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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Walt Whitman House

AND/OR COMMON Walt Whitman House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 330 Mickle Street

CITY, TOWN Camden VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

STATE New Jersey CODE 34 COUNTY Camden CODE 7

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of New Jersey-Department of Environmental Protection, David Bardin, Comm.

STREET & NUMBER State Capitol State Street

CITY, TOWN Trenton VICINITY OF STATE New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Camden County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Camden STATE New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE 1934, 1936 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress Annex, Division of Prints and Photos

CITY, TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Whitman House, 330 Mickle Street, Camden, is a simple, two story frame house, with a tin-covered gable roof. The gray, clapboarded house sits between two three story brick houses, one of which is inhabited and the other of which is owned by the state and is scheduled for demolition. The house which formerly faced the Whitman house from across the street have been removed and a vacant lot occupies the space. The house was built in three sections, the first is two rooms deep and contains the parlor and study on the first floor, and Whitman's bedroom on the second. There is a full, slightly raised cellar under this section. The second section is attached on the rear (south) wall and this contains a dining room on the first floor and Mrs. Stevens' (Whitman's fellow lodger) bedroom on the second floor. This addition has a pent roof. Attached the rear wall of the second section is the one story, pent-roofed kitchen. The first section only is maintained as a Whitman museum, with Whitman's works, chairs, and deacon's bench, among other pieces. The other rooms are used as the quarters of the curator. The house still has its original floorboards, although the clapboarding was replaced in 1955. Steam heat has replaced stoves, and electricity has replaced gas and candle lighting. In the rear of the house is a wooden privy, now used as a storage shed. The back yard is enclosed by a wooden fence.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

1884-1892

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

For the last eight years of his life, from 1884 until 1892, Walt Whitman occupied this plain frame house at 330 Mickle Street in Camden, New Jersey. Although the years of his greatest work were behind him when he resided here, it is the surviving structure most intimately associated with the Poet of Democracy. The small two-story house is currently maintained as a Whitman museum by the State of New Jersey.

BIOGRAPHY

Walt Whitman is popularly known as our "poet of democracy." Born on Long Island at Huntington, he worked as a newspaper man in Brooklyn. He travelled throughout the eastern United States and became fairly well known as the author of "Leaves of Grass." Many people did not recognize this poet as a genius during his lifetime, but he is now generally considered well in the forefront of American's most distinguished writers. He displayed a disregard of literary conventions and his writings were considered coarse or were ignored for many years after his "Leaves of Grass" was published in 1855. However, Ralph Waldo Emerson recognized this greatness at once and John Burroughs, who was for a time a fellow government worker in Washington, encouraged him consistently. British critics including Swinburne, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and George Saintsbury accepted him at full value immediately.

Whitman came to Camden from Washington in 1873. Recovering from a recent paralytic stroke, he had been summoned to Camden by his brother George, in whose home Whitman's mother was critically ill. She died in May 1873 and Whitman, himself too ill to return to Washington, made his home with his brother for the next eleven years.

When George Whitman's business was moved to Burlington, New Jersey, Walt elected to remain in Camden and on April 1, 1884, bought a small two-story frame house then numbered 328, on Mickle Street, since renumbered 330. Whitman invited the tenants then in the house to remain at reduced rent in exchange for supplying his meals. The house soon proved too small for joint occupancy and the tenants moved, leaving the poet with a few pieces of furniture, his books and papers. Unable to care for himself, Whitman asked a neighbor, Mary O. Davis, a widow, to move into the house with her furniture and maintain it for him, rent free and with a small stipend.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Elizabeth Keller, Walt Whitman in Mickle Street (New York, 1921).
 Charles Shedd, "Walt Whitman House" National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, 12/12/62.
 Ralph Westcott, Walt Whitman in Camden, a pamphlet published by the Walt Whitman Foundation and the State of New Jersey Dept. of Conservation and Economic Development (Trenton, 1952).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	4 8 9 4 3 0	4 4 2 1 1 6 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Walt Whitman House landmark boundaries consist of the house's lot boundaries. Beginning at the juncture of the north (front) wall with on the east, proceed west approximately 54' to the junction of the front wall with the front wall of the house adjoining on the west, thence south approximately 150' to the fence marking the rear boundary of the lot, thence east along that fence approximately to its juncture with the fence forming the eastern boundary of the lot, thence north along that fence line for approximately 150' to the point of origin.

These boundaries enclose the Whitman House with the historic lot boundaries.
 LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

6/6/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L. Street, NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___

STATE ___

LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8/31/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

William Labovale

DATE

6/15/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER

8

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With a modest income from his published works and the gifts of friends and admirers Whitman was able to live comfortably if not elegantly. In his last years, while living in the Mickle Street house, he issued a new edition of "Leaves of Grass" and published two collections containing new poems. Shortly before his death he began the construction of his tomb in Camden's Harleigh Cemetery. On May 26, 1892 he died, too soon to see the fruits of the literary criticism that would accord him a place in the first rank of American poets.

Shortly after World War II the little house on Mickle Street, built around 1848, was acquired by the City of Camden from Whitman's heirs. An advisory committee, the Walt Whitman Foundation, was formed to oversee the preservation and development of the property. Furnishings known to have been in the house during Whitman's lifetime books, papers and Whitman memorabilia. In 1947, the property was transferred to the New Jersey State Department of Conservation, although its contents remain the property of the Walt Whitman Foundation. The house stands in a row of dilapidated brick dwellings, one of which, at 328, next to the poet's home, has been acquired by the State. The most essential maintenance is performed by the State, and a custodian-guide lives on the property. Considering the limitation of funds available for its maintenance, the house is in reasonably good condition. Proposals have been made for redevelopment in the area, although the effect of this program on the Whitman house is not certain. A number of the brick houses in the row containing the Whitman house existed during the poet's lifetime and it would appear desirable to retain at least those adjacent to the property as part of the historic setting.