

# WEST ADAMS MUSICIANS' HOUSES



# TRAILBLAZER TEQUILA MOCKINGBIRD

## ABOUT TEQUILA

Tequila Mockingbird is a Los Angeles based artist, historian, cultural preservationist and indisputable punk legend. With a career spanning over three decades, Tequila is the curator of the Los Angeles Punk Museum, hosts *The Punkast* with UCLA musicologist Jessica Schwartz, acts for movies and television, and uses her expertise in underground music from the past century as a music supervisor in the entertainment industry.

In tandem with experimental music luminary Peter Ivers, Tequila booked the most prominent punk acts of the era for their television debut on the late night TV show *New Wave Theater*, including Black Flag, X, and Circle Jerks. Together, the pair also explored the tragic glamour of 1980's Hollywood spaces, played in Ivers' last band, Vitamin Pink, and travelled the world, counting among their friends both Timothy Leary and the Dalai Lama. Performing with everyone from members of the Jimi Hendrix Experience to Jeff Goldblum, it's safe to say that if it happened and it was cool, Tequila was there.

As an architectural historian, Tequila is fascinated by the ghosts of history and the way that they layer over the ravages of time, seeping into the backdrop of our day to day. A few of her most persistent memories of bygone LA spaces include the opulent Garden of Allah and the Sunset Strip's House of Blues, which blended modern art, folk art, and beyond into an ancient looking (but very much alive) venue. Within the architectural world, she's counted giants like Frank Gehry and the late Richard Neutra among her personal friends. "To preserve the past and keep it alive," she says, describing the ethos behind her tireless drive to sing for the spaces and songs we've almost forgotten. Never shying away from the unorthodox, she considers even the city's cemeteries among its

richest and most beautiful places—“That’s your forever real estate,” she aptly judges.

With her all-encompassing sense of place, its past, and its dynamic, haunted present, Tequila Mockingbird is one of LA’s most legendary renaissance women, an invaluable fount of ruthless historicism and excellent taste.

## **BLAZING THE TRAIL**

### **How does one develop taste in music?**

In order to develop taste in music, one has to be exposed to a great deal of music and acquire a taste for it, much like one acquires a taste for caviar, which you acquire through trial and error. The more you hear it, the more you know what you like about it. That’s how one acquires taste, through exposure.

### **To you, what is great music? How can you tell the difference between a good song and a great song?**

For me, a song is great when it raises the hair on the back of your arms and you get goosebumps. It gives you a déjà vu feeling like you already know the song, like you’ve heard it before, like it’s part of your DNA.

### **What makes a great musical artist?**

What makes a great musical artist is when the person is so involved with their music, so in love with their own music, that they can convey the feelings that they have to another person through the music.

### **These are all great artists and you’ve selected songs that represent their body of work. How did you choose how to best represent them?**

I picked the tunes that got the most traction during each artist’s lifetime, the ones that brought them the most joy and the most money. The songs that became popular really helped them. When you’re a Black artist, getting your work out isn’t always the easiest thing to do, so I chose the songs that I thought expressed the most of their lifestyle and creativity within their community and beyond.

### **As people are listening to your playlist while traveling around and seeing where these artists lived, what should they think about, in terms of the Black experience?**

When you listen to this music, I want you to hear the heart and soul of the music. It wasn’t easy to be a Black artist or a Black person for the last, I don’t know, 6000 years, but music transcends poverty, sadness, anger and all of the lower emotions. When you listen to this music, I want you to hear the joy in their voices and the joy in their sorrow.

**Music is integral to the Black experience and culture. Why do you think that is?**

Well, you can take away our freedom but you can't take away our minds. You could enslave everything but our spirit, and the spirit of music is the strongest of all spirits. It conveys, through its DNA, thousands and thousands of years of sound, which is a vibration that communicates beyond words. At its heart, music is a feeling as well as a verbalization of consonants and nouns.

**At a teacher, what are you trying to impart to people?**

I'm mostly known for punk rock but I'm also known for Kurt Vile and for classical music. The reason I like punk rock is that just like Black music, it was a protest against homogenization and sterilization, against the uniform that was being put on music to keep it commercial. I try to teach people how to avoid commercializing their music, how to do it for the joy of playing and the joy of listening.

**How do you teach someone to do that?**

You have to get them to be very quiet, like they're meditating, and then show them that you can be an artist without drinking their Kool-Aid. You can drink your own Kool-Aid.

**Your playlist is full of very popular musicians. How do you reconcile their artistry with their commercial success?**

I cannot reconcile the commerce that they were able to tap into. I feel like they were mostly victimized and ripped off but that it didn't stop them from sharing the joy of music with us. Nobody's here for a long time; we're just here for a good time. I think that's how most people look at their art.

**All of these houses are located in the same neighborhood and they were all occupied by Black artists who had "made it." When we're taking this trail and driving around, looking at the houses, what might we want to think about?**

As you're visiting the neighborhood that all of these houses are in, think about it as a community where everyone was successful at their dream of making music and art while living under a not so fun democracy and still maintaining integrity.

**How does Los Angeles play into this? Why was this community formed in LA and not elsewhere?**

My grandfather came to Los Angeles to be a cowboy. California was the promised land. It's where gold was discovered. Black people left the South and came to California because there was a freedom here. That's why we're here, because California means freedom.

**These artists settled here because of that freedom?**

Absolutely. Black people had to get out of the South because in the South, still to this day, they treat everyone pretty much the same way they did for the last 200 years. California has the sunshine and that's where we want to be, in the sunshine, literally and figuratively. Los Angeles is the city of the angels so angels gravitate towards the city.

**TO LEARN  
MORE ABOUT  
TEQUILA**

The LA Punk Museum on **Facebook**



# THE TRAIL



# CAUTION

## TRAIL RULES

### **DON'T BE A TRAIL TRASHER!:**

Take only pictures *of the outside!* And leave only footprints *on public sidewalks!*

### **DON'T BOTHER THE RESIDENTS!:**

Do not approach owners! Do not ask them to look inside!  
Doing so will cause harm to you, them and us!

### **NO GUARANTEES:**

FORT: LA does not guarantee unobstructed views of these locations. We believe that, in many ways, the journey is the destination, and that being in the neighborhood can provide its own pleasures.

### **YOUR OWN RISK:**

You assume all risk for taking this Trail.



# LOU RAWLS

DESTINATION 1  
HOUSE Unknown  
1950

**ADDRESS** 1120 South Gramercy Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90019

## WHY ON THE TRAIL?

### **What's unique about Lou Rawls' music? What should we listen for?**

Lou Rawls had a sandy, deep, smoky voice and he was made for romance. Whenever my parents wanted to get romantic, they would put on a Lou Rawls record. I remember that when that music was on, we weren't allowed to go into their bedroom.

### **Is there a song in the playlist that you think is the definitive Lou Rawls song?**

I can't pick just one song because, in our house, we listened to the whole album over and over again. It's all one song to me. I grew up with soul music being played 24 hours a day, and loud, which is why I ran away and listened to Black Sabbath and Blue Cheer and all the stuff I got into later. I thought, "OK, I can sing every Aretha song. Now what?"

### **Where would you place Lou Rawls in the history of twentieth century music?**

He lands in the '60s. The '60s was a time of revolution and we were protesting a lot. Even though I was only 4, 5 or 6 years old, I went with my parents to the equal rights marches. We watched Kennedy get shot and then we watched Martin Luther King get shot and then we watched another Kennedy get shot. As far as we were concerned, when the Kennedys got shot, it was an attack on Black people. There was a lot of racial turmoil at the time and the only way you could find solace was through music.

### **How popular was Lou Rawls at the time? Has he not transcended time as much as some of the other artists on this list?**

He was very popular back then but somehow, he got lost in time. I don't know why or how but he did not gain as much traction as the other artists. But in his day, he was much loved.

While other people were listening to The Beatles, we were listening to Lou Rawls. There's a trajectory that split and went in two different directions: rock went one way and soul went the other way. That's exactly when Lou Rawls came in, in the '60s, right when people were starting to listen to rock instead of pop.

**What else should we know about his experience as a performer or as a Black man?**

All Black people have the same experience. They're treated like crap most of the time. It's always a beauty contest and you're never pretty enough.

**When we look at Lou Rawls' house, what should we think about?**

When you look at Lou Rawls's house, you should think about everything that he overcame to be able to own his own home in America. It wasn't that long before that he wouldn't have been able to own his own home at all.

**TRAIL TUNES** Listen to *Tequila's Playlist* on Spotify.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 20**

# DESTINATION 2 MARVIN GAYE HOUSE

Sumner Hunt  
1905

**ADDRESS** 2101 South Gramercy Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90019

## WHY ON THE TRAIL?

### **What should we know about Marvin Gaye? What should we listen for?**

In Marvin Gaye, you're hearing the late '60s. The protests had started, Martin Luther King was dead, the '60s were in full swing, the flower power movement was on, the drugs and parties were happening and Black people had their afros and were feeling their freedom for the first time.

### **What's unique about Marvin Gaye and his sound?**

Marvin Gaye was romantic and handsome and creative and he wrote these jam songs that went on for a long time so you could really bite into them. It wasn't just a flash in the pan kind of songwriting.

He also came to a tragic end. Being killed by your father is probably the worst end you can come to. He had such a beautiful voice. It was a shame to lose him. All of his songs were hits, pretty much. He was one of the lucky ones. He had plenty of money and he had everything he wanted and still, that wasn't enough to keep him alive.

### **Is there a song on the playlist that you consider to be the quintessential Marvin Gaye song?**

I would say that "Sexual Healing" is the song that defines him the most. It seems to me that when everything around you is falling apart, sex is important. So I think that people relate him with sex and sexuality. I think that he was talking to his father when he wrote the song "Sexual Healing," but that's just my opinion. I believe that his father was a cross-dresser.

### **How would you describe the sound of "Sexual Healing"?**

To me, it feels like an African jam. It sounds like you could almost place yourself in a different location. It takes you away from wherever you are and takes you on a trip somewhere else.

**When we're looking at Marvin Gaye's house, what should we think about?**  
When you're looking at Marvin Gaye's house, think of how he was at least lucky enough to experience the joy of being about to own it.

**TRAIL TUNES** Listen to *Tequila's Playlist* on Spotify.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 31**

# DESTINATION 3 LITTLE RICHARD HOUSE

Robert D. Jones &  
Sanson M. Cooper  
1923

**ADDRESS** 1710 Virginia Road  
Los Angeles, CA 90019

## **WHY ON THE TRAIL?** **Where do you start with Little Richard?**

Little Richard was one of the first Black musicians to make a bunch of money. In the early days, most Black musicians didn't get paid fairly. They got bought out and then somebody like Pat Boone would sing their songs and get all the money.

Little Richard was the wildest thing that ever happened. He let his hair go everywhere, he screamed, he danced, he played the piano, he climbed up on his piano like it was a jungle gym and then he ran around it. He was just joyful. Bill Haley, Elvis Presley and all of these people learned their wild rock 'n' roll tricks from Little Richard.

A lot of these people were Baptist and when I was a little girl, my grandfather was a Baptist deacon. When you went to church in a Baptist family, back in the '60s, people would be screaming, "Oh, Lord! Thank you Jesus!" so loud, and people were practically swinging from the chandeliers with their dresses going up and their hats flying all over the place. That's what rock 'n' roll is. It's a celebration of life. They let loose in the church when they got the holy spirit and I think that Little Richard had the holy spirit. He was singing for God. He was singing for the angels because mankind ain't so nice.

Back then, people used to say, "Rock 'n' roll, that's the devil's music!" and Little Richard was always accused of doing the devil's work. Eventually, when he got older, he went back to being a minister and he himself thought of rock 'n' roll as the devil's music.

## **Is there one key Little Richard song that can help us understand what he was all about?**

"Good Golly, Miss Molly." The lyrics go, "Good Golly, Miss Molly, you sure like to ball." When I was a very young girl, around 13 years old, I went and saw Led Zeppelin in concert and Robert Plant came up to me and said, "Hey, brown sugar, you look like a good ball." And I said, "What's a ball?" Well, back then, balling meant having sex so "Good Golly, Miss Molly" is about a girl who likes to have sex, and the term "rock 'n' roll" also means having sex so that song is rock 'n' roll. All the other artists on the playlist are soul; Little Richard was the beginning of rock 'n' roll. That's where it flipped over. It's not soul, it's not gospel; it has become the devil's music, our favorite kind.

**When we're looking at Little Richard's house, what should we think about?**

We should think about the joy of being Little Richard, of being so free that you throw off your binary and become who you actually are. When I play with A.I., it doesn't know if I'm a woman, a man or an animal. When I make cartoons, I'm all three. I'm a man sometimes, a woman sometimes, an animal sometimes. Non binary. You throw off your body and you're just a spirit. Little Richard was a good spirit of rock 'n' roll.

**TRAIL TUNES** Listen to *Tequila's Playlist* on Spotify.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 37**

# DESTINATION 4

# AMANDA RANDOLPH

# HOUSE

Unknown  
1903

**ADDRESS** 2624 Van Buren Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90007

## WHY ON THE TRAIL?

### **When we listen to Amanda Randolph, what are we hearing?**

You're hearing the 1930s at their finest. In the 1920s and '30s, in America, Black people were still dealing with the Ku Klux Klan and the only way to really enjoy yourself was through music because there were still whites only water fountains and things like that; those were around until my mother was in her twenties. Amanda Randolph was one of the lucky ones. She was an absolutely fabulous, gorgeous woman, she had her own orchestra, and as she got older, she was on a lot of television shows. She transitioned from being a singer to working in Hollywood, which is huge. Like they all say: "I'd rather play a maid than be a maid." And she did great for herself. At the end of the day, she made some money and she could be comfortable. She was a very lucky woman in that she got the respect she deserved.

### **What does it say about her to have been a woman with her own band in the '20s and '30s?**

When I was little, the Chitlin' Circuit was still in action. It was a list of places where Black bands could play and could sleep, because we were segregated so they couldn't sleep at a hotel where white people slept. Thank goodness, the Chitlin' Circuit supplied plenty of places to play. Churches let you play, or you'd just put a tent up, have a party, take it down the next day, and nobody knew. For Amanda Randolph to be able to have her own band and take them on tour across the country was a huge feat in those days.

### **How would you describe the quality of her voice and of her sound?**

During that period, everybody was a crooner. She sang blues songs and she crooned them in a thick, raspy, syrupy, smoky voice. She and Bessie Smith, that whole generation, every song seems to be about love and sex. Nowadays, music isn't really about that, it's about anything but that, but in those days, romance and sex seemed to be the subject of every song. Every song was about keeping your man at home with you. That seemed to be the uniting factor. Everything is about love because when they take away your freedom, love is all you have. It's the only thing they can't stop.

**When we're looking at her house, what should we think about?**

We should think of a very strong woman who was able to navigate her circumstances and be creative despite adversity.

**HEAR AMANDA** Because she's not on Spotify, hear her **here**.

***WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 46***

# DESTINATION 5

# BILL “BOJANGLES”

# ROBINSON HOUSE

Paul R. Williams  
1937

**ORIGINAL CLIENT** Bill “Bojangles” Robinson

**ADDRESS** 1194 West 36th Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90007

**WHY ON THE TRAIL?** **What should people listen for when they listen to Bojangles?**

When you listen to Bojangles, you’re hearing the joy of tap dancing. Dancing and music go together like a marriage so I feel like when people listen to Bojangles, they hear the unchained joy of his spirit.

It wasn’t that long after slavery that Bojangles came to be. He probably still had relatives who were slaves. I mean, my own great-grandmother was a slave. We’re not so far away from the past that we can forget about it. When you listen to his music, listen to the freedom in his art.

He was also a movie star, which I think is fantastic. Bojangles was a pioneer for us because Black cinema hadn’t really gotten off the ground until he and others from his generation came along. We had our own cinema but everything was segregated. Black people were not included in Hollywood cinema.

The first time I ever saw him was in a movie with Shirley Temple, who was my idol as a child. The little white girl and the Black butler dancing on the stairs will forever keep us engaged in our quest for unity. That was probably the first interracial couple on film.

Watching them perform together is odd, when viewed through a contemporary lens. And yet, that was the only way he could have made it at the time. And Shirley Temple later became a U.S. ambassador to Ghana so obviously, he made an impression on her that lasted the rest of her life. They were the first interracial couple to sing together and dance together without it being a giant red flag to the bigots to stop what was going on. Audiences actually enjoyed seeing the Black butler and the little white girl dancing up and down the stairs.

When I first got to LA and I went to the store with my grandmother, the bag boy was Bojangles Robinson. At least that’s what I was told. Who knows if it’s true but everyone was so happy to have the bag boy be a famous Hollywood

star. It didn't matter that he wasn't driving a limousine; it was just that he was there with us.

**When we're standing in front of his house, what should we think about?**

We should think about his triumph over slavery and about the years of DNA that had kept him chained and owned by other people. This was his moment of freedom, to be able to buy his own home.

**TRAIL TUNES** Listen to *Tequila's Playlist* on Spotify.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 53**

# DESTINATION 6 ELLA FITZGERALD HOUSE

Unknown  
1949

**ORIGINAL CLIENTS** Robert H. Mason

**ADDRESS** 3971 Hepburn Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90008

**WHY ON THE TRAIL?** Ella, she's from my grandmother's generation. "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" was wartime music. World War Two featured Ella Fitzgerald with her beautiful voice playing with the big bands.

**Tell us about her voice. It has stood the test of time. People still go crazy for Ella.**

Yeah, because Ella has that sweet voice. It's sweet like sugar, not saccharine, and it's romantic. I think that people identify with the freshness of her voice. It's so crisp the way she sings. I think that her voice contrasted nicely against the big band, which is more than twelve players. She toured with some of the most famous orchestra leaders of the time and people accepted her. In those days, white musicians went in one door and Black musicians went in another door but we still got through the door.

**Do you have a favorite of the Ella Fitzgerald songs on the playlist?**

"Misty" is such a great song. Plus there's that movie that came out years later, Play Misty For Me. I think that movie breathed new life into the song because it was so spooky. "Misty" evokes such beautiful memories of life in the fog.

**But "Misty" has a really different tone than, say, "Let's Fall in Love," which is much more upbeat.**

Well, I don't think she wrote her own songs, therefore they would be all over the place. Whatever sounds good to the orchestra leader is what you sing. You don't really have a say. You can choose to sing it or not sing it but that's pretty much it.

**Let's talk about swinging. If "it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing," what does it mean to swing?**

Swinging is having a good time, getting together with your friends and, you know, being well swung. I think Ella was a swinging chick in the 1940s. They had a lot of hip jive that they talked and I think "swinging" was one of those words that just fit the bill.

**“A-Tisket, A-Tasket” was one of her biggest hits, right? Why do you think that song resonated with people so much?**

I think that people need nonsense in times of war. You know, like the artists immediately went to Dada during World War One. So I think that “A-Tisket, A-Tasket” was kind of nonsensical and that’s why people latched on to it, because it didn’t really mean anything. You don’t have to think about it too much. It’s just a happy tune.

**Can you compare Ella Fitzgerald to Amanda Randolph?**

Ella got famous. That’s the difference right there. Everyone is fantastic; it’s just about how many people are exposed to you. Amanda Randolph never had as big a music career as Ella did. You’d have to be an aficionado to know who she is.

**When people are standing in front of Ella Fitzgerald’s house, what should they think about, in terms of her as a Black artist in her time?**

They should think of a real cool chick, a giant in the pantheon of stars, when it comes to the 1940s and ‘50s and even ‘60s, when she was hanging around with Sammy Davis Jr. and Frank Sinatra. I think that she played until she was over 80 years old. So I think that people should look at her house and think of how great it must be to survive all manners of insanity and still be yourself and do your thing and get on with it.

And she actually made money, which is the biggest difference between her and the other people on the trail. Little Richard used to tell me all the time how much he couldn’t stand white people because they had ripped him off so much. I’m sure that Ella felt ripped off too, but not really because imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. We know we’re successful by what we make, through the act of creation, and I think that Ella was satisfied with her creation, which was herself. She created herself.

**Of everybody on the list, she may have had the biggest white audience.**

Music isn’t about color, it’s about music.

**That’s true, but some artists don’t cross over as much as she did.**

Well, like I always say, it’s up to you who you want to hang around with, who you want to sing with, who you want to swing with. It’s up to you to investigate music and find what you like. I think that Ella was a great woman and that we should all honor her by listening to these tunes.

**TRAIL TUNES** Listen to *Tequila’s Playlist* on Spotify.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 63**



# DISCOVERY CENTER

*Compiled by the FORT: LA Research Team*

## CONTENTS:

FACTS AND FIGURES

ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

RESOURCES AND PRESENTATIONS

TALES AND TIMELINES

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## RAWLS HOUSE

**YEAR BUILT** 1950. Remodeled by Rawls 1966.

**MATERIALS EMPLOYED** Stucco, redwood, rock, stone tile flooring, and concrete.

**COST TO BUILD** \$12500 (1950) + \$3800 for remodel (1966)

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE** Midcentury Modernism, with elements of Contemporary Ranch Style

Mid-Century Modern architecture has its roots in the modernism movement that originated in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The movement's aim was to free art and design from prevailing traditions in order to better reflect existing social, economic, and technological currents. The architects most influential in shaping American trends include Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier. In 1932 a major touring exhibit, *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*, curated by the Museum of Modern Art, played an important role in introducing the style to the masses.

As one historian noted:

"The International Style forced a general redefinition of modern architecture in the United States. 'Modern' architecture, in the eyes of those Americans who knew anything about it, became a style quite unlike the art deco storefronts, simplified classical government buildings and revival-style skyscrapers called 'modern' during the 1920s. The new modern architecture utilised flat roofs, cubic volumes, asymmetrical compositions, white walls and an abundance of concrete, glass and steel. It allowed virtually no applied ornament or overt historic references, emphasising functional and structural expression instead." (Eggerer)

After World War II, a version of the International Style emerged that later became known as Mid-Century Modern. A major influence in this development was a program sponsored by John Entenza, the editor of the Los Angeles-based magazine *Arts & Architecture*. "In 1945, [he initiated] a Case Study House program that experimented with an evolution of the International Style in Southern California. Twenty six Case Study houses designed by local

Modernists epitomized the International Style at the height of its post-World War II popularity through the 1950s and early '60s." (Whiteson)

In addition to the features embraced by the International Style, these homes included extensive use of "glass walls" to provide a sense of indoor-outdoor living; open, flexible plans, where one room flows into another; built-in furniture; "frequent dramatic siting on hillsides"; "smooth surfaces, with an absence of purely decorative details inside or out [and the] very occasional use of primary reds, yellows or blues." (Whiteson)

The Contemporary Ranch style is an evolution of Ranch, which itself was a simplification and reinterpretation of historical California Hacienda architecture. Incorporating elements of Modernism (especially Midcentury Modern flourishes), Contemporary Ranch is marked by low-pitched gable rooflines, the use of stucco, and the treatment of windows and doors as "void elements" that balance the solidity of the study white walls. Porches, carports and patios often feature abstract concrete, wood, or metal screens and columns.

#### IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE

This house was built during the post-World War II baby boom, corresponding to the return of GIs from Europe and with the rapid creation of nuclear family units throughout the United States. During this period, Los Angeles's population increased rapidly and significantly, which required the construction of many new single-family houses, most of them built on spec with inexpensive materials and labor.

When Rawls bought the house in the 1960s, he remodeled it, adding an extension to the north side. This addition is obvious, especially when seen from above, since its roof is flat rather than hipped.

#### MORE INFO

Building Permit 1950LA27854. **LADBOS**, November 27, 1950.

Building Permit 1966LA37778. **LADBOS**, December 15, 1966.

"Country Club Park HPOZ: Preservation Plan." **City of Los Angeles**, October 20, 2010.

Eggener, Keith L. "Nationalism, Internationalism and the 'Naturalisation' of Modern Architecture in the United States, 1925–1940." **Taylor & Francis Online**.

Jacobs, Karrie. "When Mid-Century Met Modernism." **Medium**, 15 June 2017.

Whiteson, Leon. "'House-Machine' at Home on Southland's Hillsides." **Los Angeles Times**, 20 May 1990.

# ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

## ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Lou Rawls

Lou Rawls got his start singing in a Baptist church choir. By the time he was in his twenties, he was touring with Sam Cooke as part of the gospel group Teenage Kings of Harmony. After a brief stint in the army, he continued working with Cooke until a car crash in 1958 forced him to take a yearlong break.

After recovering from his injuries, Rawls began performing again. A serendipitous meeting with Capitol Records producer Nick Venet at Pandora's Box on Sunset Boulevard led him to turn towards jazz and rhythm and blues. His 1966 single, "Love Is a Hurtin' Thing," was a hit, and throughout the 1960s and '70s, he had many more, including the 1977 chart topper "You'll Never Find (Another Love like Mine)." He also received three Grammy Awards. His spoken-word interludes (most notably on the songs "World of Trouble" and "Tobacco Road") laid the foundations for what would later evolve into rap music.

After a career that spanned five decades, Rawls died of lung cancer in 2006.

## RELEVANT/INTERESTING PRIMARY SOURCE

*Encyclopedia Britannica*

## MORE INFO

"Lou Rawls Residence." *The Neighborhood News Online*. January 8, 2015.

# RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

## CURRENT PHOTOS



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



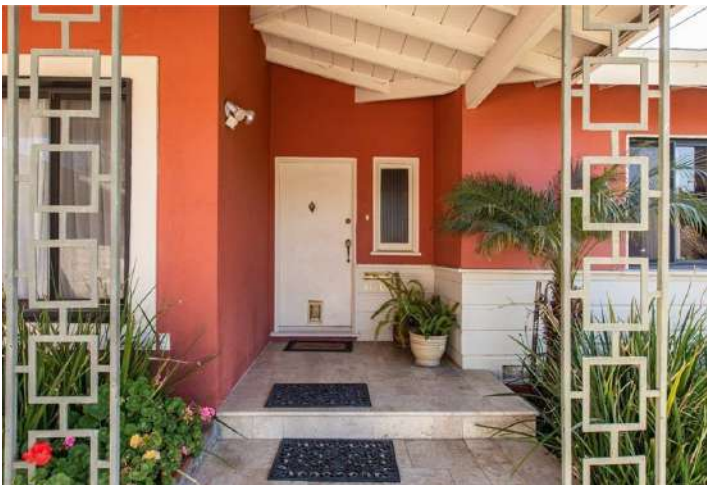
(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of LA Homes and Architecture)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of LA Homes and Architecture)



(courtesy of LA Homes and Architecture)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of LA Homes and Architecture)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of LA Homes and Architecture)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



(courtesy of Zillow)



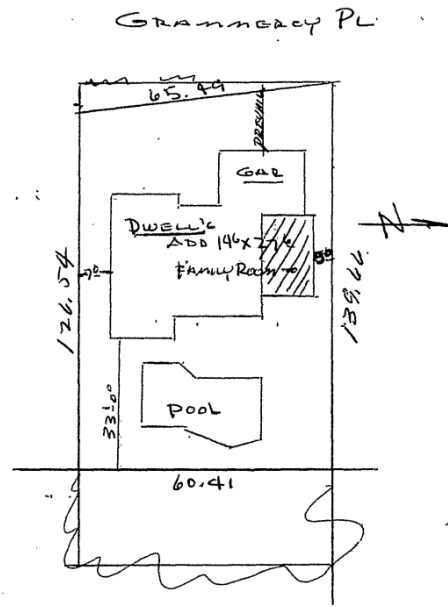
(courtesy of Zillow)

## HISTORIC PHOTOS



Lou Rawls, 1970  
(photo by Michael Ochs)

# BLUEPRINT OR FLOOR PLANS



Sketch of 1120 South Gramercy Place, showing Rawl's extension and remodel, 1966 (courtesy of LADBS)

**YOUTUBE RELATED LINK** [Video tour of the Lou Rawls House](#)

# TALES AND TIMELINES

## RELEVANT DATES

**1950**

Construction begins at 1120 South Gramercy Place, owned by William C. Jamison.

**1951**

The house is completed.

**1958**

A swimming pool is added to the backyard.

**1966**

Lou Rawls purchases the house sometime between 1964 and 1966, and begins a remodeling and expansion of the property.

**1967**

A certificate of occupancy is issued to Lou Rawls.

**2004**

The house is sold for the first time since Rawl purchased it in the 1960s.

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## MARVIN GAYE HOUSE

YEAR BUILT 1905

MATERIALS EMPLOYED Brick, stucco, concrete, wood, glass, and slate roof.

COST TO BUILD Unknown. 1917 remodel by Hunt & Burns cost \$1700.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Tudor Revival

English Tudor Revival Architecture (also known as “mock Tudor”) became popular in the United States in the early 20th century. Although the style was perceived as evocative of the castles and manor houses built during the reign of the Tudor dynasty in 15th and 16th centuries England, in fact, many of its distinctive characteristics mimicked the rustic look of Medieval cottages on the English countryside. The British architect Edwin Lutyens is credited for incorporating Tudor-influenced design elements into the Arts and Craft homes that he designed in the first decade of the 20th century, inspiring other architects to use Tudor references such as ornamental half-timbering and diamond-pattern window grilles to give simple residences a stately yet picturesque atmosphere.

IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE

Hugh Asher, the home’s original owner, bought nine lots from the developer, Abbot Kinney. After selling six of those lots, he commissioned the architect Sumner Hunt to design a house, a carriage house, and a billiards hall on the remaining three lots. These structures were built by the Alta Planing Mill Co.

Although the main house’s exterior displays all the markers of the Tudor Revival style, including front-facing gables and ornamental half-timbering, its interior has strong Craftsman influences, evident in the heavy wood moulding and wainscoting, the cut-out stair balustrades, and an open floor plan on the ground floor.

BIOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECT

Sumner Hunt was born in Brooklyn in 1865. After a short stint as a draftsman for Clarence B. Cutler in New York, he moved to Los Angeles in 1889.

According to The Press Reference Library, Southwest Edition: “On arriving in

Los Angeles Mr. Hunt was employed in the firm of Caukin & Haas from 1889 to 1892. By that time, his personality had been recognized to such an extent in the class of designs he had been turning out that he felt empowered to enter the business for himself, and so occupied himself, with a high degree of success, until 1895, when, with Theodore A. Eisen, he formed a partnership under the firm name of Eisen & Hunt, which continued until 1899.”

During this period, Hunt’s most notable work was the initial design of the Bradbury Building, which was ultimately finished and built under the supervision of Hunt’s draftsman, George Herbert Wyman, in 1893.

After forming a partnership with Abraham W. Eager in 1899, Hunt began to work with Silas R. Burns Jr., first as Eager, Hunt and Burns from 1908 to 1910, and then as Hunt and Burns from 1910 until Burns’ retirement in 1930. Hunt and Burns’s projects became the defining works of both architects’ careers, and included such landmarks as the Southwest Museum of the American Indian (1914) and the Automobile Club of Southern California Headquarters (1921-23). Hunt was appointed Vice President of the Los Angeles City Planning Commission in 1921, and President of the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1922. After Burns retired in 1930, Hunt continued his solo practice until his death in 1938.

## ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF ARCHITECT’S WORK

Like many Los Angeles-based architects of his generation, Sumner Hunt was known for his versatility and ability to combine a variety of styles that were popular at the time. His most famous design, the Bradbury Building, combines a Romanesque and Chicago-style shell with Victorian interior detailing, while buildings like the Ebell of Los Angeles and the Southwest Museum show his fluency in the Italian Renaissance Revival and Mission Revival styles.

The Marvin Gaye House is a perfect example of a Tudor-Craftsman hybrid style often used by Hunt and his design partners, Abraham Wesley Eager and Silas Reese Burns, at the turn of the 20th century. Other structures in this style designed by the trio include the Kerckhoff Carriage House and the O’Melveny House, both built in 1909.

## MORE INFO

“Bradbury Building”. *Los Angeles Conservancy*.

Building Permit 1917LA01821. *Los Angeles Department of Building And Safety*. March 27, 1917.

“Sumner P. Hunt.” *PCAD*.

Wedner, Diane. “Taking over from Titans.” *Los Angeles Times*, 16 Sept. 2007.

“West Adams Heritage Association Newsletter: West Adams Matters.” *West Adams Heritage Assocoation*, Dec. 2010.

# ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

## ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Marvin Gaye

Marvin Gaye is now remembered as one of the most singular and influential musical artists of the 20th century, helping establish the genre of urban soul while establishing a new model: the self-produced artist. Beginning his career as part of the doo-wop group the Moonglows, Gaye eventually found himself in Detroit, where he became part of Motown Records' roster of artists. His breakout hit, "Stubborn Kinda Fellow," came out in 1962, and many more followed, including "I Heard It Through the Grapevine."

1971 saw the release of Gaye's self-produced magnum opus, *What's Going On*, an album reflecting the turbulent state of American culture and politics at the time. His other masterpieces—*I Want You* and *Here, My Dear*—expanded his thematic palette, exploring his relationships with his family, friends, and himself.

Gaye moved to Los Angeles in the 1970s, and bought the house on South Gramercy Place in 1975. His brother, Frankie, lived in the detached carriage house with his wife, Irene, while his parents, Marvin Sr. and Alberta, lived in the main house with him. Gaye's substance abuse and mental health issues took a toll, and in 1976, he was forced to hand over the property's title to his parents, though he continued to live there.

On April 1, 1984, following a confrontation, Gaye was shot and killed in the house by his father, Marvin Gaye Sr. The LAPD held a press conference about the killing on the front lawn of the house, cementing its façade in the memory of many who followed the case.

## MORE INFO

"Marvin Gaye is Shot and Killed; Pop Singer's Father Faces Charges." *New York Times*, April 2, 1984.

Pierce, Tony "On This Day in LA - Marvin Gaye Killed," *LAist*, March 31, 2007.

Ritz, David, "Marvin Gaye," *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

# RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

## CURRENT PHOTOS

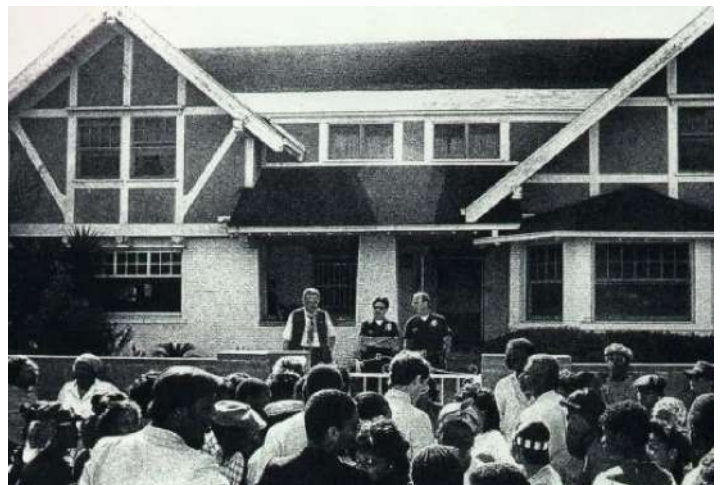


(courtesy of **Film Oblivion**)

## HISTORIC PHOTOS



Exterior of the Gaye House, April 1984, shortly after the death of Marvin Gaye (courtesy of **Nightmare Houses**)



Press conference held outside the Gaye House, April 1984, shortly after the death of Marvin Gaye (courtesy of **LAist**)



Marvin Gaye  
(courtesy of Motown UME)

**YOUTUBE RELATED LINK** *Where The Great Marvin Gaye Died, shot by Clyde Beck*  
*Inside the Marvin Gaye Death House by Scott Michaels*

# TALES AND TIMELINES

## RELEVANT DATES

**1904**

Hugh Asher purchases nine plots of land in West Adams from Abbot Kinney.

**1905**

The main house and carriage house at 2101 S Gramercy Place are designed by Sumner Hunt and built by the Alta Planing Mill Co.

**1917**

Hunt & Burns remodel the house.

**1975**

Marvin Gaye purchases the house.

**1976**

The property's deed is transferred from Marvin Gaye to his father.

**April 1, 1984**

Marvin Gaye is shot and killed by his father in the house.

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## LITTLE RICHARD HOUSE

YEAR BUILT 1923

MATERIALS EMPLOYED Plaster and wood frame, concrete, and brick.

COST TO BUILD \$12,000 (1923)

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Spanish Colonial Revival, with elements of Italian Renaissance Revival

The origins of the Spanish Colonial Revival style date back to the mission and adobe architecture of the 1600s, which spread across the areas of the United States, founded by Spain, from Florida to the Southwest and California. While regional differences emerged, in terms of residential architecture, "Spanish Colonial homes share several distinct characteristics. The structures are built with very thick walls, typically white stucco over adobe brick or stone (which helped keep the houses cool), and have a limited number of small window openings; in early homes these tiny windows didn't have glass, just holes with wood shutters that opened and closed. These homes are often L-shaped, with a central or side courtyard (a key feature of Spanish-style homes.)" (Burch)

Coinciding with the end of Spanish colonization in the mid-1800s, the style declined, only to be revived in the early 1900s. "The genre really took off after 1915, when the organizers of the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego chose to build the fairground buildings in Spanish Colonial style. They and their chosen architect, Bertram Goodhue, eschewed Greek or Roman grandeur for the influences of Spain, Mexico and the missions. Within Balboa Park, Goodhue said, they built 'a city in miniature ... meant to recall to mind the glamour and mystery and poetry of the old Spanish days.'" (Carney)

With this reintroduction, other cities soon followed suit. "By the end of the 1920s the Spanish Colonial Revival had become the architecture of Southern California. Block upon block of Los Angeles and other smaller cities of the Southland abounded with builders' versions of America's Hispanic heritage. In communities such as Santa Barbara, Ojai, Palos Verdes, San Clemente, and Rancho Santa Fe, legal and other indirect pressures were leading to the erection of complete 'Spanish' towns and cities. The intellectual justification for this revival was admittedly a bit thin, but it would be difficult to deny that the visual results were often impressive." (Gebhard)

In addition, Los Angeles historian D.J. Waldie notes that the “Spanish Colonial Revival Style was always a reimagining... Between 1916... and the mid-1930s, the architects who worked in the Spanish Colonial Revival style created houses of astonishing sympathy and presence. They designed for a knowing clientele of successful businessmen and their wives who wanted modern conveniences, accommodation for their automobiles, access to outdoor amenities and rooms that flattered their taste (but with an appealing modesty).” (Waldie)

According to architect Ione R. Stiegler, Spanish Colonial Revival homes often share the following elements: red clay tile roofs, “decorative details such as iron and wood brackets or railings, stucco vents, and elaborated chimney tops,” multi-pane windows, stucco walls, “round, square, or polygonal towers,” and patio areas that “usually take the form of a courtyard with or without a covered loggia or arcade.”

In addition to John Byers, architects known for their Spanish Colonial Revival and related styles include George Washington Smith, Reginald Johnson, Wallace Neff, Richard Requa, Roland Coate, Gordon Kaufman, Lillian J. Rice, William Templeton Johnson, Thomas O. Larkin, Arthur Burnett Benton, and Arthur Page Brown.

\*\*\*

“The Italian Renaissance Revival style was first popularized on the East Coast by architects such as McKim, Mead & White as early as the 1880s. This elegant style is seen mostly in up-scale, architect-designed buildings, such as mansions or public buildings.” (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission)

### IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE

The residence was built for Mr. J.R. Pattillo. Little is known about Pattillo but documents connect him to a property located at 601 North Lillian Way, in Hancock Park, which was also built in 1923, in a similar size and style to the Virginia Road house, which suggests that Mr. Pattillo may have been a spec builder. Jones and Cooper were known to build houses on spec, especially in the Windsor Square and Wilshire areas.

### BIOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECT

“Robert D. Jones was born in Ohio in 1878. For most of his career he was associated with Sanson M. Cooper, the ‘pioneer builder,’ credited with building hundreds of homes in Windsor Square, the Wilshire District, Beverly Hills and San Marino. Cooper was trained as a minister at Bethany College in West Virginia, and had come to Los Angeles from Cincinnati circa 1912, bringing with him artisans and crew.” (Locke)

The Los Angeles City Planning Department attributes the design of 1710 Virginia Road to contractor builder Grey V. Colf. However, the 1923 building permit digitized by the LA Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) clearly notes the architect as Jones and the contractor as Cooper.

ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE  
THAT ARE TYPICAL OF  
ARCHITECT'S WORK

Robert D. Jones was known for his ability to design in a variety of styles. His most notable designs include the Daisy Hayden Apartments (Mediterranean Revival), the Philip Newmark Residence (Tudor Revival), the Harold Lloyd/Marion Davies Residence (Italian Renaissance Revival) and the Little Richard House (Spanish Colonial Revival), all of which showcase his knowledge of architecture history and of the many revival styles popular at the time.

MORE INFO

Building Permit 1923LA36968. **LADBS**, August 18, 1923.

Burch, Maggie. "What Is Spanish Colonial Design? Everything to Know about California's Popular Style." **House Beautiful**, 13 Nov. 2018.

Carney, Steve. "Architecture Spotlight: Spanish Colonial Revival Evokes L.A.'s Golden Era." **Los Angeles Times**, 28 Apr. 2018.

Gebhard, David. "Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895-1930)." **Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians**, May 1967.

"Italian Renaissance Revival Style 1890-1930 - History." **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**.

La Fayette Square Preservation Plan. **Los Angeles City Planning Department**, September 25, 2008.

Locke, Michael. "Robert D. Jones Architect" **Flickr**.

"Residence for J.R. Pattillo." **Historic Places LA**.

Stiegler, Ione R. "Style 101: Spanish Colonial Revival." **IS Architecture**, 2017.

Waldie, D.J. "How Do We Make Our Home Here?: Casa Adobe's Answer: A Place Where Light and Air and Landscape Merged." **Los Angeles Times**, 8 Aug. 2010.

"The Zamerini Residence: A History." **Nelson White Preservation**.

# ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

## ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Little Richard Wayne Penniman

Richard Penniman was born in Macon, Georgia in 1932. He began singing in the Pentacostal churches around his family home, and soon left to tour as an R&B and drag act in nightclubs and minstrel shows around the country, where he gained the nickname Little Richard.

Little Richard rocketed to fame in 1955 with the release of the single “Tutti Frutti,” followed by a series of hits including “Good Golly, Miss Molly” and “Send Me Some Lovin’”. As his popularity grew, he also began to appear in early rock and roll films such as *The Girl Can’t Help It*. His vocal range and power, combined with his suggestive lyrics and onstage antics, provided a blueprint for popular music that is still relevant today.

In the 1950s, Little Richard and his mother, Leva Mae Stewart, moved to Los Angeles, residing in the Lafayette Park neighborhood. Their home at 1710 Virginia Road became a meeting place for entertainers of the time, including Etta James, James Brown and Jackie Williams. In 1959, Little Richard married Ernestine Campbell at the Virginia Road home. They divorced three years later.

At the height of his fame, Little Richard turned again to Christianity. He began to describe the music that he had been making as sinful, and dropped out of the music scene. After enrolling in bible college, he traveled as an evangelical preacher. He eventually returned to music after The Beatles cited him as a musical influence, but never reached the same level of popularity. He continued to perform until his retirement in 2013, and passed away in 2020.

## MORE INFO

Leitereg, Neal. “Little Richard’s onetime home in Lafayette Square finds a new fan.” *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 2019.

Winner, Langdon C. “Little Richard.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 20, 2023.

# RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

## CURRENT PHOTOS



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



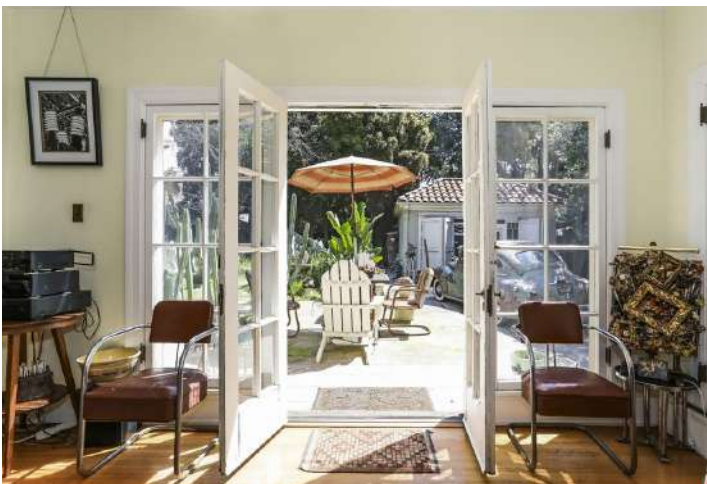
(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)



(courtesy of Redfin)

# HISTORIC PHOTO



Little Richard, 1959  
(photo by Michael Ochs, courtesy of **Getty Images**)

# BLUEPRINT OR FLOOR PLANS

1710 Virginia Rd Los Angeles, CA 90019



(courtesy of **Zillow**)

# TALES AND TIMELINES

## RELEVANT DATES

**1923**

The house at 1710 Virginia Road is built by Robert D. Jones and Sanson Cooper.

**1950s**

Little Richard and his mother move into the house.

**1959**

Little Richard and Ernestine Campbell get married at the house.

**Before 1963**

Little Richard sells 1710 Virginia Road.

**2019**

Most recent sale of the Little Richard House.

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## AMANDA RANDOLPH HOUSE

YEAR BUILT 1903

MATERIALS EMPLOYED Wood, glass, and concrete. Later addition: fiberglass sheeting (possibly from the Sears, Roebuck catalog)

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Craftsman/American Foursquare with elements of Late Victorian

The Arts and Crafts movement arose in England in the late nineteenth century in reaction to what many practicing artists and artisans considered the dehumanizing effects of the Industrial Revolution. In contrast to mass production of goods, the movement “embraced simplicity of line, good, durable materials, and the human touch” (Mosby) and sought to raise existing standards in design.

The movement also concerned itself with matters of social reform, advanced by such cultural heavyweights as John Ruskin and William Morris, who criticized the division of labor required by mass production. They felt that workers should be involved in both the design and production of creations; in other words, their ideal was that artists and workers should be one and the same, as was the case in the Middle Ages.

In terms of architectural style, the movement “emphasized handicrafts and the ideals of common laborers, in particular the use of local materials to construct a building, and favored organicism and asymmetry of design, instead of revivalist rationalism and uniformity [characteristic of popular styles of the day]. In such a way, the Arts and Crafts Movement demanded a return to a basic style, whereby a building is contextualized in its environment and location, and is built with the site in mind.” (A Dictionary of Modern Architecture)

The Arts and Crafts movement, as interpreted in the United States, retained the basic principles already set forth. It was championed by various societies and guilds that formed soon after the turn of the century, and the ideas were disseminated by journals like *The Craftsman*, *House Beautiful*, and *Ladies Home Journal*, which promoted “an open-planned interior shaped by a color palette that reflected the natural environment.” (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

\*\*\*

The plain, unadorned American Foursquare style emerged in the 1890s as a reaction to the decorative flourishes of the Victorian styles that preceded it. A classic Foursquare residence consists of a simple square or rectangular two-story structure made of wood or bricks with a hipped roof, a centered dormer, and stairs leading up to a covered front porch. The box-like shape is intended to provide a maximum amount of interior space, and each floor is usually divided into four large, interconnected rooms that sometimes feature exposed woodwork reminiscent of the Craftsman style. Because of their similarities to Craftsman and Prairie School structures, Foursquare residences are sometimes referred to as “Prairie Box” or “Transitional Period” houses. In the early decades of the twentieth century, American Foursquare became a popular mail-order style that could be purchased as a kit of parts through the Sears Roebuck catalog for under \$2000. The style appeared throughout the United States but was especially popular in the Midwest, where entire neighborhoods of Foursquare residences can be found near train stations.

#### ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF THIS STYLE

The Randolph House is an example of a transitional design in which multiple architectural styles are combined to form a hybrid at once instantly recognizable and opaque. This blend of Craftsman, Late Victorian and American Foursquare showcases the similarities between the styles, including the hipped roof, decorative brackets, covered front porch, and projecting roofline with notched rafter tails. Fiberglass sheeting was added at a later date and is incongruous with the rest of the design.

#### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The 2600 Block of Van Buren Place was developed by Percy H. Clark, who also built six of the original houses in the development. The Randolph House was not one of those houses, and was most likely designed and built by its original owners, Dr. and Mrs. Jared W. Daniels. It’s one of the oldest extant houses in what is now known as the Van Buren Historic District, which is notable not because of the architects responsible for the designs (since most of the houses were designed and/or built by their owners) but because a majority of the structures retain their original design, while most of the surrounding area has seen extensive alterations and new constructions.

#### MORE INFO

Jhori. “Arts and Crafts.” *A Dictionary of Modern Architecture*, University of Chicago, 16 Nov. 2015.

Mosby, Rebekah Presson. *Arts and Crafts Movement*. *Dictionary of American History*, edited by Stanley I. Kutler, 3rd ed., vol. 1, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2003, pp. 320-321. Gale eBooks.

*National Register of Historic Places*, Van Buren Place Historic District, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, CA, National Register #89001103.

Obniski, Monica. “The Art and Crafts Movement in America.” Heilbrun Timeline of Art History, *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2020.

# ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

## ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Amanda Randolph

Born in 1896 in Louisville, Kentucky, Amanda Randolph got her start as a singer, cutting tracks and writing songs for the Vocalstyle piano roll company, and eventually performing in musicals in New York City and in Europe in the early 1930s. She then found herself on the vaudeville circuit as a singer and performer.

After taking a short break to marry Harry Hansberry and help him run Hansberry Clam House, one of Harlem's most notable gay speakeasies, Randolph began working in the Black film industry (particularly with director Oscar Micheaux) before transitioning to radio shows and soaps at CBS. With her casting in *The Laytons* in 1944, she became the first African American actor to star in a regularly-broadcast television show. Steady television work followed, and her morning musical show, *Amanda*, made her the first Black woman with her own daytime TV show.

Although she is best known for her television roles, Randolph also appeared in films, most notably in *No Way Out* (1950) alongside Sidney Poitier in his first starring role. Her younger sister, Lillian, also worked in the entertainment industry, and became known for her role as the titular character of the radio program *The Beulah Show*.

Randolph died of a stroke in 1967 at the age of 70.

**MORE INFO** "Amanda Randolph." *Wikipedia*, 31 May 2023.

# RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

## CURRENT PHOTOS



(courtesy of **Realtor.com**)



(courtesy of **Realtor.com**)



(courtesy of **Realtor.com**)



(courtesy of **Realtor.com**)



(courtesy of Realtor.com)



(courtesy of Realtor.com)



(courtesy of Realtor.com)



(courtesy of Realtor.com)



(courtesy of Realtor.com)



(courtesy of Realtor.com)



(courtesy of **Realtor.com**)



(courtesy of **Realtor.com**)

## HISTORIC PHOTO



Amanda Randolph  
(courtesy of **Wikimedia Commons**)

## BLUEPRINT OR FLOOR PLANS



(courtesy of **Realtor.com**)

# TALES AND TIMELINES

## RELEVANT DATES

**1903**

The house at 846 S. Longwood Avenue is built.

**late 1940s**

A Mr. Walter Smith owns the house.

**1940s-1950s**

Amanda Randolph resides at 2624 Van Buren Place.

**1950s**

Amanda Randolph moves to 2639 Van Buren Place.

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## BILL “BOJANGLES” ROBINSON HOUSE

**YEAR BUILT** 1937

**MATERIALS EMPLOYED** Concrete, brick, clapboard siding, glass, and shingle roofing.

**COST TO BUILD** \$14,500 (inc. 1938 garage addition)

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE** American Colonial Revival

Like other revivalist architectural styles, American Colonial finds its roots in a nostalgia for an idealized past. The renewed interest in the early settlement of English colonists in what would later become the United States is attributed by many to the Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876 to celebrate the nation’s 100th birthday. In looking backward toward America’s colonial past, the Exhibition proposed a romanticized view of American progress as descendant from these early settlers, a sentiment that was welcomed by many amid a growing unease with European immigrants arriving in the US and the emancipation of the country’s enslaved people following the Civil War. In 1877, the prominent architects McKim, Mead, White, and Bigelow took a trip through New England to create measured drawings of what they deemed to be important colonial houses. Soon after, elements of the style began to appear as decorative overlay on the current Queen Anne style residences, and later, original American Colonial Revival homes began to take shape in earnest.

Drawing from Georgian, Federal, Dutch Colonial, and post-medieval English styles, American Colonial Revival structures are typically one or two stories high and characterized by qualities that both replicated and paraphrased the features of their colonial antecedents. Notable elements include rectangular masses; symmetrical facades (though they may be interrupted by side porches or sun rooms); multi-pane, double-hung windows with correctly proportioned shutters; pedimented doorways, porches, and dormers; large, ornate cornices; brick, wood clapboard, or shingle siding; bay windows; and open gable or hipped roofs with narrow eaves.

Colonial Revival homes gained in popularity during the early 20th century, with about 40% of US homes built from 1910 to 1930 being done so in the style. The 1940s and 1950s saw a simplified version of the style, with side-gabled or hipped roofs and classically inspired doors, windows, shutters, and dormers.

## IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE

Bill “Bojangles” Robinson and his wife, Fannie, had never owned property before they acquired 1194 West 36th Place. The couple saw this house as their “Hollywood Bungalow,” a place to ground them after Robinson’s years of travel on the vaudeville circuit.

Fannie connected the house’s architect, Paul Revere Williams, with an interior designer to collaborate with on the project, a preference of Williams’, who felt that first time homeowners might be overwhelmed by the amount of input necessary to design the house themselves. As he stated: “People don’t always know what they want. It is the architect’s job to help them find it, and keep within the bounds of grace.” In this case, the collaboration between the architect and the interior designer was doubly necessary since the Robinsons were often out of town during construction.

The home featured a garage addition labeled as a “playroom” on plans, which contained a full bar and a pool table for Robinson. Meanwhile, Fannie was enamored by the ample outdoor space.

## BIOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECT

Paul Revere Williams was born in Los Angeles in 1894, the second son of Lila Wright Williams and Chester Stanley Williams, who were recent transplants from Memphis, Tennessee. When he was just two years old, his father died. Two years later, his mother passed too, leaving him and his brother orphans. Williams was taken in by a foster mother who supported his education and encouraged his artistic talents. When he began elementary school, he was the only African American student in the student population. Nonetheless, he succeeded in his pursuits, and attended Polytechnic High School. It was there that Williams remembers one of his earliest brushes with racial bias—a teacher who discouraged him from pursuing architecture, suggesting that he’d have difficulty attracting white clients and that the Black community wouldn’t provide enough work.

Ignoring his teacher’s dissuasion, Williams quickly landed internships and work at prominent architecture firms throughout the city. He also prevailed in higher education, attending the Los Angeles Beaux-Arts School as well as USC’s School of Engineering. In 1915, he received his certification as a building contractor, and by 1921, he was licensed as an architect and served on the inaugural Los Angeles City Commission.

During the real estate boom of the 1920s, Williams’s career flourished through work in residential designs, including homes in the neighborhoods of Flintridge, Windsor Square, and Hancock Park. It was during this decade that he started his own practice. In 1923, he was recognized as the first African American member of the American Institute of Architects.

As he rose to prominence through his mastery of various styles, his strong work ethic, and his meticulous attention to detail, Williams emerged as one of Los Angeles’s most prolific architects. His commercial designs include the Los Angeles County Courthouse, the MCA building, the Beverly Hills Hotel, Chasen’s restaurant, the Palm Springs Tennis Club, and the Theme Building at LAX, and he counted among his residential clients celebrities like Frank

Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Lon Chaney, Barbara Stanwyck, and Charles Correll.

As a Black man working before the civil rights movement, Williams was acclaimed despite prejudice, discrimination, and hostility. In 1940, redlining, in the form of racial protective covenants, enforced racial segregation in approximately 80% of properties in Los Angeles, so Williams designed countless homes and commercial buildings that he could never have owned or patronized himself. For example, despite his design contributions to the Beverly Hills Hotel, Williams was refused service at the hotel. As his granddaughter recounts, “He wasn’t even able to eat out by the pool. The hostess would not seat him.” Williams even taught himself to draw upside down in order to accommodate white clients who may be uncomfortable sitting next to a Black man. In a candid autobiographical essay from 1937, the architect reflected on these challenges:

“Virtually everything pertaining to my professional life during those early years was influenced by my need to offset race prejudice, by my effort to force white people to consider me as an individual rather than a member of a race. I encountered irreconcilables who simply refused to give me a hearing, but on the whole, I have been treated with amazing fairness.”

For over five decades, Paul Revere Williams designed thousands of buildings, served on municipal and state commissions, and frequently donated his time and skills to projects dedicated to the health and welfare of Los Angeles’s Black community. In 1957, he became the first Black architect elected as a Fellow of the American Institute of Architecture. After a legendary career that spanned five decades, Williams retired in 1973 and passed away in 1980. In 2017, he was posthumously honored with the AIA Gold Medal, awarded to individuals whose work has had a lasting influence on the field of architecture.

### ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF ARCHITECT’S WORK

Williams’s architectural repertoire was vast and he employed many styles throughout his career, from Greek Revival to Mid-Century Modern. The Robinson House’s American Colonial Revival style brings to mind vast Beverly Hills and Brentwood estates designed by Williams such as Little Holmby (1937) and the Moor and Parera Residence (1937), whose mix of clapboard and brick clearly reference historical New England architecture. Like all of Williams’s best work, the Robinson House showcases his knack for synthesis and elegance.

### HOW THE ARCHITECT MIGHT BE RESPONDING TO A SITE PROBLEM

The site of the Robinson House was previously occupied by two residences that were moved, in 1937, to 2216 and 2218 Terrace Heights Avenue, in Boyle Heights, by a Mrs. Kardashian and E. Baylorin, respectively.

## MORE INFO

Building Permit 1922LA19635. *Los Angeles Department of Building And Safety*. June 8, 1922.

Building Permit 1938LA09148. *Los Angeles Department of Building And Safety*. April 4, 1938.

Building Permit 1937LA38881. *Los Angeles Department of Building And Safety*. November 30, 1937.

Building Permit 1937LA34368. *Los Angeles Department of Building And Safety*. October 19, 1937.

Building Permit 1937LA39391. *Los Angeles Department of Building And Safety*. December 3, 1937.

Building Permit 1937LA37439. *Los Angeles Department of Building And Safety*. November 15, 1937.

*The Paul R. Williams Project*

# ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

## ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Bill “Bojangles” Robinson

Bill Robinson was born Luther Robinson in 1878 in Richmond, Virginia. He was raised by his grandmother and began busking and dancing at a young age. He soon found himself on the minstrel show circuit, eventually graduating to vaudeville and Broadway.

Robinson was best known for his soft shoe and tap dance performances, especially his tap routines on a staircase. Soon, Hollywood came calling, and he performed in a succession of films alongside Shirley Temple, the white child star and the older Black man becoming the first interracial dance couple in cinema history. In 1943, he also starred in *Stormy Weather*, an all-Black musical film inspired by his own life.

Robinson was married three times. His longest marriage was to his second wife, Fannie Clay, whom he married in 1922 and with whom he hired Paul R. Williams to design their house in 1937. The couple divorced in 1943 and Fannie kept the house. A year later, Robinson married Elaine Plaines, but he never owned another house. Despite his groundbreaking success, he died penniless in 1949, at the age of 71.

## MORE INFO

“Bill (Bojangles) Robinson Residence, Los Angeles, CA.” ***The Paul R. Williams Project***.

“Bill Robinson.” ***Encyclopedia Britannica***. November 21, 2022.

# RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

## CURRENT PHOTO



(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)

## HISTORIC PHOTOS



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker,  
courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker,  
courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker,  
courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker,  
courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker,  
courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker,  
courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker,  
courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker,  
courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker, courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker, courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker, courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker, courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker, courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker, courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker, courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, 1939  
(photo by Maynard L. Parker, courtesy of the **Huntington Library**)



Robinson House, ca 1943  
(courtesy of **Miriam Matthews Photograph Collection, UCLA Library**)



Fannie S. Clay and Bill Robinson in 1933  
(photo by Carl van Vechten, courtesy of **Library of Congress**)



Paul R. Williams  
(courtesy of the **Los Angeles Public Library**)

# TALES AND TIMELINES

## RELEVANT DATES

### October 1937

The two buildings occupying the lot at 1194 West 36th Place are disassembled and moved to Boyle Heights. Construction begins on the Robinson House.

### 1939

The house is completed but it's unclear whether or not the Robinsons move in. Some sources state that they did not make 1194 West 36th Place their permanent home until 1943.

### 1943

The Robinsons divorce and Fannie keeps the house in the settlement.

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## ELLA FITZGERALD HOUSE

**YEAR BUILT** 1949

**MATERIALS EMPLOYED** Stucco walls and wood shingle roof.

**COST TO BUILD** \$18,000

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE** American Colonial Revival

Like other revivalist architectural styles, American Colonial finds its roots in a nostalgia for an idealized past. A renewed interest in the early settlement of English colonizers in what would later become the United States is often attributed to the Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876 to celebrate the nation's 100th birthday. In looking back towards America's colonial past, the exhibition proposed a romanticized view of American progress as descendant from these early settlers, a sentiment that was welcomed by many amid a growing unease with European immigrants arriving in the US and with the emancipation of the country's enslaved people following the Civil War. In 1877, the prominent architects McKim, Mead, White, and Bigelow took a trip through New England to create measured drawings of what they deemed to be important colonial houses. Soon after, elements of the style started to appear as decorative overlay on Queen Anne-style residences, and, later, original American Colonial Revival homes began to be built.

Drawing from the Georgian, Federal, Dutch Colonial, and post-medieval English styles, American Colonial Revival structures are typically one- or two-stories high, and possess qualities that both replicate and paraphrase the features of their colonial antecedents. Notable elements include rectangular massing; symmetrical facades (though they may be interrupted by side porches or sun rooms); multi-pane, double-hung windows with correctly proportioned shutters; pedimented doorways, porches, and dormers; large, ornate cornices; brick, wood clapboard, or shingle siding; bay windows; and open gable or hipped roofs with narrow eaves.

The American Colonial Revival style grew in popularity in the early 20th century, with about 40% of US residences built between 1910 and 1930 designed in this style. In the 1940s and 1950s, architects transitioned to a simplified version of the style, with side-gabled or hipped roofs and classical-inspired doors, windows, shutters, and dormers.

## OTHER FACTS AND FIGURES

One year after Fitzgerald purchased her home on Hepburn Avenue, musician Ray Charles and his family moved into a two-story stucco residence at 3910 Hepburn Ave, a few houses up the street from Fitzgerald.

## RELEVANT/INTERESTING PRIMARY SOURCE

### ***Colonial Revival Architecture***

## ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF ARCHITECT'S WORK

The residence at 3971 Hepburn Ave. is composed of elements and materials typical of the simplified American Colonial Revival style of the 1940s and 1950s. Three multi-pane, double-hung dormer windows offer views from the top floor while a bay window and picture window break up the symmetry on the ground floor. In a departure from the original Colonial architecture, the open gable shingle roof extends beyond the main façade on one side, leaving open space for a small garden outside the bay window.

## MORE INFO

"Activism, Music Intersect in Leimert Park." ***Los Angeles Times***, 25 Dec. 2005.

# ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

## ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Robert H. Mason (known to be the owner in 1949)  
Ella Fitzgerald (1957-1980)  
William and Marilyn Ezell (1995-present)

Ella Fitzgerald

Often referred to as “The First Lady of Song,” Ella Fitzgerald was thought to be the greatest female jazz singer in the US for more than half a century. Her flexible, wide-ranging voice and improvisational ability earned her 14 Grammy awards and numerous other accolades, both for her music and for her contributions as a civil rights activist.

Born on April 25, 1917 in Newport News, Virginia, Fitzgerald moved with her mother, Temperance “Tempie” Henry, and Tempie’s longtime boyfriend, Joseph, to Yonkers, New York, in the early 1920s. Starting in third grade, Fitzgerald loved dancing and performed for her peers at school. Her family’s church, Bethany African Methodist Episcopal Church, provided her with her earliest experiences in music. Tempie died in 1932, when Fitzgerald was 15 years old, prompting her to move to Harlem to live with her aunt, and, eventually, to a state reformatory school in Hudson, New York.

Fitzgerald made her most significant musical debut at the age of 17, on November 21, 1934, in one of the earliest Amateur Nights at the Apollo Theater. She had intended to go on stage and dance, but as there was another dance duo performing that night, she opted to sing instead, which won her first prize. In the mid-1930s, she was asked to join the orchestra of drummer and bandleader Chick Webb, and she gained acclaim as part of the group’s performances at Harlem’s Savoy Ballroom. When Webb died in 1939, the band was renamed Ella and Her Famous Orchestra—Fitzgerald recorded nearly 150 songs with Webb’s orchestra between 1935 and 1942, when she left the band to pursue a solo career. She worked with manager Moe Gale, co-founder of the Savoy, and, later, with Norman Granz, founder of Verve Records, with whom she recorded some of her most widely noted works.

Fitzgerald appeared in movies, made numerous guest appearances on television shows, and collaborated with jazz greats, including Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, which produced some of her best-known songs, such as “Dream a Little Dream of Me” and “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing).” She moved from St. Albans, New York, to the Leimert Park neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1957, though her busy touring schedule kept her on the road for many years. In 1993, Fitzgerald established the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, which awarded grants to fund academic

opportunities, music education, basic care needs, and medical research focused on diabetes, heart disease, and vision impairment.

Fitzgerald died at the age of 79, on June 15th, 1996, in Beverly Hills, California. She has been honored with the National Medal of Arts, the NAACP's inaugural President's Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

\*\*\*

Bill and Marilyn Ezell

Marilyn Ezell is a retired facilities design manager and her husband, Bill, is a retired banker.

### QUOTES FROM OWNERS

"I decorated the new house myself," [Fitzgerald] told Mary Okon shortly after she moved in. "I'd sure like to... spend more time with Ray, Jr. I don't think I'd ever give up the tours though. Being on the road gets rough sometimes, but I'd sure miss singing to people."

"Everything we need is here," said 34-year resident Marilyn Ezell. "I would think this is how Harlem was in the old days. We have jazz clubs, art galleries and museums. My church, West Angeles Church of God in Christ, is less than a mile away."

### RELEVANT/INTERESTING PRIMARY SOURCE

***Colonial Revival Architecture***

### MORE INFO

"Activism, Music Intersect in Leimert Park." ***Los Angeles Times***, 25 Dec. 2005.

Nicholson, Stuart. "Ella Fitzgerald: A Biography of the First Lady of Jazz, Updated Edition." ***Google Books***, 2004.

# RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

## CURRENT PHOTOS



(photo by FORT: LA)



(photo by FORT: LA)



(photo by FORT: LA)



Marilyn and Bill Ezell in front of the Ella Fitzgerald House  
(photo by Stephen Osman, courtesy of **Getty Images**)

## HISTORIC PHOTOS



Ella Fitzgerald  
(photo by Anthony Bruno/Michael, courtesy of Getty Images)



Ella Fitzgerald  
(photo by Gilles Petnard/Redferns)

# TALES AND TIMELINES

## RELEVANT DATE

**June 8, 1949**

A permit is filed by owner Robert H. Mason to build a two-story dwelling at 3971 Hepburn Avenue, in Leimert Park.

**1957**

Jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald purchases the home, but due to her busy touring schedule, only lives there for part of the year.

**1995**

Bill and Marilyn Ezell purchase the residence for \$248,000.

**October 20, 1995**

A certificate of occupancy is issued after construction to enlarge the second floor bathroom and add a walk-in closet over the existing first floor.

**September 9, 1996**

A permit is filed to reroof the residence and garage.

**December 9, 2009**

A permit is filed to add a 288-square-foot sunroom at the first story level with a deck above it.

## MORE INFO

"Activism, Music Intersect in Leimert Park." *Los Angeles Times*, 25 Dec. 2005.

O'Connor, Pauline. "An Illustrated Guide to Los Angeles Architecture." *Curbed LA*, 21 June 2018.