

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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AUG 29 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Vallee Family House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

36 Monroe Avenue

street & number 36 Monroe Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Westbrook

N/A vicinity

state Maine

code ME

county Cumberland

code 005

zip code 04092

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Lucas S. Peterson S.H.P.O.
Signature of certifying official
Maine Historic Preservation Commission

8/26/88
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Beth L. Savage

10/13/88

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th CenturyAmerican MovementsOther: Square House

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls Wood/Weatherboard

roof Asphaltother Broad front porch with
gabled entrance

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Vallee Family House is a two-story hip roofed "square house" sheathed in weatherboards. It stands on a narrow city lot on Monroe Avenue in Westbrook and is accompanied by a diminutive rectangular garage.

Facing west, the house has a two-bay facade with a full width hip roofed porch. A broad gable featuring bracketed eaves frames the entryway behind which is a projecting vestibule. To the south on the recessed wall is a large fixed sash window surmounted by a leaded glass transom. The second story contains a pair of symmetrically placed three-over-one windows. A hip roofed dormer punctuates the center of the west roof plane.

The north side elevation has a door sheltered by a gabled overdoor and flanking three-over-one windows on the first story, an inter-story centrally located stair window and two windows on the second story. Its counterpart south wall features an exposed face interior chimney flanked on the first story by small leaded glass windows, a three-over-one window and a narrow rectangular shed roofed bay. Two additional openings are located to the east of the chimney on the second story. The rear elevation contains an original enclosed hip roofed porch with eight three-over-one windows and a door as well as three second story windows.

Inside, the finish reflects the modest appearance of the exterior. The side hall leads to an open string stair with square newel posts and balusters; through a wide opening into the parlor; and to the kitchen located behind the stairs. A plain brick fireplace/mantel is located in the parlor. A pair of French doors framed by leaded glass sidelights connects the dining room to the rear porch. The second floor contains three small bedrooms and a bath.

The garage stands at the southeast corner of the lot. It is sheathed in weatherboards and covered by a hip roof with a small front dormer. A pair of wooden doors marks the entrance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Entertainment

Period of Significance
1914-c.1922

Significant Dates
1914

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
Vallee, Rudy

Architect/Builder
Robinson, O. George, Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Vallee Family House is a modest but intact two-story frame dwelling commonly known as a "square house". It was constructed, according to family tradition, in 1914 by local builder O. George Robinson for Charles A. Vallee, a middle class Westbrook druggist and the father of Rudy Vallee, an entertainer of national significance beginning in the 1930s. Because the house was Vallee's residence during the years in which his musical interests and talent were initially shaped, it is being nominated to the National Register under criterion B.

Hubert Prior Vallee, known to millions as Rudy Vallee, was born on July 28, 1901, in Island Pond, Vermont. About 1905 he and his family moved to Westbrook, Maine, where his father pursued his career as a druggist, becoming the proprietor of Woodman's Pharmacy by 1910. Vallee attended the local public schools and, as recounted in his autobiography, worked grudgingly at his father's store. During this period Vallee discovered his keen interest in music, beginning with a set of toy drums that by the age of twelve was replaced with a real snare drum, and then a complete drum outfit that enabled him to play in the high school orchestra.

Vallee himself was unsure of the exact place of his debut as an entertainer, but he claimed that it was either as the replacement drummer of the Westbrook City Band on Armistice Day, 1918, or in the local Star Theatre where he was a temporary member of the orchestra that accompanied the silent films. By this time his interests had broadened to include vocal renditions of the popular songs of the day. His rapidly expanding fascination with all aspects of the entertainment world was greatly augmented when his father acquired a phonograph and records for the drugstore as well as during a brief period of employment at the Star Theatre sweeping floors and operating the projectors. In his subsequent employment as an usher at the newly opened Deluxe Strand Theatre in Portland that Vallee soon developed an enthusiasm for the saxophone, an instrument whose mastery he soon acquired. By 1920 Vallee was performing in a variety of local bands including "Welch's Famous Novelty Jazz Orchestra", "The Crescent Orchestra" and "The Famous Harmonic Orchestra".

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Remembering Rudy Vallee." Maine Sunday Telegram (Portland).
April 17, 1988.

Obituary. New York Times. July 4, 1986.

Vallee, Rudy, with McKean, Gil. My Time is Your Time: The Story of Rudy Vallee. New York: Ivan Obolensky, Inc. 1962.

See continuation sheet

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 Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1

UTM References

A

1	9	3	9	0	4	6	0
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4	8	3	6	3	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property of less than one acre occupies the City of Westbrook tax map 29, lot 197.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the buildings and entire city lot historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1988

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132

city or town Augusta state Maine zip code 04333

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2

The saxophone appears to have been Vallee's key to his further rise to prominence as an entertainer. Central to his success was the ability to learn new techniques such as the method by which Rudy Wiedoeft, a leading saxophonist of the period, produced the ethereal tonal quality that was evident in his recordings. Wiedoeft, in fact, would become Vallee's mentor and the inspiration for his assumed name. Soon, Vallee was offered a position in the orchestra at the Strand Theatre where he remained through his tenure at the University of Maine in 1921-1922. Disillusioned with the university after his first year, Vallee subsequently transferred to Yale where he graduated in 1927 after spending a year in London. Throughout this period Vallee's entertainment career continued to develop and mature through a variety of mediums and in various places.

The period at Yale marks the end of Vallee's significant association with the house in Westbrook, although it continued to serve as his parents' and then brother's residence. His own visits to Westbrook become infrequent as he gained national stature in the 1930s. While he did make use of a small summer camp that he built along the shore of Kezar Lake in Oxford County, Maine, the very early years of his career are best symbolized by the modest house where he lived with his parents and siblings.