

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

**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

Louis Armstrong House

AND/OR COMMON

Louis Armstrong House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

3456 107th Street

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Corona, Long Island

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

__ VICINITY OF

9th

STATE

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY

Queens

CODE

081

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Louis Armstrong

STREET & NUMBER

3456 107th Street

CITY, TOWN

Corona, Long Island

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Registry of Deeds, Queens County Courthouse (212) 657-4666

STREET & NUMBER

Sutphin Blvd.

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None Known

DATE

__ FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two and a half story, red brick residence is a twenty-five foot unattached rowhouse. There is a two story addition from the grade level that projects eight feet in front of the original building line on the street elevation. A single car garage, with a slightly recessed wood overhead door, is attached to the house. From the garage a six foot high brick wall runs continuous around the six lot site. The street frontage of the site is approximately 125 feet.

The window treatments and sizes on the street elevation are uniform and are directly under each other. All windows have limestone sills and lintels with a marble voussoir centered above each. At the first floor there are three double-hung windows in one opening. While at the second floor, there are three equally spaced double-hung windows with a fourth directly above the main entrance. The main entrance, 10 steps above grade, is a wood door set in a pointed arched marble surround. There is a second entrance at grade from the side of the front addition. The two side elevations are similar with three uniform windows directly under each other, on the first and second floor and a single window at the attic level.

There is a continuous brick parapet wall, on all sides except the rear elevation. At the street elevation the parapet is topped by a overhanging wood cornice. This cornice is supported by four equally spaced modillions below. Four decorative festoons are centered in the fascia between each modillion. A plain continuous horizontal moulding extends across the base of the fascia. On both side elevations the parapet wall is stepped and topped with limestone caps.

A small enclosed, single story frame porch has been added at the rear entrance. The rear yard has a flagstone patio with flagstone steps down to the garden area. Directly behind the patio, at the rear property line, a 15 foot by 10 foot masonry storage room has been built.

The side lots have been landscaped, and are enclosed by a brick wall, which affords a comfortable outdoor entertainment area. A stucco, semi-circular, slate topped bar extends from the garden side of the house. A brick bathroom accessible from the garden, has been added at the rear of the house.

The turn of the century, 11 room house, has been almost completely renovated during the 35 year ownership of the Armstrongs. Being in excellent repair, the house would require no major work as a landmark site. In addition Mrs. Armstrong indicates a desire to have the house become a memorial to her late husband at some later date. Also much of the interior remains as Mr. Armstrong used it and many of his possessions and artifacts are there.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Afro-American History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	Louis Armstrong (1900-1971) Residency (1940-1971)	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Not Known
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, whose career spanned more than fifty-five years, was unquestionably one of the most creative, influential, and popular American musicians, arrangers and composers. Armstrong was a part of the catalytic forces which brought the blues and jazz from the alleys and honky tonks of the deep south up the Mississippi to what would culminate in its becoming a recognized American art form. Louis Armstrong's life and career parallels the rise of jazz in respectability and acceptance.

Having overcome numerous obstacles because of color, Armstrong attained a station in the music world which was achieved by few of his contemporaries. Armstrong took the improvisational impulses of his black background, combined with an acute sense of music, and created a new sensation both nationally and internationally. During the 1960s, Armstrong under the auspices of the United States Department of State became the outstanding American Ambassador of Goodwill. He toured around the world carrying the message of humanity through his music.

Having gained a place in the limelight of the world, Louis Armstrong maintained his sense of conscience and did not refrain from speaking out on the injustices faced by minority peoples throughout the world. His music was of such character as to appeal to young and old, rich and poor. The level of his achievements in music is only matched by the concern for humanity his life exemplifies. Like no other, his talent and abilities influenced the musical heritage of the nation.

BIOGRAPHY

Louis Armstrong, grandson of former slaves, and son of Mary Ann (Maryann) and Willie Armstrong, was born July 4, 1900 in New Orleans, in a district of the city known as "Back O' Town." Young Louis was raised by his grandmother, a deeply religious woman who sent him to public school and Sunday school and of whom he always spoke of with affection.

It was these early years with his grandmother that sparked Louis' music interest. From an early age, he developed a fondness for music and was a member of the church choir. In a section of New Orleans - called Brick Row - Louis began to take note of the musicians who played in the local honky tonks. One such place was the Funky Butt hall, a huge, battered building, old, with large cracks in the walls. Buddy Bolden, Bunk Johnson, and the Eagle Band, often played at this place, also "King" Joe Oliver, who at the time was the most noted trumpeter in New Orleans, and who later was to have the greatest impact on Louis' career.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Allen, Walter C. and Rust, Brian A. King Joe Oliver. London: Sadgwick and Jackson Ltd., 1958.

Armstrong, Louis. Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans. New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1954.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	59,60,7,0	451,210,3,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Louis Armstrong House sits on the lot numbered 3456 on 107th Street in the Corona District of Queens County, New York facing west. Adjacent the house to the south separated by a distance of approximately 8 feet is another residential structure. Around the west, north and east sides of the house runs a brick wall. The boundary of the property commencing at the point of juncture of the Armstrong property and the adjoining lot on the 107th Street side runs counterminous with this wall, north 125', then east approximately 82', then south 125' and then west to the point of origin.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY (Continued)

NAME / TITLE

Lynne Gomez Graves, Historical Projects Director

ORGANIZATION

Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation

DATE

3 February 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1420 N Street, Northwest

TELEPHONE

462-2519

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

TITLE

DATE

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET Louis Armstrong
 House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Two

It was an unfortunate incident that led to his learning to play an instrument. On New Year's Day, 1913, Louis was arrested for firing a gun loaded with blanks. This had long been the custom but was considered illegal. For this, Louis was taken to Juvenile Court, and remanded to the Colored Waif's Home for Boys.

At first, Louis found it difficult to adjust in the Home. After joining the Home's Brass band, he became more settled. Mr. Peter Davis, a black keeper, who served as janitor and music teacher, taught Louis how to expand his musical talent - Louis experienced with the tamborine, trombone, and the bugle. Initially, Louis' relationship with Mr. Davis was uneasy but through the young bugler's persistence and dedication, he became one of the most progressive and well liked individuals in the Home. He later shifted to the coronet, and Davis taught him how to play "Home, Sweet Home." Louis described his jubilation thusly, "Then, I was in seventh heaven. Unless I was dreaming, my ambition had been realized." Because of his abilities, he was made band leader, and had an opportunity to travel throughout the city whenever the band participated in parades.

After staying approximately a year and a half at the Waif's Home, Louis was released in the custody of his father who had remarried. Because of the lack of resources his father thought it was best for Louis to go and live with his mother.

Louis was excited about returning to live with his mother and to his old neighborhood. At the age of fifteen, Louis took two jobs: one playing his cornet in Henry Ponce's place; the other shoveling coal. When the job at Ponce's ended, his only chance to play his horn was at occasional funerals. The small group he formed during World War I with Joe Lindsey was often without work and Louis accepted various odd jobs to maintain himself.

In 1918, Armstrong received his first job offer to play in an established band. Respected even by jazz trumpeter "King" Oliver, the young Armstrong was gaining notoriety. When "King" Oliver left for Chicago, Kid Ory asked him to take Oliver's place in his band. Armstrong often played with other bands on the nights Kid Ory's band was idle.

When the Armistice came, Armstrong stopped working in the coal yard and devoted full time to his music. He could now play at the newly opened clubs throughout the city. He played part-time with Oscar Celestin's Tuxedo Brass Band, Kid Ory's band, and with a small group in Gretna (across the Mississippi River.)

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House

A popular young musician, he was often invited to join other bands. But it was not until Fate Marable offered him an opportunity to play on steamers - the U. S. S. Sydney and Saint Paul - that he left Ory's band. Unlike other bands Armstrong had accompanied, Marables musicians had to read music.

Armstrong was aided in learning to read music by David Jones, a black mellophone player who made Armstrong the featured man in the Orchestra. The band travelled to Davenport, Iowa, St. Paul, Minnesota and other cities on a six months tour. Armstrong remained with the band for approximately three years.

In 1921, during his last year on the steamer, Armstrong began playing in the French Quarters at Tom Anderson's Cabaret on Rampart between Canal and Iberville Streets. He played there for two years with a four piece orchestra headed by Paul Dominquez. When Anderson's cabaret closed, Armstrong was booked at similar places. Engagements were slow in 1921 until he became a permanent member of Celestin's Tuxedo Brass Band, playing second coronet, a position his idol "King Joe Oliver had once played. Armstrong remained with the band for over a year, but on August 8, 1922, he left New Orleans to join Oliver's band in Chicago.

Armstrong was a big success in Chicago, and along with Oliver began to further popularize jazz and the blues. Oliver treated him like a son - and they began recording together. Because of this association with Oliver, Armstrong played his first solos on records, and began to reach a wider audience.

After almost two years with Oliver's Band, Armstrong was persuaded to leave the band by his wife, Lillian Hardin, whom he had married on February 5, 1924, and who was the pianist for the band. She felt that Louis should play first coronet, and that he would never get this opportunity while playing with Oliver's band. Armstrong easily found jobs with other bands from 1924-1928: Ollie Power's Band, Fletcher Henderson's Band in New York (it was Henderson who suggested that he switch from coronet to trumpet), back in Chicago to play with Lil Armstrong's (his wife) band at the Dreamland Cafe where his performances drew many black and white musicians. He went on to play with Carroll Dickerson's Band, and later organized his own band, Louis Armstrong and the Stompers. In 1929 he returned to New York to join the Luis Russell Band, and the Mills' Rhythm Band. During this time Armstrong continued to record, producing well over eighty titles. He later made his first trip to California and was offered a job as "cabaret soloist" at Frank Sebastian's Cotton Club in Culver City, California.

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He returned to Chicago in the spring of 1931, formed another band, and toured the south. This gave him a chance to return to New Orleans where he performed before segregated audiences. All the local newspapers ran stories about the former reform school inmate who came home from the north a jazz hero. Armstrong went on to play in Houston, and in Memphis where he commanded approximately \$1,000 per week salary.

At the encouragement of friends, Armstrong decided to see Europe. His recordings were very popular in Britain and his decision to go was well timed. A decade before Armstrong's trip, jazzmen had toured Britain but had only attained a limited reputation with record fans and the people who danced in London's West End. His appearance at the Palladium was a smashing success. One music critic who was present at his first performance wrote:

Monday at the Palladium was a sensation. Never have I experienced such an emotion. . . The place was rocking like a steamship in heavy weather. . . . Some young trumpeters asked to examine Louis' mouthpiece; they couldn't believe that anyone could achieve such power without some mechanical aid.²

Melody Maker, a leading newspaper that commented on music and musicians, praised his techniques: he talked to the band members, "Swing, Swing, Swing, you cats, Way down, way down," striding and sweating all over the stage, and mopping his face with a succession of handkerchiefs. The reviewer further observed: "Top F's bubble about all over the place and never once does he miss one."³

He performed before large audiences in many other places in Britain, including Glasgow, Liverpool, London, and Birmingham before returning to New York in early November, 1932. He then toured throughout America and returned to Europe during the summer of 1933 and remained most of 1934, this time he visited Paris, Switzerland, Belgium and Italy. Armstrong was sought out by music critics, and talked for hours with musicians. He was received with great pomp at the home of the President of the Bar Association in Brussels and recorded many titles, while receiving numerous headlines during his trip.

Armstrong returned to America and continued to tour extensively, and by 1936, he and his band commanded \$8,000 per week salary. After achieving a degree of success Armstrong purchased a home at 3456 107th Street where he and his wife resided together for thirty-five years. His concerts were performed in ball rooms and theatres. Armstrong performed from 1938 until 1941 at such places as the Grand Terrace (Chicago), and the Cotton Club (New York)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Louis Armstrong House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Six

A side of Louis Armstrong that seldom received much attention was his low key criticism and fight against Jim Crowism and racism. As a youth in New Orleans, he faced racism, and while he toured Britain in 1932. Once he was arrested in Memphis, (1931) for riding on the front seat of the band's bus beside his white manager's wife. At a concert given in Memphis after his release, he dedicated a song to the police chief entitled, "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead You Rascal You." Two years later he lashed out against a Louisiana law which did not permit integrated bands to give concerts. The band kept its white musicians, and Armstrong gladly refused to play in New Orleans saying, "them people in Louisiana ain't right."⁵

Louis Armstrong's contribution to music was national and international in scope. He was one of the early shapers of jazz as a great jazz trumpeter. Since jazz is one of the few art forms originating in America, he changed the way people composed and arranged it. His forte "was improvisation, rhythmic drive and an instrumental and vocal style that was at once 'hot' and captivating." He popularized scat-singing and influenced tonal possibilities. In a career that spans over fifty-five years, he performed in every major country in the world. He recorded hundreds of titles (gospel, blues, and jazz), adding new ranges and improvisation. He took the "raw spontaneous folk music of the honky tonks and street parades and, quite unconsciously built it into music beyond anything musicians had previously imagined."⁶

His influence was not only evidenced by his musical genius but also his humanitarianism. He brought joy, and happiness to those who heard his music and knew him as an artist. Because music has an international appeal, going beyond ethnic disagreements, Armstrong was often sought to perform good will missions by the U. S. State Department. "Ambassador Satchmo" was well known by many heads of state. He appeared throughout the world and drew capacity filled auditoriums. Without a doubt, Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong was one of the most influential musicians in the world.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Louis Armstrong
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2. Max Jones and John Clinton, Louis: The Louis Armstrong Story, 1900-1971 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971) pp. 134-135.
3. Ibid. p. 137.
4. Jean G. Cornell, Louis Armstrong: Ambassador Satchmo (Illinois: Grand Publishing Company, 1972) pp. 81-88.
5. Melody Maker, December 12, 1959, newspaper clippings, Folder 3, Louis Armstrong Files.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Louis Armstrong
 House ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE Two

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