:

> …the difference between Miss Miller and other white people, white people as they lived in my imagination, and also as they were in life, had to have had a profound and bewildering effect on

[3] In a July 1960 issue of *Esquire,* Baldwin writes that the house in which he grew up had been demolished for a housing project bounded by "Lenox Avenue on the west, the Harlem River on the east, 135th Street on the north, and 130th Street on the south." He also notes that he and his family "never lived beyond these boundaries; this is where we grew up." He continues, "when I turn east on 131st Street and Lenox Avenue, there is first a soda-pop joint, then a shoeshine 'parlor,' then a grocery store, then a dry cleaners,' then the houses. All along the street there are people who watched me grow up, people who grew up with me, people I watched grow up along with my brothers and sisters; and, sometimes in my arms, sometimes underfoot, sometimes at my shoulder – or on it – their children, a riot, a forest of children, who include my nieces and nephews." James Baldwin, "Fifth Avenue, Uptown," *Esquire* (July 1960), via www.esquire.com/news-politics/a3638/fifth-avenue-uptown.

[4] James Baldwin, "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," in *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Library of America, 1998), 817.

[5] David Leeming, "The White Problem," *PEN America*, January 8, 2007, accessed February 3, 2019. pen.org/the-white-problem.

> my mind. Bill Miller was not at all like the cops who had already beaten me up, she was not like the landlords who called me nigger, she was not like the storekeepers who laughed at me. I had found white people to be unutterably menacing, terrifying, mysterious – wicked: and they were mysterious, in fact, to the extent that they were wicked: the unfathomable question being, precisely, this one: what, under heaven, or beneath the sea, or in the catacombs of hell, could cause any people to act as white people acted? From Miss Miller, I began to suspect that white people did not act as they did because they were white, but for some other reason, and I began to try to locate and understand the reason.[6]

Baldwin's stepfather, a Pentecostal preacher, was particularly threatened by the special attention his son garnered. Indeed, Baldwin's otherness, in addition to his bookish nature and slight frame, put him at odds with his stepfather. There were efforts to appease his stepfather, to match something of himself to the man who held so much sway over his life. As a result, Baldwin followed his example and became a youth pastor. At the same time, he was also struggling to control the homosexual urges that conflicted with his spiritual upbringing. He later recalled, "I became, during my fourteenth year, for the first time in my life, afraid – afraid of the evil within me and afraid of the evil without."[7] Studying the texts and scriptures, he improvised his way through his sermons.[8] He was a pastor of no small talent and showed a real flair for connecting with the material and audience. Thus, he began honing the oratory skills that would distinguish him. Later in life, he would call on the same habits: prepare and then let the moment, audience, and interactions move him and spontaneously shape his commentary.

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[6] James Baldwin, *The Devil Finds Work*, Dial Press, 1976.

[7] James Baldwin, "Region in My Mind," *New Yorker* (November 17, 1962), www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/11/17/letter-from-a-region-in-my-mind.

[8] "James Baldwin, The Art of Fiction No. 78," *Paris Review*, Issue 91 (Spring 1984), 53.

During his time as a youth pastor, Baldwin had a relationship with a much older man.[9] Though grateful to him, for Baldwin had shared his poetry with him and experienced for the first time what it was like to be an object of sexual desire, the dalliance was a great source of internal conflict.[10] The experiences he had with him also had the effect of shattering "all of the American categories of male and female, straight or not, black or white"– perceptions that he had previously held.[11] This was achieved, he noted, "not without anguish, certainly; but once you have discerned the meaning of a label, it may seem to define you for others, but it does not have the power to define you to yourself."[12]

In his later autobiographical work, "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," Baldwin reflected on his early gay life, when he struggled with the discovery that his "existence was the punch line of a dirty joke."[13] Realizing that while he felt he was entirely harmless and indeed often afraid for his own life, he was treated like a threat – chased and attacked, shunned and excluded. Eventually, he became disillusioned with Christianity and its inclination towards racism and homophobia.[14] The death of his stepfather in 1942 was the final catalyst that led him to break with religion and, instead, to eventually pursue life as a writer:

> Until my father died I thought I could do something else. I had wanted to be a musician, thought of being a painter, thought of being an actor. This was all before I was nineteen. Given the conditions in this country to be a black writer was impossible. When I was young, people thought you were not so much wicked as sick, they gave up on you. My father didn't think it was possible – he thought I'd get killed, get murdered. He said I was contesting the white man's definitions, which was quite right. But I had also learned from my father what he thought of the white man's

[9] In "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," Baldwin writes that this older man was a local gangster, though he does not name him.
[10] "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 819.
[11] "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 819.
[12] "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 819.
[13] "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 819.
[14] "Region in My Mind."

> definitions. He was a pious, very religious and in some ways a very beautiful man, and in some ways a terrible man. He died when his last child was born and I realized I had to make a jump – a leap. I'd been a preacher for three years, from age fourteen to seventeen. Those were three years which probably turned me to writing.[15]

Around the same time, Baldwin also explored his homosexuality by cruising in the theaters lining 42nd Street, which were among the few spaces at that time, public or private, for men to engage in sexual activity with other men. He later provided an account of the men, many of them closeted and leading double lives, who also cruised there: "These men looked like cops, football players, soldiers, sailors, Marines or bank presidents, admen, boxers, construction workers; they had wives, mistresses, and children. I sometimes saw them in other settings – in, as it were, the daytime."[16]

Baldwin had several early literary influences by way of the many books he read at the New York Public Library on 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue and its two Harlem branches. He was profoundly shaped at the 135th Street Branch (now part of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; National Historic Landmark), which, beginning in the 1920s, had the city's most significant collection of black-themed works written by black authors:

> I went to the 135th Street library at least three or four times a week, and I read everything there. I mean, every single book in that library. In some blind and instinctive way, I knew that what was happening in those books was also happening all around me. And I was trying to make a connection between the books and the life I saw and the life I lived.[17]

The influences of Countee Cullen and Beauford Delaney, two gay black artists of the Harlem Renaissance, were also pivotal to the young Baldwin. Cullen, a celebrated poet and Baldwin's former teacher at Frederick

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15 "The Art of Fiction No. 78," 52.

16 "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 821.

Douglass Junior High School (now Frederick Douglass Academy), shared stories of his time in Paris, thus providing Baldwin with a real-life example of a black man who traveled internationally. In addition to sharing his poetry with Baldwin, he encouraged him to enroll at DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, a then-prestigious public school which Cullen had attended.[18] Baldwin, who graduated in 1942, wrote for and became an editor of the school's literary magazine, *The Magpie*. Other contributors to the magazine included future publishers/authors Sol Stein and Emile Capouya, with whom Baldwin developed lifelong friendships. In 1940, Capouya suggested that Baldwin make contact with Delaney, a modernist painter who lived in Greenwich Village.[19] Delaney, who may have also been one of Baldwin's earliest lovers, mentored him, providing him entree into rarefied circles and exposing him to jazz and art. Baldwin credited Delaney with teaching him how to see beyond what was immediately apparent, to look deeper, to see the world as an artist would. Delaney also inspired Baldwin by showing what was, perhaps, possible for him. Baldwin recalled that Delaney was "...the first living proof, for me, that a black man could be an artist. In a warmer time, a less blasphemous place, he would have been recognized as my teacher and I as his pupil. He became, for me, an example of courage and integrity, humility and passion. An absolute integrity: I saw him shaken many times and I lived to see him broken but I never saw him bow."[20]

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[17] James Baldwin in "The Price of the Ticket," trailer, *YouTube*, youtu.be/4_hYraYI2J8.

[18] At the time, DeWitt Clinton High School was only open to boys and had a predominantly Jewish student population who came from working-class, liberal households. Though located in the northwest section of the Bronx (its third and current location), students from other parts of the borough and from Harlem were allowed to attend. Influential alumni mostly had careers in literature and the arts; in addition to Countee Cullen (class of 1922), those who graduated before or around Baldwin's time include, but are not limited to, gay Jewish film director George Cukor (class of 1917); black artist Romare Bearden (1925-28); first black conductor of the New York Philharmonic Dean Dixon (class of 1932); black artist Robert Blackburn (class of 1940); bisexual Jewish photographer Richard Avedon (class of 1941), also a school friend of Baldwin's, who would later collaborate with him on the photo-essay book *Nothing Personal*; and Jewish playwright Neil Simon (class of 1944). "DeWitt Clinton High School," *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DeWitt_Clinton_High_School.

[19] "James Baldwin at the National Press Club," Library of Congress, December 10, 1986, 3. www.loc.gov/rr/record/pressclub/pdf/JamesBaldwin.pdf.

[20] James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948-1985* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 7.

**The Greenwich Village Years and Life Abroad**

In 1943, Baldwin left Harlem and moved to Greenwich Village, a neighborhood to which he had always been attracted.[21] According to biographer David Leeming, "On the surface, the bohemian Villagers seemed less concerned with his being 'colored' than did white people elsewhere."[22] Baldwin first stayed with Delaney at 181 Greene Street (demolished) and worked a series of odd jobs until Delaney introduced him to Connie Williams. Born in Trinidad, Williams owned Calypso, a small restaurant at 146 MacDougal Street (demolished), located a block south of Washington Square Park, where Baldwin found work as a waiter. Calypso helped sustain a series of struggling, racially diverse bohemians by providing them with work and community. It "became a favorite spot for artists, musicians, actors, and writers in general, as well as for political radicals."[23] Its interracial regulars (not all of whom Baldwin encountered there) included bisexual black poet Claude McKay, gay black writer Alain Locke, black musician/actor Paul Robeson, black activist Malcolm X, bisexual white actor Burt Lancaster, bisexual white actor Marlon Brando, and black singer/actor Eartha Kitt. The ragtag Calypso group provided a support system that, by turns, encouraged, housed, and fought with Baldwin. They were, essentially, a chosen family. Many of its members, from disparate backgrounds, had never had the benefit of close contact with people unlike themselves. Enduring friendships were formed. Other Greenwich Village mainstays, such as Minetta Tavern on MacDougal Street, Joe's Diner on West 4th Street, and the White Horse Tavern on Hudson Street, provided Baldwin with opportunities to meet the likes of bisexual and gay Beat Generation writers Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg.[24]

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[21] Labor organizer Stan Weir, a white man, notes that he and Baldwin moved to Greenwich Village (separately) in 1943. This was the same year that Connie Williams opened Calypso. Beauford Delaney, a friend of Williams, recommended Baldwin to her when she was looking for a waiter for her new restaurant. See Stan Weir, "Meetings with James Baldwin," libcom.org/library/meetings-james-baldwin.

[22] David Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 37.

[23] Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography*, 44.

[24] Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography*, 44.

Although he had ensconced himself in an inspiring community, he still experienced the hardships, pressures, and racially motivated attacks that most black Americans faced. There are stories of Baldwin courting conflict, deliberately going to anti-black establishments for the sole purpose of lashing out when he was treated poorly or asked to leave. According to Baldwin's account in "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," this was repeatedly the case at the San Remo Café, an Italian establishment at 189 Bleecker Street that was popular among Bohemians, Beats, and gay clientele. Baldwin seemed to take being excluded from this particular locale as a personal affront since it was close to Calypso and on his route home. Passing it so often made the sting of refusal sharper. He resolved to make them accept him.[25] He finally accomplished this by dining there with Frank S. MacGregor, the president of Harper & Brothers, and simply returning alone later that evening.[26] Tourists also harassed him, and, in one case, he recalled that a group demanded that he be removed from the San Remo.

Baldwin also encountered potential danger among young white men who had expressed an interest in having sex with him, for he never could be sure when a seduction could turn into an assault. The few sexual relationships he had with white women were often emotionally taxing on him as well: "I found myself at the mercy of a double fear. The fear of the world was bearable until it entered the bedroom. But it sometimes entered the bedroom by means of the motives of the girl, who intended to civilize you into becoming an appendage or who had found a black boy to sleep with because she wanted to humiliate her parents." He followed by noting that these largely negative encounters "had nothing to do with how I found myself in the gay world. I would have found myself there anyway.…"[27]

[25] "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 825.
[26] "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 825.
[27] "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 821-822.

In 1945, still living in Greenwich Village, Baldwin won a prestigious fellowship from the Eugene Saxton Memorial Trust, run by Harper & Brothers. The project he worked on during that fellowship would later become his first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, published in 1953. In 1948, Baldwin saw the publication of his first review, "Maxim Gorski as Artist," in *The Nation* and his first short story, "Previous Condition," in *Commentary*, a monthly magazine founded in 1945 by the American Jewish Committee. Also in 1948, he was the recipient of a Rosenfeld Foundation Fellowship to work with photographer Theodore Pelatowski, who he met in the Village, on a book about Harlem storefront churches and dance halls.[28]

Baldwin's writing projects came at a time when life for men of color in America was becoming increasingly difficult because of a rise in racially motivated attacks. Gay men of color also faced homophobic violence. Baldwin noted that "Life for niggers was fairly rough in Greenwich Village. There were only about three of us, if I remember correctly, when I first hit those streets, and I was the youngest, the most visible, and the most vulnerable. On every street corner, I was called a faggot."[29] The feelings of persecution heightened until he chose to leave for Paris in November 1948, at the age of twenty-four. A 1984 interview he gave in *The Paris Review* about his move there provides insight into his difficult relationship with New York at that time and, indeed, throughout his life:

> I was broke. I got to Paris with forty dollars in my pocket, but I had to get out of New York. My reflexes were tormented by the plight of other people. Reading had taken me away for long periods at a time, yet I still had to deal with the streets and the authorities and the cold. I knew what it meant to be white and I knew what it meant to a nigger, and I knew what was going to happen to me. My luck was running out. I was going to go to jail, I was going to kill somebody or

[28] James Campbell, *Talking at the Gates: A Life of James Baldwin* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 36. According to Campbell, only Pelatowski's photographs survive.
[29] "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," 821.

> be killed. My best friend [Eugene Worth] had committed suicide two years earlier, jumping off the George Washington Bridge.[30]

When interviewer Jordan Elgrably asked Baldwin why he chose France, he replied,

> It wasn't so much a matter of choosing France – it was a matter of getting out of America. I didn't know what was going to happen to me in France but I knew what was going to happen to me in New York. If I had stayed there, I would have gone under, like my friend on the George Washington Bridge.[31]

In a 2007 article, black writer Hilton Als noted that "postwar Paris proved to be a refuge for a number of black Americans, and the Parisians, as Baldwin's friend Maya Angelou has said, were delighted with them. … France was not without its race prejudices, she recalled in an interview, it simply did not have any guilt vis-à-vis black Americans."[32] One of Baldwin's few contacts when he arrived in Paris was the black author Richard Wright, who he had met in 1944 and whose writing focused, in large part, on racial issues in the United States.

Baldwin spent much of the remainder of his life living in France, with time also spent in other places, such as Istanbul and Los Angeles. However, he never lost his connection to New York City, where his family and several of his publishers were located, and where his perspectives on American racism and homosexuality, among other topics, had been shaped. As such, the city as well as the people and experiences he encountered there were often the subject of, or the inspiration for, his work and his commentary. In 1953, the New York City-based Knopf published his first major work, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. In it, Baldwin mostly tells his own story through the eyes of the fictional character John. He recalled, "Mountain' is the book I had to write if I was ever going to write anything else. I had to deal with what hurt me most. I had to deal, above all, with my

[30] "The Art of Fiction No. 78," 50. Worth's suicide was later fictionalized by Baldwin in his novel *Another Country* (1962).
[31] "The Art of Fiction No. 78."
[32] Hilton Als, "Family Secrets," *PEN America*, January 8, 2007, pen.org/family-secrets.

father. He was my model; I learned a lot from him. Nobody's ever frightened me since."[33] The book's themes and the central relationships of parent and child and pious follower and his/her religion still resonate with readers.

In 1954, Baldwin won a $3,000 fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation to further his studies in the field of general non-fiction.[34] That year, Knopf rejected his second novel, *Giovanni's Room*, because its homosexual themes were determined to be too provocative and, the editors believed, would undermine his position in the black community.[35] Baldwin recalled the publisher stating, "You cannot afford to alienate that audience. This new book will ruin your career, because you're not writing about the same things and in the same manner as you were before, and we won't publish this book as a favor to you."[36]
After delving into matters of race so eloquently in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, the all-white cast of characters in *Giovanni's Room* seemed an odd detour for Baldwin to take. The novel was inspired by observations of life and love in Paris and centers around the character of David, an American with a girlfriend, who spends most of the story in the apartment of Giovanni, an Italian barber he met at a gay bar and with whom he had an intimate relationship. Baldwin had the daring to challenge norms and, according to biographer Douglas Field, "pioneered fictional accounts of homosexuality and bisexuality in his fiction." [37] Baldwin crafted full-bodied stories that presented LGBT people as full and whole and worthy of exploration. He treated their fears and dreams and sex lives like that of any protagonist. By this very treatment, his characters stood out. While the absence of black characters was noticeable, Baldwin later explained the difficulty of writing a book at that time that dealt with gay *and* black characters: "I certainly could not possibly have—not at that point in my life—

[33] Leslie Bennetts, "James Baldwin Reflects on 'Go Tell It' PBS Film," *New York Times*, January 10, 1985, C17.
[34] "James Baldwin," John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, www.gf.org/fellows/all-fellows/james-baldwin.
[35] Fern Marja Eckman, *The Furious Passage of James Baldwin* (Lanham, MD: M. Evans & Company, 2014).
[36] Colm Tóibín, "The Unsparing Confessions of 'Giovanni's Room," *New Yorker*, February 26, 2016.
[37] Field, 48.

handled the other great weight, the 'Negro problem.' The sexual-moral light was a hard thing to deal with. I could not handle both propositions in the same book. There was no room for it."[38] Hilton Als wrote, "*Giovanni's Room* isn't exactly self-affirming, but the fact that Baldwin wrote about the world of his sexuality at all is extraordinary given the year and his race. So intense was the stern Puritanism of most blacks I knew while I was growing up that one was not simply a faggot but a *damned* faggot."[39] He goes on to quote the white poet Richard Howard, "It was regarded as an exceptional book, and gay people were proud that such a thing existed, and that it should have been written by a black person was kind of phenomenal."[40] Illustrating the book's importance to the LGBT community, its title was the inspiration for Giovanni's Room Bookstore, an early gay bookstore that opened in Philadelphia in 1973.

In 1955, Baldwin was temporarily in New York and living in a small apartment on Gay Street, in Greenwich Village, with Lucien Happersberger, a bisexual Swiss artist he had met in Paris.[41] With the fate of *Giovanni's Room* pending, Baldwin finished a draft of his first play, *The Amen Corner*. He also published his first collection of essays, *Notes of a Native Son*. Black playwright, poet and novelist Owen Dodson produced *The Amen Corner* at the historically black Howard University that same year. *Giovanni's Room* was eventually published by Dial, based in New York City, in 1956. The reception was not nearly as dire as Knopf had predicted. Rather, it promptly won an award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the Partisan Review Fellowship.

In 2012, scholar Josep M. Armengol wrote about the work's detractors, summarizing the views of black literary critics and what they deemed an absence of race in the novel: "In addition to criticizing its overt homosexual

[38] "The Art of Fiction No. 78."
[39] Als, "Family Secrets."
[40] Richard Howard, quoted in Als, "Family Secrets."
[41] *James Baldwin: A Biography*, 99.

content, some scholars complained that the novel, centered on a white homosexual couple, was not sufficiently focused on the black experience."[42] Armengol further relates, "If many reviewers in the mainstream press described Baldwin's new novel as sexually deviant, African American critics saw it as racially deviant as well. Several writers, particularly black nationalists, went even further, linking Baldwin's sexual 'perversions' with racial ones."[43]

By the late 1950s, Baldwin actively began his involvement in the black civil rights movement. Notably, in 1957, he met the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on his first of many trips to the South.[44] His time there resulted in two essays, "The Hard Kind of Courage" for the October 1958 issue of *Harper's Magazine* and "Nobody Knows My Name" for the Winter 1959 issue of *Partisan Review*. It was also around this time, in 1958, that he rented an apartment at 81 Horatio Street, in Greenwich Village (extant), where he would live off and on until 1961 (he noted that there were "a couple of Negroes in the building already.").[45] On the civil rights front in New York City, Baldwin worked alongside several black colleagues, including the openly gay civil rights leader Bayard Rustin and the closeted lesbian playwright and activist Lorraine Hansberry, a close friend of Baldwin's and a fellow Greenwich Village resident. In 1963, then-Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy asked Baldwin to organize a "quiet, off-the-record, unpublicized get-together of prominent Negroes" in New York to discuss race relations in the United States, according to Clarence Benjamin Jones, an advisor to Dr.

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[42] Josep M. Armengol, "In the Dark Room: Homosexuality and/as Blackness in James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 37, no. 3, 671-693.

[43] Armengol, 671.

[44] "James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket: Biographical Timeline," *American Masters*, Public Broadcasting Service, August 1, 2013, www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/james-baldwin-biographical-timeline/2667.

[45] Baldwin, quoted in *James Baldwin: A Biography*, 148. At the time of James Baldwin's tenancy, the rowhouse at 81 Horatio Street, originally a single-family dwelling, had already been altered to a multi-unit apartment building. As a result, its stoop was removed and the main entrance was moved to the ground floor. This was a typical alteration that owners in the city made when converting single-family rowhouses to multiple apartments. In 2003, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) approved a permit to reconstruct the stoop entrance and the cornice. See Certificate of Appropriateness 03-6297.

King who attended that meeting.[46] Baldwin invited Hansberry, his brother David, singer and activist Harry Belafonte, entertainer and activist Lena Horne, and several other black and white activists and/or artists. Later in the year, Baldwin also held a New York City press conference with Rustin to call on President John F. Kennedy to intervene in Alabama Governor George Wallace's handling of protests that were held after the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham killed four young black girls. Baldwin also took part in the landmark 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, organized by Rustin, and the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march.[47] Of his new-found direction as a civil rights activist, Baldwin wrote:

> I had to go through the civil rights movement and I don't regret it at all. And those people trusted me. There was something very beautiful about that period, something life-giving for me to be there, to march, to be a part of a sit-in, to see it through my own eyes.
>
> What held me in Paris later – from '53 to '57 – was the fact that I was going through a kind of break-up in my private life, yet I knew I had to go back to America. And I went. Once I was in the civil rights milieu, once I'd met Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X and Medgar Evers and all those other people, the role I had to play was confirmed. I didn't think of myself as a public speaker, or as a spokesman, but I knew I could get a story past the editor's desk. And once you realize that you can do something, it would be difficult to live with yourself if you didn't do it.[48]

In 1961, Baldwin's collection of essays, *Nobody Knows My Name*, was published by Dial. The latter also published his next novel, *Another Country*, in 1962, and another essay compilation, *The Fire Next Time*, in 1963. *The Fire Next Time* was notable for being the first essay to spend forty-one weeks in the top five of *The New York Times* bestseller list.[49] *Another Country*, set in the late 1950s in Greenwich Village, was begun

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46 Clarence Jones, *What Would Martin Say* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 192-195.
47 Rustin's Apartment, in the Penn South Complex in New York City, has been listed on the National Register.
48 "The Art of Fiction No. 78," 61.
49 "James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket: Biographical Timeline."

during Baldwin's tenancy at 81 Horatio Street and continued over time in several countries. Like *Giovanni's Room*, it explored bisexuality. It also incorporated the controversial themes of interracial relationships and infidelity. The novel drew the attention of J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), when it was deemed obscene in New Orleans.[50] Despite, or perhaps in response to the controversy, the book sold well and won the Brotherhood Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.[51]

The FBI was deeply invested in monitoring vocal black Americans, such as Baldwin and Dr. King. It had well-placed informants in various organizations and movements and actively worked to discredit influential leaders, paying particular attention to the effect that literary and other public figures had on the masses. Recognizing the power of words to inflame the black community, the FBI employed "ghostreaders" to monitor and analyze black publications.[52] It devised a strategy of intimidation by mimicking the writing style of black authors, which allowed them to plant false information and mislead followers in the name of inciting chaos within the growing and powerful grassroots organizations springing up across the United States.[53]

Baldwin, who united pointed and passionate criticisms of the American race problem and the FBI with unflappable poise and dignity, was an obvious candidate for investigation. The threat inherent in his power as an orator and storyteller was analyzed as closely as were the most dangerous men in the world. Coupled with his gay-themed writings and despite an unwillingness to clearly label himself as gay, he was of even greater interest to Hoover, who held a particular grudge against homosexuals.[54] At 1,884 pages in length, covering the

[50] Douglas Field, "Baldwin's FBI Files as Political Biography," in *The Cambridge Companion to James Baldwin*, Michele Elam, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 194–210.
[51] James Baldwin Papers, finding aid, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, 2.
[52] William J. Maxwell, "Why James Baldwin's FBI File Was 1,884 Pages," *Publisher's Weekly*, February 20, 2015.
[53] Maxwell.
[54] Maxwell.

years 1958 to 1974, the file is notable as the largest compiled on any black artist during the civil rights era.[55] Baldwin, aware that he was under surveillance, did not let it deter his fight for civil rights.

By the mid-1960s, Baldwin was a well known and sought-after figure. Nevertheless, he continued to endure hardships while in New York, dealing with the same racism he had fled from years earlier. For example, he was the victim of a hate crime while out at the Village Paddock, a small bar near his Horatio Street apartment, with white friends. On the other hand, his success brought the new complexities of fame and the complication of fans.[56] Outside his home on Horatio Street, admirers were a constant presence. As biographer David Leeming notes, "fame spoiled any hope of domestic tranquility [for Baldwin]. At one point things became so bad that [publisher Richard] Baron hid him away at his home in Westchester. But the followers found him there."[57] During this time period, Baldwin was frequently interviewed for television and print; in "The Angriest Young Man," in the October 1961 issue of *Ebony* magazine, Baldwin gave an in-depth interview on his views about America, and his image made the cover of the May 17, 1963, edition of *Time.* He also became acquainted with Malcolm X, even though he had known of him years earlier, when the two met during a talk between Malcolm X and a student, which Baldwin agreed to moderate. Baldwin and Malcolm X would meet again, on September 5, 1963, when they debated their differing strategies on achieving civil rights and equality for black Americans.

Baldwin had fledgling friendships with both Dr. King and Malcolm X and, to his surprise, found he was placed in a peculiar dynamic to the two great men: "I was in some way in those years, without entirely realizing it, the Great Black Hope of the Great White Father. I was *not* a racist – so I thought; Malcolm *was* a racist, so *he*

[55] Maxwell.
[56] *James Baldwin: A Biography*, 160.
[57] *Baldwin: A Biography*, 187.

thought. In fact, we were simply trapped in the same situation, as poor Martin was later to discover (who, in those days, did not talk to Malcolm and was a little nervous with me)."[58]

**James Baldwin and 137 West 71st Street**

On February 4, 1965, a corporation associated with the Baldwin family, purchased the residential building at 137 West 71st Street on Manhattan's Upper West Side.[59] The house was a former single-family row house that had previously been redesigned as a small apartment building. The original building was one of a row of four, at 131-137 West 71st Street, designed by the prolific row house architectural firm of Thom & Wilson in 1890 for J. T. and J. A. Farley, builders who were very active on the Upper West Side during the neighborhood's first phase of major development in the 1880s and early 1890s.[60] The Upper West Side, a neighborhood defined by Central Park on the east, the Hudson River on the west, 59th Street on the south, and 110th Street on the north, remained largely open land, dotted by a few rural mansions (mostly along the river), farmhouses, and shanties until the final decades of the nineteenth century. The impetus for development on the Upper West Side was the opening of the Ninth Avenue elevated railroad in 1879 (Ninth Avenue is now Columbus Avenue), which made it convenient for people to live in the area and commute to jobs farther south on Manhattan Island. Speculative developers, such as the Farleys, were soon building single-family row houses on the side streets, most of which were sold to upper-middle-class white households. For example, in 1900, 137 West 71st Street was the home of a lawyer, his wife, two daughters, and three servants.[61]

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[58] *Baldwin: A Biography*, 187.

[59] The property was purchased by the El-Rhon Corporation, of which Baldwin's sister Gloria E.K. Smart (née Gloria Esther Baldwin), acted as chief executive officer. El-Rhon had been incorporated in Washington, D.C., on September 25, 1964. Smart is the literary executor of the Estate of James Baldwin. El-Rhon purchased the property from its prior owner, Jack Mandel, on February 4, 1965. See Manhattan property conveyances, liber 5313, page 423 (recorded February 4, 1965).

[60] New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District Designation Report*, edited by Marjorie Pearson and Elisa Urbanelli (New York: Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1990), vol. 1, 262-263.

The opening of the IRT subway, with a station at Broadway and 72nd Street, resulted in a dramatic change to the character of the Upper West Side, as row houses were demolished and replaced by apartment buildings, especially during the second and third decades of the twentieth century. Simultaneously, many of the remaining row houses were converted into apartments or rooming houses. By the 1960s, the Upper West Side was among the most diverse neighborhoods in New York City, with affluent apartment house residents coexisting with poorer households. In the 1960s, some row house owners attempted to attract residents who could pay higher rents by undertaking extensive renovations to their buildings. These renovations included upgrading the utilities on the interior and, in many cases, either removing or stripping the façade and recladding it with a modern material, such as glazed brick. This is what occurred at 137 West 71st Street. In 1961, Jack Mandel and Elias Gold, the owners of the building, commissioned architect H. Russell Kenyon to dramatically redesign the old house.[62] Kenyon removed the original stoop and the entire façade and built a new front at the lot line. The new façade was designed in a Modern style and was clad entirely in white glazed brick, a material that had come to define Modern residential living in the city, especially for apartment buildings. In addition, Russell removed the stoop, which would have provided the original access to the parlor floor, and designed a granite entrance enframement at ground level, used small modern glass blocks in the new, large ground floor window opening to increase privacy in the ground-floor apartment. On the upper floors, he replaced the traditional fenestration with groups of three double-hung sash that created the effect of a modern picture window on each floor. Kenyon also converted the building into eight small apartments.

It was this redesigned house that James Baldwin moved into four years later, taking the ground floor rear apartment, with its access to the rear yard, for his personal residence. Apartments used by his mother and two of

[61] United States Census, 1900, E.D. 465, 12.

[62] Almost nothing is known about Kenyon. He appears to have opened an office in New York City in 1913. His only other known designs are five, one-story garages in Manhattan built between 1948 and 1950 (see www.metrohistory.com/dbpages/NB results) and a

his sisters, Gloria Karefa-Smart (and her daughter and sons) and Paula Whaley (first with a friend and then with her son), were among those on the upper floors. The remaining four apartments had rent-regulated tenants. The Baldwin family affectionately referred to the house as "headquarters."[63] Describing the West 71st Street home, Aisha Karefa-Smart, Gloria's daughter, recounted in the foreword to *The Prodigal Son* that the "…family occupied half the building that my uncle purchased on the Upper West Side, and our poor neighbors, who had been used to a quiet life prior to the purchase of the building and my family's arrival from Harlem, occupied the other half."[64] While living there, Baldwin worked on novels, plays for stage, and scripts for the screen; he planned events to support various charities; and wrote to and received letters from a truly astounding number of literary and Hollywood elites.[65] He also answered fan mail.[66]

The West 71st Street home, which Baldwin used as his New York City residence until his death in 1987, was an important place for him, even when he was living elsewhere. Communications with and through his sister Gloria, who acted as his secretary, were frequent. The address was used as a permanent locale to which documents of import, books to review, and a myriad of requests could be forwarded and assured to reach him, regardless of whether he was currently residing in the city or not.[67] Even Baldwin's FBI file lists his 71st Street home as his official address.[68] People "from all walks of life," according to Aisha Karefa-Smart, seemed to sense his imminent arrival and flocked to 71st Street, knowing they would find him there. Some followed him

house in the Bronxville section of Yonkers designed in 1913. He apparently lived in this neighborhood and the house was commissioned by a member of his family (see *American Contractor* 34 (March 1, 1913): 66).

[63] Trevor Baldwin, e-mail to Amanda Davis, March 5, 2019; Karim Karefa, phone call with Amanda Davis, March 27, 2019.

[64] Aisha Karefa-Smart, "Foreword: The Prodigal Son," *African American Review* 46.4 (Winter 2013), 559.

[65] For a selection of notable works completed by James Baldwin during the years he owned the 137 West 71st Street building, see appendix.

[66] Many of those letters, now part of the seventy-seven-box collection known as the James Baldwin Papers acquired by Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, are from fans, young and old, who connected with Baldwin's gay and black characters.

[67] James Baldwin Papers, finding aid, 12.

home from speaking engagements to extend their time in his presence a little longer.[69] His influence as a gay writer of color was also felt: "People bore witness to my uncle," she notes, "sometimes crying tears of deep gratitude, explaining the impact his work had on them. How his writing had saved their lives, or had given them the courage to come out to their family." She also recalled these times of arrival as joyous and celebratory:

> Whenever Uncle Jimmy came home to visit (home being 137 West Seventy-first Street), my grandmother would smile widely and say: "Well, the prodigal son has returned!" I loved it when Uncle Jimmy came home. The energy and vitality at 137 elevated to a fever pitch as soon as he hit the door. Even before he arrived, the house was set ablaze with excitement and anticipation just by the mention of his name.
>
> The refrain, "Jimmy's coming!" could be heard all throughout the house as my grandmother, my Aunt Paula, and my mother Gloria would run up and down the stairs of the small, white-brick, four-story apartment building, preparing for the onslaught of visitors.[70]

Those visitors meant food, friendship, fellowship, and extended family would descend on the home, including notable black literary figures who, to Baldwin and his kin, were family, too. Aisha Karefa-Smart writes,

> There was Aunt Toni [Morrison], who was one of my mom's best friends, who actually lived with us at 137 for a time with her two sons, Slade and Dino. Aunt Toni Cade [Bambara], big-eyed and no-nonsense, who was my favorite because "She ain't take no tea for the fever," as the old folks from Harlem would say. There were also Paule Marshall, Louise Meriweather, Rosa Guy, Amiri and Amina Baraka, Max Roach, and Aunt Vertamae [Smart-Grosvenor], just to name a few. All of these amazing people were my adopted aunties and uncles—part of our extended family.[71]

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68 "James Baldwin," FBI Records: The Vault, Federal Bureau of Investigation, https://vault.fbi.gov/james-baldwin.
69 Karefa-Smart, 560.
70 Karefa-Smart, 559.
71 Karefa-Smart, 560.

Baldwin's love for his family never wavered; he lavished attention on all of his younger relations because he recognized that an investment in youth, starting with his own family, was vitally important. His niece notes that, "*In The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, my uncle wrote: 'The young are the community's sacred—and only—hope, and it is the responsibility of the elders to guide and protect and raise the young.'"[72]
She also shares accounts of the conversations about revolution and other topics that were held at the house: "They talked about feminism, race, Africa, poverty, the Vietnam War, black male and female relationships, black men and white women, the FBI and whether they were listening."[73] Her recollections provide detail that explain Baldwin's passionate defense of blackness and black people. They also reveal the depth of his bonds with his fellow writers and freedom fighters, black women and men who would make notable contributions to the literary field and civil rights movement.

Less than three weeks after the Baldwin family obtained ownership of 137 West 71st Street, Malcolm X (by then known as El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) was assassinated on February 21, 1965, at the Audubon Ballroom in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. Baldwin, who was then in London, returned to New York to attend the February 27th funeral at the Faith Temple of God in Christ, in Harlem. Later that year, on October 26th, Baldwin gave what is perhaps his most memorable and impassioned speech, at Cambridge University in England, when he debated with staunch conservative and editor of the *National Review*, William F. Buckley. The topic was "The American Dream is at the Expense of the American Negro," a topic Baldwin addressed, in part, as follows:

> One of the great things that the white world does not know, but I think I do know, is that Black people are just like everybody else. One has used the myth of Negro and the myth of color to pretend and to assume that you were dealing with, essentially, with something exotic, bizarre,

[72] Karefa-Smart, 561.
[73] Karefa-Smart, 560.

> and practically, according to human laws, unknown. Alas, it is not true. We're also mercenaries, dictators, murderers, liars. We are human too.[74]

Baldwin's powerful oration received a two-minute standing ovation.[75]

Biographer David Leeming, in his 2015 essay "James Baldwin: Voyages in Search of Love," reflected on his time working as Baldwin's assistant from 1964 to 1966. He shared that, "in the fall of 1965 [Baldwin] left again for Istanbul to escape the sense that in spite of his fame he was still, like Ralph Ellison's man, invisible. He would come home briefly in the spring of 1966, and asked me to return again to Istanbul with him."[76] This trip heralded a flurry of travel. In 1966, Baldwin finished his fourth novel, *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, in Rumeli Hisari, Turkey.[77] (Dial published the book in 1968). He also took on a script-writing assignment, agreeing to adapt *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, written by Alex Haley, for Columbia Pictures. For a time, he moved to Los Angeles and Palm Springs, California, to work on the project. At the same time, he collaborated with Dr. King to raise money for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a civil rights organization of which King was the first president.[78] On February 23, 1968, at New York's Carnegie Hall, they both spoke at the centennial celebration of the birth of civil rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois. This event occurred about six weeks before King's assassination.

In "Martin and Malcolm," Baldwin's 1972 essay for *Esquire Magazine*, he shared the exact moment he learned that King had been shot. Baldwin was with actor Billy Dee Williams and another friend in Beverly Hills. After Dr. King's assassination, Baldwin declined to continue with the Malcolm X project. He attended Dr. King's

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[74] "The American Dream and the American Negro," *New York Times*, March 7, 1965, SM32.
[75] "James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket Biographical Timeline."
[76] David Leeming, "James Baldwin: Voyages in Search of Love," *James Baldwin Review* 1, no. 1 (September 1, 2015), 136.
[77] "James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket Biographical Timeline."

funeral service on April 9, 1968, at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. "Since Martin's death, in Memphis, and that tremendous day in Atlanta, something has altered in me, something has gone away," began Baldwin in "Malcolm and Martin." [79] Baldwin reflected that Dr. King's funeral was "the most real church service I've ever sat through in my life."[80]

Baldwin continued to write and to receive invitations to speak and teach while traveling around the world. The long-awaited publication of his play *The Amen Corner* was undertaken by Dial in 1968. Leeming noted that, "In the 1970s and 1980s Baldwin was, in effect, a transatlantic commuter. For the last 15 years of his life he essentially lived half of each year in France in St Paul de Vence…and half in the States…[81] In 1971, Lippincott published transcripts of his "Rap on Race" discussions with bisexual anthropologist Margaret Mead and another essay, "An Open Letter to My Sister, Miss Angela Davis," was published in the *New York Review of Books.* The next year, Lippincott published another of his conversations, this time with black American activist and poet Nikki Giovanni, titled *A Dialogue*. His frequent New York collaborator, Dial, would publish his third collection of essays, *No Name in the Street,* which Leeming called "a memoir of sorts," in 1972.[82] That same year, publisher Joseph in London and Dial in New York published his first screenplay, "One Day When I was Lost: A Scenario Based on The Autobiography of Malcolm X."

A jazz enthusiast, Baldwin entertained members of the jazz community, including Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie, at the West 71st Street house.[83] Baldwin was living at the house in the summer of 1973, when he

[78] "James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket Biographical Timeline."
[79] James Baldwin, "Malcolm and Martin," *Esquire* (April 1972), 94, via classic.esquire.com/article/1972/4/1/malcolm-and-martin
[80] James Baldwin, "Malcolm and Martin."
[81] "James Baldwin: Voyages in Search of Love," 137.
[82] "James Baldwin: Voyages in Search of Love."
[83] Karim Karefa, phone call with Amanda Davis, March 27, 2019.

participated in the Newport Jazz Festival-New York, which had been relocated to the city a year before. For the festival, Baldwin wrote and produced "The Hallelujah Chorus – The Life and Times of Ray Charles," performed at Carnegie Hall on July 1, 1973, in tribute to and in collaboration with the singer Ray Charles. Covered by *Jet Magazine*, the event "began with a brief commentary on the Black experience in America. It led to Charles recalling childhood memories in four sketches."[84] The production featured Baldwin's brother David, alongside actor and activist Cicely Tyson and actor David Moses.[85] Baldwin later wrote to actor Lena Horne about the production in the hopes that she would join them for a national tour. In his letter, he notes that he would return to New York the week of November 18th. [86]

Baldwin's fifth novel, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, was published by Dial in 1974. The book, Leeming wrote, "took its title from an old W.C. Handy song he saw as containing a kind of ironic portrait of himself: 'the blind man on the corner who sings the Beale Street Blues.'"[87] The character Tish, walking with her boyfriend, Fonny, through Washington Square Park, describes the gay men they see cruising there as "young men with bright hair and very tight pants, who looked quickly at Fonny and resignedly at me."[88] Dial brought forth two new Baldwin works in 1976, *The Devil Finds Work*, his fourth collection of essays, and his first and only children's book, *Little Man, Little Man: A Story of Childhood*, on which he collaborated with illustrator Yoran Cazac, a white French painter who he met through Beauford Delaney. Written for children and adults alike, *Little Man, Little Man* told the story of a young boy in Harlem running errands and coming of age in much the same way Baldwin did. This work was born out of a recurring conversation Baldwin had with his nephew, Tejan Karefa-Smart (affectionately known as "TJ"), whenever he returned to their shared Upper West Side residence, which

84 "Baldwin Honors Ray Charles at the Newport Jazz Festival," *Jet Magazine*, July 19, 1973, 60.
85 "Baldwin Honors Ray Charles at the Newport Jazz Festival."
86 James Baldwin Papers, box 3a, folder 3/23. In his letter to Lena Horne, Baldwin also writes, "My address is 137 West 71st Street NYC 10023. Telephone 787 0163 or 779 8789. I arrive in NY week of November 18."
87 "James Baldwin: Voyages in Search of Love," 137.

ultimately became the inspiration for the Harlem home in the book.[89] TJ would ask, "Uncle Jimmy, when are you going to write a book about me?"[90] One Thanksgiving, a box full of books, written for TJ, arrived.[91] Baldwin, reporter Sameer Rao writes, "confused his critics and supporters alike" with the book's publication, as "Its tale of four-year-old TJ, a Black child experiencing alternating joy (playing and dancing with friends) and pain (police violence, watching neighborhood boys take narcotics) in Harlem, left many readers wondering if it was actually meant for children."[92] Despite its historical significance in the field of children's literature, *Little Man, Little Man* soon went out of print. Following renewed interest, however, it was reprinted in 2018. Shortly after, a symposium at New York University, entitled "James Baldwin's Story of Childhood," convened several scholars of black literature, history, and culture. A recap of the event noted that Dagmawi Woubshet, a professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, spoke of how "*Little Man, Little Man* centers the interior lives of children of color and rejects the dominant narratives of white childhood and white innocence. The book is written from the perspective of a black child who speaks in the Black vernacular. The characters see and describe a multitude of shades of black skin, each time more richly than the last."[93] Aisha Karefa-Smart said her uncle's "lush and musical descriptions of blackness was 'an act of resistance' against negative representations of blackness."[94]

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[88] James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk* (New York: Dial, 1974).

[89] "'Little Man, Little Man' is Back Again: Event Recap of James Baldwin's Story of Childhood: A Symposium, 9/11/18," NYU Center for the Humanities, nyuhumanities.org/09-11-18. At this symposium, Tejan Karefa-Smart recalled his childhood as "studded with 'social jam sessions' in his childhood home [137 West 71st Street], a four-story converted brownstone which was a meeting place and makeshift home for artists, sculptors, musicians, activists, and other friends of Baldwin's."

[90] "Foreword: The Prodigal Son," 560.

[91] "Foreword: The Prodigal Son."

[92] Sameer Rao, "Why the New Reprint of James Baldwin's Children's Book Still Matters," *Colorlines*, August 24, 2018, www.colorlines.com/articles/why-new-reprint-james-baldwins-childrens-book-still-matters.

[93] "'Little Man, Little Man' is Back Again: Event Recap of James Baldwin's Story of Childhood: A Symposium, 9/11/18."

[94] "'Little Man, Little Man' is Back Again....'"

In a letter dated March 3, 1978 and posted from his home on 71st Street, Baldwin wrote to a friend to say that City College was awarding him a Dr. King medal and that he had finished his latest book. Though he does not mention the title, it was likely *Just Above My Head*, his sixth and final published novel. That year, he "[c]onducted a month-long lecture series and writing workshop at the University of California in Berkeley."[95] He also traveled to Russia for the first time for a symposium of prominent American and Soviet writers.

For most of his life, Baldwin had been more vocal about his experiences as a black man than as a homosexual. In the last years of his life, however, he spoke more openly about this aspect of his identity in various interviews, speaking engagements, and in his autobiographical work, *Here Be Dragons* [c1985]. On June 5, 1982, Baldwin spoke before a crowd of more than two hundred gay men at a forum organized by Black and White Men Together (known since 1985 as Men of All Colors Together; MACT), a group founded in 1980 to address racism in the gay community. The forum was held at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, New York City's first permanent LGBT synagogue, which met in a commercial space at 57 Bethune Street, part of the Westbeth Artists' Housing Complex (National Register listed) on the Greenwich Village waterfront. In a 1982 White and Black Men Together bulletin, it was noted that Baldwin "spoke with candor and openness about his own homosexuality" and "stated that his life-long sexual orientation had never been a secret, but he had not always felt it was necessary, or 'anybody's business,' to openly affirm it." He continued, "Before I was seven years old, there were so many labels on my back beginning with 'nigger.' By the time I was 14, I went through a kind of nervous breakdown … and by the time I was 17, I had survived all the labels, including the label of 'faggot.' It wasn't, and it isn't, easy."[96]

[95] James Baldwin Papers, finding aid, 5.
[96] Ted Freed, "James Baldwin and BWMT," 1982. MACT/NY Information Bulletin. June 2018.

In a 1984 interview with Richard Goldstein for *The Village Voice*, Baldwin discussed in detail his views on such topics as homosexuality, homophobia, the term "gay" and other labels people place on themselves and one another, and racism in the LGBT community. When asked if "black people have the same sense of being gay as white gay people do," Baldwin responded, in part:

> A black gay person who is a sexual conundrum to society is already, long before the question of sexuality comes into it, menaced and marked because he's black or she's black. The sexual question comes after the question of color; it's simply one more aspect of the danger in which all black people live. I think white gay people feel cheated because they were born, in principle, into a society in which they were supposed to be safe. The anomaly of their sexuality puts them in danger, unexpectedly. Their reaction seems to me in direct proportion to the sense of feeling cheated of the advantages which accrue to white people in a white society. There's an element, it has always seemed to me, of bewilderment and complaint. Now that may sound very harsh, but the gay world as such is no more prepared to accept black people than anywhere else in society. It's a very hermetically sealed world with very unattractive features, including racism.[97]

In 1983, Baldwin accepted a professorship of Literature and Afro-American Studies at the Five College Network in Amherst, Massachusetts.[98] A year later, *Essence Magazine* published the story, "Revolutionary Hope: A Conversation between James Baldwin and Audre Lorde." The conversation between the two civil rights activists and writers (Lorde, a Staten Island resident and self-identified lesbian, was also an outspoken advocate of LGBT rights) could be termed "revolutionary." They discussed the long unexplored differences between the way black women and men move through and experience the world.

In the 1984 edition of the *Paris Review*, Jordan Elgrably's interview of Baldwin provided new and intimate insight into the author's life, much like that late-in-life essay exploring his sexuality and the frank talk he had given at the Black and White Men Together forum. Responding to minimal prompts and inquiries from his

[97] Richard Goldstein, "Go the Way Your Blood Beats: An Interview with James Baldwin," *The Village Voice*, June 26, 1984, 13-14.
[98] James Baldwin Papers, finding aid, 5.

interviewer, he grappled with themes and experiences he had vividly explored through his characters and in his more explicitly autobiographical works from this later-in-life perspective. At the root of it all was a desire to demand acceptance and inclusion in the history of America, the place that one loves despite the hardships one suffers there:

> I think that it is a spiritual disaster to pretend that one doesn't love one's country. You may disapprove of it, you may be forced to leave it, you may live your whole life as a battle, yet I don't think you can escape it. There isn't any other place to go – you don't pull up your roots and put them down someplace else. At least not in a single lifetime, or, if you do, you'll be aware of precisely what it means, knowing that your real roots are always elsewhere. If you try to pretend you don't see the immediate reality that formed you I think you'll go blind.[99] … I believe what one has to do as a black American is to take white history, or history as written by whites, and claim it all – including Shakespeare.[100]

In 1985, Baldwin published *The Price of the Ticket*, a collection of non-fiction essays from 1948 to 1985, with Marek/St. Martins in New York. The non-fiction book, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, was also released that year. It investigated the Atlanta child murders, a series of brutal killings in 1979 and 1980, the handling of that investigation by Atlanta authorities, and Wayne Williams, the black man who was accused of the crimes.

In 1986, Baldwin was awarded the Légion D'Honneur, the highest decoration in France, by President François Mitterand. Other awards in his lifetime included a 1976 honorary degree, Doctor of Letters, from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and another, Doctor of Humane Letters, in 1984 from City College of New York in his native Harlem.

Also in 1986, Baldwin made a second sojourn to Russia, with fellow American writer/playwright Arthur Miller, this time to meet with Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union. The purpose of the gathering was to

99 "The Art of Fiction No. 78," 76.
100 "The Art of Fiction No. 78," 79.

continue discussing the pursuit of peace with input from notable artistic and literary figures around the world.[101] Baldwin was included in these kinds of discussions because he never shied away from the reality of race relations in the United States. He spoke passionately about the treatment of African Americans and did not shrink when interviewers demanded explanations for his viewpoints. It was the marrying of these in his works that left an indelible mark on the literary world and inspired generations of writers, including Toni Morrison and Maya Angelou, to put their truth on paper. He was unusual in the level of support he leant to other artists. There was no hint of selfishness or jealousy in his dealings with those aspiring to literary greatness. His devotion to understanding black women, as shown in his interview with Lorde, is remarkable.
Baldwin is credited with inspiring a number of people to engage more fully with the movement or their art. In 1983, for example, while at his 71st Street home, Baldwin sent a letter of support to poet and author Albert Russo, about his friend "the black woman novelist, Toni Morrison," calling her, "in every way beautiful, extraordinary, swift."[102]

On December 1, 1987, James Baldwin died from stomach cancer at the age of 63 in St. Paul de Vence, France. His death rippled across the black and literary communities. David Leeming shared intimate details of those last days:

> During the last week of his life I helped Jimmy's brother David and his friends Bernard and Lucien care for him. During the night when it was my turn to watch, we would talk of many things, but travel was always a theme. He would someday return to America to do a film. We talked of a visit to Indian country in the American southwest; he had never been there – another ocean to cross.[103]

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[101] Francis X. Clines, "Peter Ustinov Talks of Gorbachev Chat," *The New York Times*, October 30, 1986, A10.
[102] James Baldwin to Albert Russo, April 11, 1983, in James Baldwin Papers, box 4, folder 7.
[103] "James Baldwin: Voyages in Search of Love," 137.

In poet, author, and activist Maya Angelou's eulogy for Baldwin, she reflected on how she was personally affected by knowing him and being known by him:

> You knew, didn't you, how I needed your language and the mind that formed it? How I relied on your fierce courage to tame wildernesses for me? How strengthened I was by the certainty that came from knowing you would never hurt me? You knew, didn't you, how I loved your love? You knew. This then is no calamity. No. This is jubilee. "Our crown," you said, "has already been bought and paid for. All we have to do," you said, "is wear it."[104]

Though he died in France, his funeral was held at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, where crowds of people gathered to honor him on December 8, 1987.[105] Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison and poet and activist Amiri Baraka eulogized him. He was laid to rest at Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York. His sister Gloria became the literary executor of Baldwin's estate and sold the 71st Street property to its current owner in the fall of 1994.[106] Before the sale of the house, Gloria, her daughter Aisha, and her granddaughter continued to live there. Following his death, Baldwin's apartment was used as an office in which the family stored his papers and records, among other items.[107]

In 2014, the 90th anniversary year of his birth, East 128th Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues, in Harlem, was co-named "James Baldwin Place" in his honor. Today, Baldwin continues to be the subject of scholarly works, debate, and discussion, and his influence and the complexity of his life are still being explored.

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[104] Toni Morrison, "Life in His Language," *The New York Times*, December 20, 1987, BR27.

[105] Morrison, "Life in His Language."

[106] The property was conveyed by El-Rhon Corp. (signed by Gloria E.K. Smart) to Zingarella Realty Corp. See Manhattan property conveyances (recorded November 28, 1994).

[107] Karim Karefa, phone call with Amanda Davis, March 27, 2019.

Perhaps Toni Morrison said it best, "Jimmy, there is too much to think about you, and too much to feel. The difficulty is your life refuses summation – it always did – and invites contemplation instead."[108]

[108] Morrison, "Life in His Language."

**A Selection of James Baldwin's Published Works during the years he lived at 137 West 71st Street** [109]

**1965**
*Going To Meet The Man*; Dial; collected short stories: "The Rockpile"; "The Outing"; "The Man Child"; "Previous Condition"; "Sonny's Blues"; "This Morning This Evening So Soon"; "Come Out The Wilderness"; "Going To Meet The Man."

**1968**
*The Amen Corner*; Doubleday; a play.
*Tell Me How Long The Train's Been Gone*; Dial; a novel.

**1969**
*Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism*; Barron; an essay.

**1971**
*A Rap On Race: James Baldwin and Margaret Mead*; Lippincott; a dialogue.

**1972**
*No Name in the Street*; Dial; essays.
*One Day When I Was Lost: A Scenario Based on 'The Autobiography of Malcolm X'*; Joseph (London, 1972); Dial (New York, 1973); a screenplay.

**1973**
*A Dialogue*; Lippincott; a conversation with black poet / activist Nikki Giovanni.

**1974**
*If Beale Street Could Talk*; Dial; a novel.

**1976**
*The Devil Finds Work*; Dial; essays.
*Little Man Little Man: A Story of Childhood*: Dial; a children's book by James Baldwin and Yoran Cazac.

[109] "James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket Biographical Timeline."

**1979**
*Just Above My Head*; Dial; also published by Stock in French as Harlem Quartet (1987); a novel.

**1983**
*Jimmy's Blues*; St. Martin's; poems.

**1985**
*The Evidence of Things Not Seen*; Holt, essays.
*The Price of The Ticket: Collected Non-Fiction*; St. Martin's Press; essays.

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United States Census, 1900, E.D. 465, p. 12.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



Verbal Boundary Description
The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the attached map with scale.

Boundary Justification
The boundary was drawn to include the original parcel associated with this building.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 1

Photographer, Photos 1, 2: Christopher Brazee, 2016
174 4th Street
Troy, NY 12180

Photographer, photos 3, 4, 5: Amanda Davis, 2019
71 West 23rd Street, #903
New York, NY 10010

Tiff Files: CD-R of .tiff files on file at
National Park Service
Washington, D.C.
and
New York State Historic Preservation Office
Waterford, NY 12188

Views:

0001. façade looking north
0002. façade, entrance detail
0003. interior, ground floor hallway, looking south toward entrance
0004. interior, Baldwin apartment, looking south from former bedroom into former living room; original entrance in far right corner of photo; original location of dividing wall marked by two support columns
0005: interior, Baldwin apartment, looking north into former bedroom; window and door to garden can be seen; dividing wall location marked by large exposed beam and two support columns

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number his. photos Page 1

James Baldwin on the cover of *Time* Magazine, May 17, 1963

☐ See continuation sheet

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



Screen shots from a "10 Minute Profile on the Writer James Baldwin" filmed c1979 in and around the author's West 71st Street Residence. The video can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nJwXFDt28w

Baldwin in his apartment

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number his photos Page 3

Baldwin with his mother and other relatives in his mother's apartment

See continuation sheet

Baldwin's mother in her own apartment

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number his. photos Page 5

Baldwin entering his mother's apartment

See continuation sheet

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Baldwin carrying a child – possibly his mother's apartment

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Baldwin with a group of family members in New York City – not West 71st Street, possibly Harlem

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number his. photos Page 8

This photo was taken by Jack Manning of the *New York Times* on June 1, 1972 in the garden of Baldwin's home on W. 71st Street

See continuation sheet

James Baldwin Residence
New York, New York Co., NY

*137 West 71st Street*
*New York, NY 10023*

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 325 650 1,300 Feet

James Baldwin Residence

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

# James Baldwin Residence
New York, New York Co., NY

*137 West 71st Street*
*New York, NY 10023*

4517000
4516000
4515000
4514000
4513000
4512000

584000
585000
586000
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588000

*Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N*
*Projection: Transverse Mercator*
*Datum: North American 1983*
*Units: Meter*

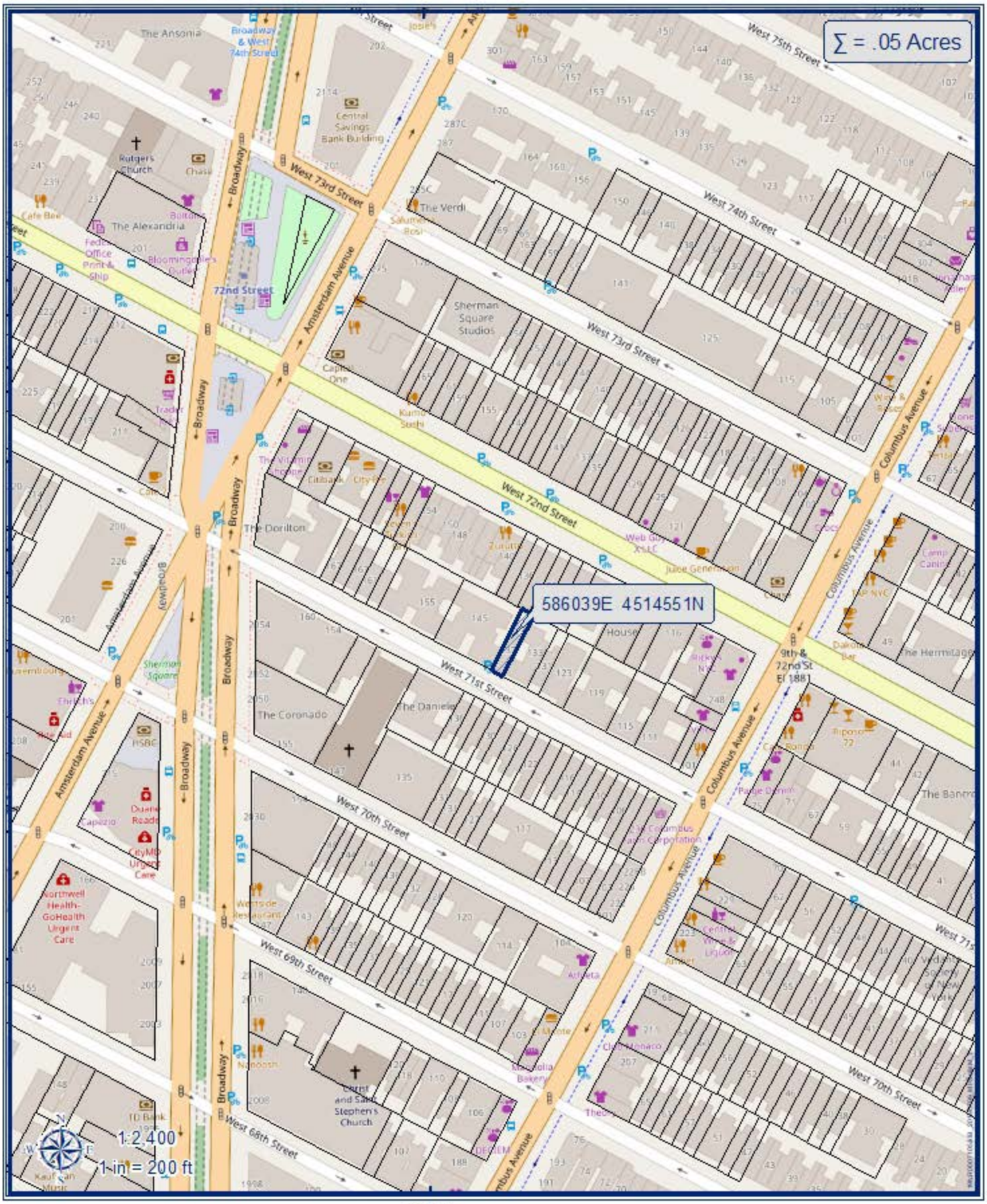
Feet
0 650 1,300 2,600

James Baldwin Residence

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

# James Baldwin Residence
New York, New York Co., NY

*137 West 71st Street*
*New York, NY 10023*




586000

*Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N*
*Projection: Transverse Mercator*
*Datum: North American 1983*
*Units: Meter*

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James Baldwin Residence

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

James Baldwin Residence
New York, New York Co., NY

*137 West 71st Street*
*New York, NY 10023*

586000

*Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N*
*Projection: Transverse Mercator*
*Datum: North American 1983*
*Units: Meter*

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James Baldwin Residence

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

137
JEEP

137
NO MENUS
NO FLYERS
DO NOT LEAVE ANYTHING
PLEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

| | |
|---|---|
| Requested Action: | Nomination |
| Property Name: | Baldwin, James, House |
| Multiple Name: | |
| State & County: | NEW YORK, New York |

| Date Received: | Date of Pending List: | Date of 16th Day: | Date of 45th Day: | Date of Weekly List: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7/18/2019 | 8/9/2019 | 8/26/2019 | 9/3/2019 | 9/6/2019 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Reference number: | SG100004332 |
| Nominator: | SHPO |

Reason For Review:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| __ Appeal | __ PDIL | __ Text/Data Issue |
| __ SHPO Request | __ Landscape | __ Photo |
| __ Waiver | **X** National | __ Map/Boundary |
| __ Resubmission | __ Mobile Resource | __ Period |
| __ Other | __ TCP | __ Less than 50 years |
| | __ CLG | |

__**X**__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __**9/3/2019**__ Date

| | |
|---|---|
| Abstract/Summary Comments: | |
| Recommendation/ Criteria | |

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

**Landmarks Preservation Commission**

**Kate Lemos McHale**
Director of Research

**1 Centre Street**
**9th Floor North**
**New York, NY 10007**

**212 669 7902** tel
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RECEIVED
JUN - 7 2019
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

June 4, 2019

R. Daniel Mackay
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Re: James Baldwin Residence, 137 West 71st Street, Manhattan (Block 1143, Lot 19)

Dear Deputy Commissioner Mackay:

I am writing on behalf of Chair Sarah Carroll in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the James Baldwin Residence, located at 137 West 71st Street in Manhattan, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The agency has reviewed the materials you submitted and has determined that the building appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. We note that the building is located within the LPC's Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District, designated on April 24, 1990, and was calendared for consideration as an Individual Landmark for its association with James Baldwin on May 14, 2019. Therefore, based on this review, the Commission supports the nomination of the building.

Sincerely,

Kate Lemos McHale

Kate Lemos McHale
klemosmchale@lpc.nyc.gov

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**
Governor

**ERIK KULLESEID**
Acting Commissioner

14 July 2019

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following three nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

James Baldwin Residence, New York New York County
James H. Case III and Laura Rockefeller Case House, Van Hornesville, Herkimer County
Innisfree, Millbrook, Dutchess County

The James Baldwin House nomination was prepared by the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project team as part of New York's Underrepresented Properties Grant for LGBT properties in New York City. As part of our reporting requirements for this grant, a slightly earlier version of the nomination was submitted to NPS and reviewed by Jim Gabbert of your office. Jim provided positive comments on this draft, which was subsequently revised and presented to the State Review Board.

The New York SHPO would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Barbara Wyatt of your office, who provided substantial advice and guidance to the consultant who prepared the nomination for Innisfree, an important example of modern landscape design. Barbara helped the consultant to conceptualize and organize the draft and provided instructions on counting landscape features.

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office