

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New York
COUNTY: New York
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Henry Street Settlement and Neighborhood Playhouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Henry Street Settlement and Neighborhood Playhouse

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
263-267 Henry Street and 466 Grand Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE:  
New York

CODE:

COUNTY:  
New York

CODE:

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" 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	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) settlement house and playhouse

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Henry Street Settlement, % Herbert L. Abrons, President, Board of Directors

STREET AND NUMBER:  
265 Henry Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

STATE:  
New York

CODE:  
10002

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
New York County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:  
60 Centre Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

STATE:  
New York

CODE:

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
263-267 Henry Street has been declared a New York City landmark.

DATE OF SURVEY: 1/18/66  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
305 Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

STATE:  
New York

CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

No. 265 Henry Street is the middle house of three which comprised the original Henry Street Settlement. It is a three-story Federal style house with basement. Built in 1827, it retains much of its original appearance, including the original front doorway and iron railing. The entrance is complete with leaded glass sidelights and transom. The door frame with its Ionic colonnettes supports a wood transom bar embellished with handsome moldings.

Its neighbor to the west, No. 263, is a four-story modified Federal town house, also built in 1827. Some of the original details remain, such as the stair rails and the two tall windows beside the door, but all of the lintels above the windows were redone in the late 1870s in the then-fashionable Neo-Grec style, and traces of the Queen Anne style of the 1880s are seen in the lintel panel and sunburst above the front door. The heavy cornice is of the same period.

To the east, No. 267 is a three-story town house with basement built in 1834 and remodeled about 1910. Today, the house is Georgian Eclectic in style, though the basement entrance and shallow arches above the first-floor windows are reminiscent of Federal architecture. According to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the facade of this building is a fine example of similar Georgian Eclectic town houses that were built with such freedom of interpretation in New York City at the turn of this century.<sup>1</sup>

The Neighborhood Playhouse, included in this nomination for national historic landmark status, was built by Alice and Irene Lewisohn in 1915 to carry forward their work in drama and dance that was begun with the children in the old buildings of the settlement. The playhouse, located on Grand Street just two blocks north of the Henry Street houses, is still an integral part of the settlement's work and remains in its original location amidst considerable neighborhood renewal. The playhouse is Georgian Revival in style and features a fine double-entrance with elliptical fanlight and sidelights. A comparison of today's playhouse with a 1915 drawing of the building that appeared in Lillian Wald's book The House on Henry Street reveals that it has changed little. An iron railing has been placed along the roofline and the building to its left has been removed; an attractive mural now adorns this wall. Preservation work is in progress at the Neighborhood Playhouse, and it will soon be complemented by a neighboring fine arts center that is all but complete.

"The Settlement," Wald observed in 1915, "through the preservation of several old houses of the neighborhood, maintains a curious link with what, in this city of rapid changes, is already a shadowy past."<sup>2</sup> Her comment holds even more truth today.

<sup>1</sup>Offprint furnished by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

<sup>2</sup>The House of Henry Street (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), p. 169.

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1895- ; playhouse 1915-

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 Architecture | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |   | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"A sick woman in a squalid rear tenement, so wretched and so pitiful that, in all the years since, I have not seen anything more appealing, determined me, within half an hour, to live on the East Side."<sup>1</sup> Thus Lillian Wald recalls her introduction to New York's Lower East Side, in 1893 a haven for poor immigrants, "a vast crowded area, a foreign city within our own." Wald proposed, along with Mary M. Brewster, "to move into the neighborhood; to carry on volunteer nursing, and contribute our citizenship to what seemed an alien group in a so-called democratic community."<sup>2</sup> The two women took up residence in a Jefferson Street tenement in July 1893, then acquired larger headquarters 2 years later at 265 Henry Street. From the small Greek Revival town house there (and, later, the two adjoining houses) came the impetus for a whole host of social reforms--all initiated by Lillian Wald.

Wald originated the concept of "public health nursing" and developed a city-wide visiting nurse service. Her experiment in a local school led to the organization of the first public school nursing system in the world. She founded what soon came to be called the Henry Street Settlement, and sought to meet the social and educational needs of immigrant families. Wald was a pioneer in the movement for public playgrounds and championed a broad range of liberal causes: housing reform, the regulation of sweatshops and abolition of child labor, woman suffrage, and pacifism.

Lillian Wald lived and worked at the houses on Henry Street for nearly 40 years. In 1915 the Neighborhood Playhouse was built, and has been an integral part of settlement work there ever since. Though the original settlement has grown to include several modern buildings and the basement of a nearby public housing unit, these early houses have been well preserved and remain a vital link to the settlement's historic past.

<sup>1</sup>Lillian D. Wald, The House on Henry Street (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Handbook of Settlements, ed. by Robert A. Woods and Albert J. Kennedy (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1911), p. 205.

Continued

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Duffus, R. L. Lillian Wald: Neighbor and Crusader. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938.

Kellogg, Paul U. "A Pioneer Woman of the City Frontier." New York Times Magazine, March 13, 1927, pp. 10 ff.

Smith, Helena Huntington. "Profiles: Rampant but Respectable." New Yorker, December 14, 1929, pp. 32-35.

Wald, Lillian D. The House on Henry Street. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"		
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"		
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"		
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"		
				Henry Street Settlement:				
				40	42	50	73 59 07	
				Neighborhood Playhouse:				
				48	42	55	73 59 03	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 acre.

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Carol Ann Poh, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys, National Park Service DATE: 12/28/73

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Significance (page 1) Henry Street Settlement and Neighborhood Playhouse

Lillian Wald and the Henry Street Settlement

Lillian D. Wald (1867-1940) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and spent most of her youth in Rochester, New York, where she grew up in a well-to-do home, attended private schools and, as she later said, "lived the life of a stylish young lady." In 1889, at the age of 22, she entered the New York Hospital Training School for Nurses in New York City. Upon graduation she spent 1 year as a nurse in an orphan asylum, then entered the Women's Medical College in New York. While there, in 1893, she was asked to organize a course of instruction in home nursing adapted to the needs of immigrant families on New York's Lower East Side. It was then that Wald discovered firsthand the miserable conditions under which large portions of New York's immigrant population suffered.

Lillian Wald persuaded another nurse, Mary M. Brewster, to join her, and in July 1893 the two women took up residence in a tenement on Jefferson Street, determined to visit and minister to the sick. They formally organized their work in 1895 and, through the generosity of New York banker Jacob H. Schiff, they acquired larger quarters at 265 Henry Street. Wald was to live and work here for nearly 40 years, until her retirement in 1933. Two adjoining houses, Nos. 263 and 267, were added in 1905.

Nursing was always central to Lillian Wald's work. "It was estimated," she once wrote, "that ninety per cent. of the sick people in cities were sick at home--"<sup>3</sup> Obviously, large numbers of people could not--or would not--avail themselves of hospital care. Nursing at that time was under the auspices of religious bodies or charity clinics, or else nurses served the patients of one doctor exclusively. It was Lillian Wald who introduced the concept of "public health nursing;" by hourly service paid for by the family whenever possible, she brought private nursing within the reach of the poor. Wald's pioneer program grew slowly at first, but by 1913 there were 92 nurses in the Henry Street Visiting Nurse Service, and by 1940 they numbered nearly 300, and worked from some 20 branches throughout the city.<sup>4</sup>

A visiting nurse not only cared for the sick, but also taught mothers how to keep their families well. A child might come to her, seeking relief for sore eyes. Climbing tenement steps to see where he lived and to talk to his mother, she saw conditions of filth that demanded immediate attention. "I went into every room in the front and rear tenements," Lillian Wald

<sup>3</sup>Wald, House on Henry Street, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup>The Visiting Nurse Service became a separate agency in 1944.

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8. Significance (page 2) Henry Street Settlement and Neighborhood Playhouse

later recalled, "and set the dwellers to sweeping, cleaning, and burning refuse. In some rooms swill had been thrown on the floor, vessels were standing in the room unemptied from the night before...." Thus, from the first, Wald realized that a visiting nurse had to do more than heal the sick; sickness was not an isolated phenomena, but tied to overcrowded tenements, rooms without access to light and air, and poor and insufficient food.

At the Henry Street Settlement, as it came to be called, classes were formed to instruct immigrant mothers and their daughters in home nursing, cooking, and sewing. Girls' and boys' clubs were organized. The Neighborhood Playhouse on Grand Street was opened in 1915, and offered new opportunities for neighborhood musical and dramatic productions. In the rear of the Henry Street houses, Lillian Wald welcomed neighborhood children who had no place to play but New York's crowded streets; it was this play group that inspired Wald to become a pioneer in the movement for public playgrounds.

Not only did Lillian Wald largely originate the concept of public health nursing, she also fostered a series of important innovations in the field. Observing that poor health often kept children out of school needlessly, she arranged to have one of the Henry Street nurses provide nursing services in a public school. The experiment proved so successful that the New York City Board of Health soon organized the first public school nursing system in the world. It was at her suggestion, too, that the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in 1909 undertook a nursing service for its industrial policyholders; other life insurance companies followed suit. The idea of a Federal Children's Bureau originated with Wald, and her idea was realized in 1912.

In addition to her settlement work, Wald energetically supported many of the broad reform movements of the day. She espoused the cause of labor, and worked for the regulation of sweatshops and the abolition of child labor. She advocated housing reform. She was a pacifist. She supported woman suffrage. But perhaps this summary ignores Wald's remarkable compassion. One biographer has written that "it was Lillian Wald's own personality that gave her undertakings their special character. The Henry Street Settlement and the Visiting Nurse Service became institutions, but they always reflected her own lively appreciation of the individual human being."<sup>5</sup> When she died in 1940 some three thousand friends gathered on the East Side for her funeral services.

<sup>5</sup>Lillie M. Peck, "Wald, Lillian D.," Dictionary of American Biography, 1958, XXII (Supplement Two), 688.

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8. Significance (page 3) Henry Street Settlement and Neighborhood Playhouse

The houses on Henry Street, as well as the Neighborhood Playhouse, today remain a link with the settlement's historic past. The Henry Street Settlement is still an active force for the vitality of the neighborhood, offering a whole range of social, educational, and recreational programs for both adults and children. Physically, the neighborhood has changed--public housing has, for the most part, replaced the tenements. But in a very real sense the spirit and enthusiasm of its founder endures. "The cause of human progress," Lillian Wald once said, "that is the beginning and should be the end of the House on Henry Street."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Wald, House on Henry Street, p. vi.