

PH002-102

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Franklin	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 69-12-18-0023	DATE 12/23/69

1. NAME

COMMON:
Nordica Homestead

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Birthplace of Lillian Norton (Lillian Nordica)

2. LOCATION N of Farmington on Holly Rd. off ME 27

STREET AND NUMBER:
RFD#3 on the Holly Road about 1/2 mile from Route 27

CITY OR TOWN:
Farmington

STATE: Maine CODE: 18-2750 COUNTY: Franklin CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
The Nordica Memorial Association, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:
R.F.D. #3

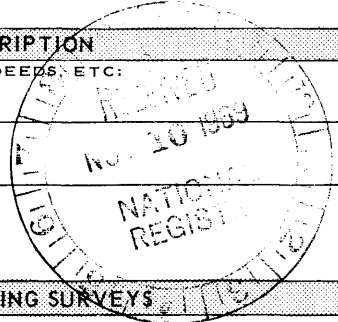
CITY OR TOWN: Farmington STATE: Maine CODE: 18-2750

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:



6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maine
COUNTY: Franklin
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Homestead serves as a museum for the large collection of Lillian Nordica belongings. Two large collections were found in the 1930's. The complete collection consists of wardrobe, trunks, rare china, stage jewels, art objects, a chair given by Diamond Jim Brady, a Chinese chair given by the Empress of China, furniture and autographed photographs. There are two life sized portraits of her. One of which is located in the Homestead.

There are three rooms open for public inspection. In the Gown Room many of her costumes for opera or concerts are found on forms. There are nearby photographs of her wearing some of these gowns. There are glittering stage jewels displayed in a casket which once held a million dollars worth of her real jewels. Here is the chair given to Nordica by Diamond Jim Brady. A recent acquisition is a large piece of the gold plaster molding from the old Metropolitan Opera House. This rests on a large piece of the first gold curtain used at the Metropolitan. Nordica sang in La Giocenda the night it was first seen by the public.

In the front room is the first portrait of Nordica. This room is filled with many mementoes: stage jewellery, the plaque from the Liberty ship, The Lillian Nordica, furniture and autographed pictures.

Immediately off the front room is Nordica's bedroom. In this room, besides the bedroom furnishings, are the rare China and two expensive gowns used by the diva. The first gown is of gold cloth and cost \$3,000. The second is a wedding gown of white satin with pearls and silver lace.

The house itself is presently occupied by the caretaker's family. The site overlooking the Sandy River and Mount Blue is some two miles from Farmington on the Holly Road. The well preserved house rests on a 115 acre tract. The house was partially restored in 1910 and finally restored in 1928. Only one tenth of the Nordica collection is presently in the Homestead.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Born in the Nordica Homestead as Lillian Norton in 1857, she lived there until she was five years old. Moving from the old Homestead, she lived in Farmington Village for a short time and then moved to Boston. Her mother had intended that her sister Whilemena be given serious voice training, but with Whilemena's death, her mother turned to Lillian, the youngest of her six daughters. Following some private lessons, Lillian Norton entered the New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, her first instructor being John O'Neil. Lillian went abroad to perfect her vocal training and to secure the opportunity of a debut in a European opera house. When she was 21, this opportunity came in Milan, Italy, in the role of Elvina in Don Giovanni. At the suggestion of her teacher, San Giovanni, she then Italianized her name first to Giglia Nordica (Lily of the North) and then to Lillian Nordica. Accompanied by her mother, Lillian spent ten years living in Europe. They moved from Italy to Paris, to St. Petersburg, to London. Progress was slow, but Nordica was arriving as a singer. She had her American debut at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1891. She had arrived as a star, but she set a new goal, that of impersonating the Wagnerian roles. She studied for Wagnerian roles under the tutelage of Wagner's widow, becoming one of the few sopranos ever to sing Wagnerian roles in tune.

In 1911 she returned to Farmington to be presented the Nordica Homestead by two of her sisters. The most memorable event of her visit was the concert she gave before a packed house made up of her townspeople. Nordica possessed a voice of liquid purity, exceptional range and magnificent power. These combined with a charming personality, flair for the dramatic, and obsession to study enabled her to reach fame in every corner of the earth. She was married three times, but none of her marriages were successful. Her first husband died when he was lost on a balloon flight, she divorced her second and her third spouse outlived her. In the fall of 1913 Nordica began a concert tour which extended to the Pacific coast, to Honolulu and Australia. In the Gulf of Papua in December she was taken seriously ill with pneumonia, and not until March was she able to continue her journey to Batavia, Java, where she passed away May 10, 1914. In 1928 the Nordica Homestead opened to the public and has been open every since that time. Two large collections of Nordicana were acquired in 1931 and 1935, adding a wealth of interesting pieces to the homestead.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Glacken, Ira, Yankee Diva
 Newspaper article, Lily of the North, Christian Science Monitor, Oct. 3, 1936
 Stinchfield, Ben, Museum for a Lily, Music Journal, June, 1969, pp24 & 25
 Newspaper article by Harriett Houghton, May 3, 1967.

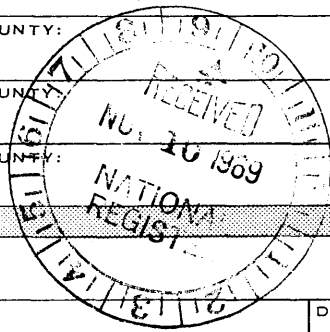
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	44°	41'	49"	70°	8'	51"						
NE	44°	41'	59"	70°	8'	17"						
SE	44°	41'	42"	70°	8'	35"						
SW	44°	41'	30"	70°	9'	5"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 John W. Briggs, Historian

ORGANIZATION
 State Park & Recreation Comm.

STREET AND NUMBER:
 State House

CITY OR TOWN:
 Augusta

STATE
 Maine

DATE
 November 7, 1969

CODE
 0160

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Lawrence Stuart
 Lawrence Stuart
 Title Director

Date November 7, 1969

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connally
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

DEC 23 1969

Date _____

ATTEST:
William J. Swartz
 Keeper of The National Register

Date DEC 10 1969

SEE INSTRUCTIONS
 19/4909 020/49 000
 1-16 76 000
 19/4909 020/49 000
 19/4909 020/49 000
 19/4909 020/49 000

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
69-18-0023	12/23/69

(Number all entries)

Edwin Norton, the father of Lillian Norton, built the house in 1840. Mr. Norton was a farmer and a member of a large family who owned and operated farms in the Townships of Farmington, New Vineyard and Fairbanks, Maine. Edwin Norton chose the farm on which he built his home for its central geographical location in relation to the vast holdings of his relatives. This farm in the rolling hills of central Maine is typical of the style of those distant years. The wooden frame house which Norton built is modest and trim without benefit of porch or portico: a small four square building with a couple of rooms under its single gable and an ell out behind. The original exterior was sheathed with painted clapboards which in these early days was a mark of distinction and expense over the usual frame dwelling house sheathed with split cedar shingles. Windows were bordered with blinds. Two chimneys served the heating system of the house. The house was raised on a foundation of cellar walls made of split granite slabs. The interior consisted of low ceilings, sprigged wallpaper on plastered walls and spatter floors (planed pine boards, painted first in a solid color then spattered with paint drops of several colors). The Homestead is situated on an elevation which over looks the hills and mountains famous for this part of Maine. There is a gorgeous view. In the distance from the house is a large barn. In the productive years of the 1860s there were other outbuildings.

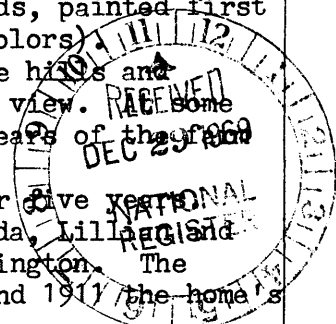
Lillian Nordica was born in 1857. She lived in this house for five years. By this time her father, Edwin, had died and her mother, Amanda, Lillian and her sisters moved from the homestead into the village of Farmington. The farm itself was eventually sold. Between the years of 1863 and 1911 the home's ownership was out of the hands of the Norton family.

In 1911 this farm of 115 acres was purchased by Lillian Norton's sisters, who redecorated and furnished the house, improved the grounds, called the place Norton Woods and presented it to Mme. Nordica. In August of that year Mme. Nordica came there for a visit. The sisters continued to spend a portion of the summers there - until the death of Nordica in 1914.

Eventually they too passed to the Great Beyond. The farm went into other hands, was unoccupied and gradually fell into disuse. The house became a sad ruin.

This became a personal matter in the minds and hearts of friends and admirers of Lillian Nordica. In December of 1927 the Nordica Memorial Association, Inc. was organized for the purpose of restoring the birthplace.

Since that time the farm, house and grounds have been restored to a point wherein today it is a fitting memorial to America's first and greatest prima donna. The house and barn today contain only a small portion of the Nordicana collection which has been gathered together by the Nordica Memorial Association, Inc. There is only room enough in the house and barn to display 10% of the collection held. The remainder lies in storage in Farmington. The aim of the Association is to secure eventually a modern fireproof museum to house the collection. This museum will be built adjacent to the Homestead. The collection now owned by the Association is the preponderant part of all articles which could be labeled Nordicana. The land on which the Nordica Homestead is located consists of an area of 115 acres. It is owned by the Nordica Memorial Homestead Association, Inc.



U.S.G.S. 1:5 min.

FARMINGTON, MAINE Nordica Homestead

N 4430—W 7000/15

1956

STATE OF MAINE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

44° 41' 49"
44° 41' 59"
44° 41' 42"
44° 41' 30"

70° 8' 51"
70° 8' 17"
70° 8' 35"
70° 9' 5"

ES
: INTERIOR
RVEY

SELEY 33 MI. HILLIPS 11 MI. STRONG 4.5 MI. KINGFIELD 16 MI. NEW VINEYARD 4 MI. (KINGFIELD) ANSON (JU)

