

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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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

The New York Amsterdam News Building

AND/OR COMMON

The New York Amsterdam News

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2293 Seventh Avenue

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New York

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

19th

STATE

New York

___ VICINITY OF

CODE
36

COUNTY
New York

CODE
061

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 Newspaper

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mary C. Collins

STREET & NUMBER

1274 Fifth Avenue

CITY, TOWN

New York

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Surrogate Court Office

STREET & NUMBER

31 Chambers

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 | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

2293 Seventh Avenue is the center unit of five, four-story row houses which are flanked by a five-story brick tenement building at each end. The upper two floors of the row houses are residential while the lower two are commercial store fronts. These highly stylized Greek Revival style row houses and brick tenement buildings occupy the entire east side of Seventh Avenue between West 135th and West 134 Streets. The units vary only in slight exterior detail and finish. 2293 and the two units to the north have a brownstone exterior finish while the other two have a brick finish. All the buildings are connected and have a service yard accessible from either West 135th or West 134th Streets.

Construction of 2293 is stone masonry exterior bearing walls with wood, joists, rafters and interior stud walls and a built-up roof. The plan is rectangular, approximately 15 feet wide at the street side.

The front elevation has a brownstone exterior finish, with raised brownstone trim around openings. The building is topped by a projecting painted, galvanized-iron cornice supported by four equally spaced modillions. A projected stone cornice extends between the bottom of each modillion above which are raised decorated brownstone panels.

Each of the upper two floors have three, equally spaced wood double-hung windows, directly above each other. While the second floor has a large picture window below the two left windows. The main entrance is from the second floor and is directly below the third window. The entrance is reached by a small concrete uncovered porch, 11 steps from the sidewalk. The first floor is four steps below the sidewalk.

All six, double-hung windows have raised brownstone decorated lintels with modillions and trim. At the second floor a metal cornice and plain frieze extend the length of the shop window, with a roll up canvas awning below. Above the first floor window there is a projected tile cornice.

Although structurally sound, the building is in need of repair. Much of the brownstone is spalling and the lintel above the door and window above need replacing. The commercial spaces seem to have been renovated and altered several times. All of the row houses are completely occupied except one which is only partially vacant.

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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

Afro-American History

SPECIFIC DATES 1916 - 1938 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Not Known

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Founded by James H. Anderson in December 1909, the New York Amsterdam News has become the nation's most prominent and respected black newspaper. The paper was founded in Anderson's home on West 165th Street, "with six sheets of paper, a lead pencil and a dressmaker's table, 5 x 4 feet." For seven months the paper was released from this West 165th Street address, and for most of this period, Anderson was its editor, reporter, advertising manager, sports writer, circulation manager, and financier.

The founding of the Amsterdam News came in the exact year as the organization of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). 1909 marked the shift to a new policy of social action from the compromise tactics of Booker T. Washington. It is also of importance that the editorial policy of the Amsterdam News parallels the trends in thought of this new movement.

At the time of the paper's organization, the major problem facing blacks was lynching. The Amsterdam News, like other organs of the black press, led the fight against these atrocities. The News, in particular, identified and condemned elected officials and candidates for their failure to state their position on this subject. In questioning President Harding's failure to mention lynching in his message to Congress, the paper implied that perhaps the President did not believe the issue was important enough to merit a statement. The paper recognized that the President was entitled to his opinion and that the black community shared the same right of expression toward its view. The News stated that lynching was the most important problem confronting the United States Government and that "... lynching must stop!". As printed in a December 1922 editorial concerning the defeat of the Dyer Anti-Lynching bill, the News stated "... the Dyer bill is not yet dead. It still lives in the hearts and minds of all who favored it."

In 1916, increased circulation, growth and development necessitated an expansion of personnel and relocation to larger quarters at 2293 Seventh Avenue. By 1938, the newspaper had outgrown the confines of the Seventh Avenue site and moved to its present location at 2340 Eighth Avenue.

It was during the years between 1916 and 1938 that the Amsterdam News experienced its greatest growth in circulation and in local and national appeal. It expanded from a local newspaper

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in the Harlem community, to one which provided national coverage and enjoyed a national reputation among blacks.

Edward A. Warren became publisher and general manager in 1916, and served in those capacities until his death in 1921. From 1921 to 1926, the paper was published by founder Anderson and Warren's widow and daughter, Mrs. Sadie Warren and Mrs. Odessa Morse. Mrs. Warren married William H. Davis in 1926 who became the paper's president and general manager. A year later, in December 1927, the Amsterdam News released its Christmas issue in rotogravure, becoming the first black-owned weekly to employ this new technique in printing.

The Amsterdam News, in its 58 years has had many significant innovations. It was the second newspaper to be admitted to the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) in October 1930, and is still a member. It was also the first black newspaper to be unionized in all departments. This took place in 1936.

Following the tradition established by earlier black newspapers, the Amsterdam News disseminated issues relating to discrimination, inequality and injustice faced by Afro-Americans. It had the distinction of being one of the most vocal, dynamic and articulate members of the black press. As President Truman stated in an address given at the presentation of the Wendall Wilkie Award in 1947:

"The more than sixty Negro newspapers show an understandable concern with the problem of relationship between the races. From the columns of the Negro press example after example can be cited of reporting and editorial writing which deal with these problems in the courageous manner that we can expect of the best of our journalists."

The Amsterdam News was one of the finest examples of analytical journalism. During the 1920s and 1930s, the paper increased its size from twelve pages to approximately twenty-five pages. It covered those national issues which profoundly affected the day-to-day lives of blacks.

A prolific and scholarly group of black leaders were editors of this organ throughout its history. These men included such famous personalities as: T. Thomas Fortune, George W. Harris, Obie McCollum, John Lewis Clark, Earl Brown, Dan Burley, Julius J. Adams, Alger Adams, Thomas Watkins, S. W. Garlington, Stanley Ross, T. D. Sellers, Dr. G. James Fleming and James Hicks.

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Indicative of the high esteem felt for the black press, T. Thomas Fortune along with other editors, were selected as members of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Black Brain Trust." The purpose for the selection of these editors was to distribute positive information on the programs of the New Deal.

Unlike the major white press with its gigantic circulation, news was disseminated in the black community by numerous independent newspapers. In the words of John Hope Franklin, these papers:

"... became the medium through which the yearnings of the race were expressed, the platform from which the Negro leaders could speak, the coordinator of mass action which Negroes felt compelled to take, and the instrument by which many Negroes were educated with respect to public affairs."

Because New York City was the largest concentration of black residence, the Amsterdam News assumed an especial significance as the leader of black thought and action in print. The News exemplifies in totality the essence of every black newspaper in America.

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