



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Lisa Ann L. Mangat, Director

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November 27, 2019

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room B-50
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Anderson, Edmund, House

Dear Board of Supervisors:

Pursuant to Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60.6(c) I am notifying you that the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) at its next meeting intends to consider and take action on the nomination of the above-named property to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Details on that meeting are on the enclosed notice. The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving California's cultural heritage. If the item is removed from the scheduled agenda, you will be notified by mail.

Local government comments regarding the National Register eligibility of this property are welcomed. Letters should be sent to California State Parks, Attn: Office of Historic Preservation, Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer, 1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, California 95816. So that the SHRC will have adequate time to consider them, it is requested, but not required, that written comments be received by the Office of Historic Preservation fifteen (15) days before the SHRC meeting. Interested parties are encouraged to attend the SHRC meeting and present oral testimony.

As of January 1, 1993, all National Register properties are automatically included in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) and afforded consideration in accordance with state and local environmental review procedures.

The federal requirements covering the National Register program are to be found in the National Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and in Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60. State law regarding the California Register is in the Public Resources Code, Section 5024. Should you have questions regarding this nomination, or would like a copy of the nomination, please contact the Registration Unit at (916) 445-7004. **Note that staff revises nominations throughout the nomination process.**

Sincerely,

Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

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COMMISSION MEMBERS

Adam Siro, Chair
Lee Adams III
Bryan K. Brandes
Janet Hansen
Alan Hess
Luis Hoyos
Rick Moss
Marshall McKay
René Vellanoweth, PhD

MEETING NOTICE

FOR: State Historical Resources Commission Quarterly Meeting

DATE: Friday, January 31, 2020

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: State Resources Building—Auditorium
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, California 95814

This room is accessible to people with disabilities. Questions regarding the meeting should be directed to the Registration Unit (916) 445-7008.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Anderson, Edmund "Rochester," House **DRAFT**

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1932 Rochester Circle

City or town: Los Angeles State: California County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stucco, Wood, Concrete, Brick, Asphalt

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Edmund "Rochester" Anderson House is located at 1932 Rochester Circle on the south side of the street between Cimarron Street and S. Gramercy Place in the South Los Angeles neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles. The main house is a two-story, single-family Colonial Revival residence with a wood-framed structure. It faces north towards Rochester Circle and is rectangular plan with a two-story wing to the east and a one-to-two-story wing to the west. The cross-gabled roof has an off-centered, front-facing gable and is covered with composition shingles. The walls are primarily clad with stucco. The main entrance is located off-center to the west on the street-facing elevation and a port-cochère is located to the east. A porch with a shed roof is located at the center of the rear-facing elevation. The house's Colonial Revival style is expressed through details such as its main entrance with a broken triangular pediment and fluted pilasters with Doric capitals. To the rear or south of the main house is a backyard with an inground pool, pool house, and office building. The property is in fair condition and retains all aspects of integrity.

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Narrative Description

The Edmund "Rochester" Anderson House is located at 1932 Rochester Circle in the South Los Angeles neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles. The property is located at the center of the south side of the street, which terminates at a dead end just to the east of the property, and is primarily surrounded by one-story, single-family residences. The property is irregular in shape and approximately 130 feet wide on the north, 126 feet long on the east, 132 feet wide on the south, and 101 feet long on the west. It comprises a main house, inground pool, pool house, and office building. The main house faces north onto Rochester Circle and is set back from the street. A grassy front lawn is surrounded by a low metal fence with fleur-de-lis pickets and brick posts. The main entrance is accessed via a front gate that leads to a concrete path with a brick border. To the east of the pedestrian path is a concrete driveway leading to a porte-cochère, which is accessed via a rolling metal gate. A low brick planter just to the west of the main entrance features two tall palm trees.

The main house is two stories in height and rectangular in plan. A two-story wing that is rectangular in plan is located at the east end of the building to the east of a porte-cochère. A one-to-two-story wing that is irregular in plan is located at the west end of the building and wraps around the southwest corner. A small one-story porch is located on the south elevation to the west of the porte-cochère. The house has a side-gabled roof with a single-front facing gable located off-center to the west. The east wing has a side-gable roof. Both are covered in composition shingles. The west wing has a combination roof. A shed roof covered with rolled asphalt is located over the two-story portion at the west end of the building. A flat roof with a raised concrete railing that forms a balcony is located at the one-story portion at the southwest corner. The porch on the south elevation has a shed roof that is covered with composition shingles. The house has two brick chimneys. One chimney is located towards the west end of the building and the other is located off-center to the east. Additionally, there are four mechanical dormer vents regularly spaced along the slope of the roof on the street-facing elevation.

The exterior is primarily clad with a lightly-textured stucco. The front-facing gable features wood horizontal siding, while the second-story of the west wing features tongue-and-groove wood siding with a pronounced channel. The street-facing elevation is ornamented with two double-height fluted Doric wood columns located on either side of front-facing gable and a wood cornice located beneath the eave.

The main entrance is located on the front-facing gable and accessed via a brick step leading to a wide brick landing. It consists of a wood paneled door painted red. It is flanked by two multi-light sidelights with wood frames. Both the main entrance and sidelights are recessed within a broken triangular pediment wood door surround. The porte-cochère is located off-center to the east and consists of an unornamented opening with paired metal gates.

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There are six secondary entrances. Two secondary entrances are on the south elevation. One is located towards the east end and consists of paired multi-light wood doors. The second entrance is located towards the west end and consists of a partially glazed wood door. Four of the secondary entrances are on the east wing. Three are located on the south elevation and consist of single or paired wood French doors. A fourth entrance is located within the porte-cochère and consists of a partially-glazed wood paneled door. All feature simple wood frames and wood thresholds. There are also two pairs of wood French doors and a single wood French door to the second-floor balcony at the west end of the house.

The house has an irregular fenestration pattern. Window openings vary in size and shape and are either single, paired, or grouped. On the street-facing elevation, window openings feature non-operable wood shutters. Additionally, on the ground-floor, four are ornamented with semi-circular moldings above the window opening. Window sashes primarily consists of two-over-two single-hung windows with wood frames and sills. On the west wing, there is a glass block window that curves around the corner on the ground-floor. There are also both fixed and sliding multi-light window sashes on the second-story. There are two bay windows. One is located on the street-facing elevation, and the other is located on the east elevation of the west wing. The bay window on the street-facing elevation is semi-circular and has fixed multi-light wood windows. The bay window on the west wing is canted and has two-over-two single-hung windows. Finally, there is an oriel window located on the south elevation with one-over-one single-hung wood windows.

The interior of the house has two floors above street level and one below with approximately 4,600 square feet of living space. The main portion of the house and west wing can be accessed from the main entrance on the street-facing elevation and two secondary entrances on the south elevation. The east wing is primarily accessed from the secondary entrances on the south elevation and the secondary entrance within the porte-cochère. It is also internally connected to the main portion of the house from the master bedroom on the second floor.

The ground floor of the main portion of the house and west wing is divided into a foyer, living room, family room, kitchen, dining room, office, laundry room, and bathroom. The ground-floor foyer is accessed via the main entrance. It features parquet flooring with a square pattern, plaster walls with wainscoting and a crown molding, and a plaster ceiling with a chandelier. The dominating feature of the room is a curving staircase, which leads to the second floor. To the east of the foyer is the family room. This room features wood plank flooring, floor-to-ceiling wood plank wall paneling topped with a crown molding, and a plaster ceiling. The dominant features of the family room are a brick fireplace with a wood mantel on the east wall and a curved bar on the west wall. The fireplace is also flanked by built-in bench seating. To the west of the foyer is the living room. The living room features wood plank floors, plaster walls with wood baseboard and crown molding, and a plaster ceiling. A mirrored fireplace is also located on the west wall and two chandeliers are located at the north end of the room, one in the northwest corner and one in the northeast corner.

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To the south of the foyer is a corridor that runs east-west and extends from the west wall of the living room to the east wall of the family room. The laundry room, bathroom, and stairs to the basement are all accessible from this corridor. The kitchen is located to the west of the laundry room, and the dining room is located to the west of the kitchen. Because the wood flooring in all three rooms has a unique parquet pattern that runs down the center of the spaces, the laundry room, kitchen, and dining room were likely originally one space that has since been subdivided.

The bedrooms on the second floor of the main house are arranged around an east-west corridor. Three bedrooms are located at the west end of the corridor and the master bedroom is located at the east end. All have carpeted floors, plaster walls with wood baseboards and crown moldings, and plaster ceilings. An enclosed porch is located off the northwest bedroom, and a balcony is located off the northeast bedroom. There are two ancillary rooms located to the east of the master bedroom and accessible via door openings on the east wall. There are also two bathrooms on the second floor, one located off the corridor and one off the master bedroom.

The ground floor of the east wing was originally a garage accessible via a garage opening at the west end of the south exterior wall. The ground floor has since been partitioned into two bedrooms that are located on either side of a foyer with a stair to the second floor. The ground-floor bedrooms are accessible via exterior entrances as well as interior entrances located within the foyer. On the second floor of the east wing are two bedrooms located to either side of the stair. These bedrooms have wood plank flooring, plaster walls with wood baseboards and crown moldings, and plaster ceilings. A door on the west wall of the west bedroom leads to one of the ancillary rooms located off the master bedroom.

To the rear or south of the main house is a backyard with an inground pool, pool house, and office building. The backyard is surrounded on three sides by a concrete block wall ornamented with stone paneling and brick pilasters. A concrete path with a brick border is located directly to the south of the main house. The inground pool is located at the center of the backyard. It is rectangular in shape with curved edges and is bordered by stone paving. To the south of the pool is a raised concrete-and-brick dais flanked by two free-standing Doric concrete columns.

The pool house is located near the west end of the backyard. It consists of two one-story wings with a central alcove that is open on the side facing the pool. The two wings and central alcove all have shed roofs covered with composition wood shingles and are clad in tongue-and-groove wood siding with a pronounced channel. There is a brick fireplace and chimney located within the alcove and bathrooms located within the two wings. The pool house was constructed in 1941 within the period of significance; therefore, it contributes to the character of the property.

The ancillary office building is located near the east end of the backyard. The office building is rectangular in plan and one-story in height. It has a flat roof and is clad in tongue-and-groove wood siding with a pronounced channel. The entrance is located on the west elevation and consists of paired wood French doors with multi-light sidelights. The office building was

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originally a carport that was enclosed in 2005; therefore, it does not retain integrity from the period of significance and does not contribute to the character of the property.

The property has not been substantially altered from the period between 1940 and 1977 when Anderson lived there. The only known major alteration to the house's exterior after 1977 is the removal of the garage opening on the east wing and replacement with new entry doors. New fences were erected around the front and rear yards, although the brick base of the fence at the front yard appears to be original. New paving was installed to the rear of the main house and around the pool. A carport at the east end of the rear yard was enclosed and converted into an office in 2005. On the interior, the original floor plan of the main house remains largely unaltered except for the subdividing of the space at the southwest corner into a laundry room, kitchen, and dining room. The original features and materials in the main living spaces and bedrooms have been preserved. The cabinets and counter tops in the laundry room, kitchen, and dining room are all non-original. The master bath has also been remodeled.

The Edmund "Rochester" Anderson House retains all aspects of integrity and meets the eligibility requirements as outlined in the Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles Multiple Property Submission for residences. The property retains its integrity of location, as it has not been moved from where it was constructed in 1940. The integrity of design is intact, as the historic function and aesthetic of the main house and surrounding property is still readily apparent. The house retains its integrity of materials, as key materials from the period of significance remain on the exterior and in the main living spaces and bedrooms on the interior. The integrity of workmanship is intact and is evident in the original finishes found throughout the interior and exterior of the house. The integrity of feeling is intact. The physical features of the main house and surrounding property still convey the feeling of a 1940s Colonial Revival-style single-family residence. The property retains its integrity of setting. Its immediate setting, its front and rear yard, have been minimally altered since 1977, and its essential features remain, including the grassy front lawn, concrete pathways at the main entrance and porte-cochère, and rear yard with a pool and pool house. The property's broader setting also remains, namely its prominent location on a block otherwise characterized by one-story single-family residences. Lastly, the property retains its integrity of association, as it retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its associative significance under Criterion B.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

PERFORMING ARTS

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

Period of Significance

1940–1977

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Anderson, Edmund "Rochester"

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Manson, Gerald (engineer)

Sweet, Harry W. (builder)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Edmund "Rochester" Anderson House is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B in the areas of Ethnic Heritage and Performing Arts. It meets the registration requirements for the residences of prominent persons outlined in the *Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles* Multiple Property Submission and is significant at the local level in the context of Entertainment and Culture. The property was the residence of Anderson, a radio, film, and television actor. He began his career in show business as a teenager performing on the vaudeville circuit. In 1937, Anderson became the first African American to have a regular role on a national radio program playing the part of Rochester on *The Jack Benny Program*. He continued to play the character when the series moved to television from 1950 to 1965. Anderson also performed in as many as 65 films, mostly between 1932 and 1946. The period of significance is 1940 to 1977, which corresponds with the period he resided at the property from its construction until his death.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Edmund Lincoln Anderson was an entertainer who was so strongly associated with his most famous role that he became commonly known as "Rochester" the name of his character on *The Jack Benny Program*. Anderson was born in Oakland, California on September 18, 1905.¹ By 1920, the family had moved to San Francisco. As a boy, Anderson sold newspapers on a street corner and permanently damaged his vocal cords from the constant shouting. As a result, he developed a raspy voice that would become his trademark. Anderson began singing and dancing in vaudeville houses as a teenager. He performed in various teams, which often included his older brother Cornelius. One such team, The Three Black Aces, enjoyed considerable success in the late 1920s and early 1930s. During one of his vaudeville tours on the East Coast, Anderson met the comedian Jack Benny. The men only shook hands, not knowing that one day they would be connected professionally and personally.²

Precisely when Anderson moved to Los Angeles is unknown, but it must have been in the early 1930s.³ His first film appearance was *What Price Hollywood?* in 1932. The cast included the

¹ His parents Edmond L. and Maud M. Anderson are widely reported to have been entertainers, but in the 1900 U.S. Census they are noted as living in Kansas City and he listed his occupation as porter and she as dressmaker. By the 1910 U.S. Census, they were living in Oakland and he again listed his occupation as porter and she none. By the 1920 U.S. Census, they were living in San Francisco and Edmund Sr. listed his occupation as piano mover. Edmund Jr. was 14 years old at this time and he worked as a "errand boy" for an architecture firm.

² Henry T. Sampson, *Blacks in Blackface: A Sourcebook on Early Black Musical Shows* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 2014), 1373.

³ Anderson is not listed in the 1930 U.S. Census or the *Los Angeles Negro City Directory*, 1930-1931.

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African American actress Louise Beavers. Anderson played a butler, while Beavers played a maid. During the Golden Age of Hollywood African American actors were mainly relegated to roles as servants and other demeaning parts.⁴ With limited opportunities for upward mobility, many black actors calculated that playing a servant was better than being a servant. Anderson continued to work in films through the 1930s, but mostly uncredited parts such as bellhops, chauffeurs, and porters. His most important role during this period was in *The Green Pastures* (1936), the first film produced by a major Hollywood studio with an all-black cast since 1929.⁵ The film depicted stories from the Bible with Anderson playing the part of Noah. He also performed in nightclubs such as the Apex Club on Central Avenue, the heart of the African American community of Los Angeles before World War II.

Anderson rose to national fame through the role of Rochester on *The Jack Benny Program*. The show starred none other than Jack Benny who also began his career in show business as a vaudeville performer. His radio program bounced back and forth between CBS and NBC between 1932 and 1955. Benny played a fictional version of himself, a vain miser who never aged past 39 and played the violin badly. The comedy of the show was mostly at Benny's expense as the supporting cast exposed his shortcomings. It was among the most highly rated programs during its run and is credited as one of the originators of the situational comedy form.

Anderson's first appearance on the program on March 28, 1937 was a one-time role as a porter. Five weeks later he was cast as a waiter. A few weeks later, Anderson was once again given a bit part on the program. The show received so much favorable mail about the gravel-voiced Anderson that Benny decided to create a regular role for him as his butler and valet, "Rochester van Jones." Anderson first appeared on the program as Rochester on June 20, 1937. This was the first time a black actor had achieved a reoccurring role on a radio program.

The Jack Benny Program was groundbreaking in that the two men lived and worked side-by-side. The fact that Anderson was cast as a black character was a major step forward from programs such as *Beulah* and *Amos and Andy* where white actors played blacks. While he played Benny's servant, "Anderson often got the better of his boss," as historian R.J. Smith points out.⁶ While Rochester, especially in the early years, was a racist trope for a lazy servant with bad habits like drinking and gambling, the character was also smart, outspoken, and witty. Anderson often deflated Benny's pomposity with a single line "What's that, boss?" which became his catch phrase.

⁴ The Golden Age of Hollywood is generally considered 1915 to 1963.

⁵ Donald Bogle, *Bright Boulevards, Big Dreams: The Story of Black Hollywood* (New York: One World Ballantine Books, 2005), 164; *Hallelujah!* (1929) directed by King Vidor was the first film produced by a major Hollywood studio with an all-black cast.

⁶ R.J. Smith, *The Great Black Way: L.A. in the 1940s and the Lost African American Renaissance* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006), 157.

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After Anderson joined the cast of *The Jack Benny Program*, he continued to act in films on a regular basis. Two of the films in which he appeared won the Academy Award for Best Picture, *You Can't Take It with You* (1938) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939). His parts in those films were still small, because starring roles for African Americans in Hollywood were rare. In 1943, MGM decided to make a film version of the Broadway musical, *Cabin in the Sky*, which featured an all-black cast including Ethel Waters and Rex Ingram. Anderson was cast in the starring role of Little Joe Jackson, who dreams of being a better man. *Cabin in the Sky* was the feature film debut of the director Vincente Minnelli and the singer Lena Horne.

Like most African Americans moving to Los Angeles, Anderson originally settled near the Central Avenue corridor. By 1940, Anderson and his wife of eight years, Mamie (Wiggins) were living at 756 E. 43rd Street.⁷ According to the U.S. Census, they were sharing the house with Charles and Bessie Kaverner, Fred Sims, and Ralph and Lillian Cooper. Ralph Cooper also listed his occupation as actor. Anderson was a fixture on Central Avenue and much admired in the community. In 1940, he was elected the honorary mayor of Central Avenue, a position he took somewhat seriously. In a campaign advertisement in the *California Eagle*, he said, "I believe the people of the Eastside are entitled to the same Civil, Political, and Social Rights as people of other communities...I believe that our streets should be cleaned, that we should have more efficient police protection..." The ad concludes with, "A vote for Rochester is a vote for yourself."⁸

Ironically, around the same time Anderson was campaigning for mayor he was planning to move from the Central Avenue corridor to the West Adams neighborhood. Black settlement in West Adams defied the white westside and non-white eastside racial dichotomy of Los Angeles with Main Street acting as the color line. Access, however, was mainly limited to wealthier African Americans who could afford the higher home prices. Anderson purchased three lots on W. 37th Street, a cul de sac off of Cimmaron Street. Although it has been reported in popular sources that he retained the distinguished African American architect Paul R. Williams to design his home, no supporting evidence could be found. The building permit for the residence indicates that it was designed by the engineer Gerald Manson and constructed by Harry Sweet. No information could be found on either Manson or Sweet regarding their professional lives.

The grand new house reflected Anderson's success in the entertainment industry. By this time, he was earning a salary of \$100,000 a year, making him the highest paid African American actor in Hollywood at the time.⁹ During World War II, Anderson used his celebrity status to advocate for blacks in the military. He believed that African Americans should be given the opportunity to fly planes for the Armed Forces. To show his support, he visited the Tuskegee Airfield and meet

⁷ Mamie Wiggins Anderson died on August 5, 1954. Anderson remarried Evangela Simon on February 8, 1956. They divorced in 1973.

⁸ Quote in Smith, 18-19; and Advertisement for Rochester, *California Eagle*, May 23, 1940.

⁹ Harry Louis Gates Jr., *Harlem Renaissance Lives from the African American National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press 2009), 7.

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with pilots there. Anderson also supported the war effort by financing the Pacific Parachute Company that made parachutes for the Army and Navy during the war years.¹⁰

While *The Jack Benny Program* continued to air on CBS radio until 1955, a television version debuted in 1950. Following World War II, the racial humor on the show surrounding Rochester declined. Benny and the writers made a conscious effort to remove all stereotypical aspects from Rochester's character. The relationship between Benny and Rochester became more complex and familiar over time. Mary Livingston, Benny's wife in real life and on the show, decided to reduce her role. Despite her success, she suffered from stage fright, which grew more acute over time. As Livingston appeared less frequently, Rochester became Benny's primary foil. After the television show ended in 1965, by all accounts the two men held each other in high esteem and remained friends.¹¹

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Anderson enjoyed a life of semi-retirement. Occasionally, acting in a film, like Stanley Kramer's *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1970) or making a personal appearance. But the enormous success of his role as Rochester made casting him as anything else difficult. During the latter period of his life, he spent most of his time with his stable of racehorses, a hobby he had developed earlier in his life. Anderson died on February 28, 1977. He was posthumously awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for Radio. It is located in front of the building at 6513 Hollywood Boulevard. He was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 2001.

Anderson is significant as a rare example of an African American who found success in the early entertainment industry. Playing the role of Rochester on *The Jack Benny Show* (both radio and television) made Anderson one of the most popular and highest paid comedians of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. The Edmund "Rochester" Anderson House is the only property closely associated with Anderson's life as an entertainer. The locations of his previous residences and the dates he resided there are unclear because of conflicting sources.¹² He lived at 1932 Rochester Circle from the completion of the house in 1940 until his death in 1977, which corresponds to the most important period of his career in Hollywood. In 1979, the City of Los Angeles changed the name of the street to Rochester Circle in his honor. The Eddie Rochester Anderson Foundation used the property as a sober living facility until recently, when the program moved to another location. The property is now used as a bed-and-breakfast.

¹⁰ Elizabeth McLeod, "Rochester Goes to War: Eddie Anderson and His Pacific Parachute Company," *Radio Classics*, accessed June 3, 2019, <http://www.radioclassics.com/rochester-goes-to-war-eddie-anderson-and-the-pacific-parachute-company/>.

¹¹ "Eddie 'Rochester' Anderson," *Wikipedia*, accessed June 3, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eddie_%22Rochester%22_Anderson.

¹² According to the 1938 City Directory he lived at 1603 W. 36th Street. By 1941, he had married and moved to 773 E. 43rd Street, also according to the City Directory. Since the completion of the house at 1932 Rochester Circle in 1940 is documented with building permits, the listing in the 1941 City Directory may have been an error. The 1940 U.S. Census indicates that he and his wife were living at 756 E. 43rd Street and had resided there since 1935. They shared the house with five other people.

Anderson, Edmund "Rochester," House
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bogle, Donald. *Bright Boulevards, Big Dreams: The Story of Black Hollywood*. New York: One World Ballantine Books, 2005.

Gates, Harry Louis Jr. *Harlem Renaissance Lives from the African American National Biography*. London: Oxford University Press 2009.

Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. Building Permits. Various dates.

Sampson, Henry T. *Blacks in Blackface: A Sourcebook on Early Black Musical Shows*. London: The Scarecrow Press, 2014.

Smith, R.J. *The Great Black Way: L.A. in the 1940s and the Lost African American Renaissance*. New York: Public Affairs, 2006.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.020889 Longitude: -118.315000

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the property is the full extent of the Los Angeles County Assessor's Parcel No. 5042-019-018 and corresponds to the Sketch Map/Photo Key.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the parcel on which the building was constructed and has been historically associated.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Teresa Grimes, Principal and Emily Rinaldi, Associate Architectural Historian

organization: GPA Consulting

street & number: 617 S. Olive Street, Suite 910

city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90035

e-mail emily@gpaconsulting-us.com

telephone: (310) 792-2690

date: June 24, 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Edmund "Rochester" Anderson House

City or Vicinity: Los Angeles

County: Los Angeles

State: California

Photographer: Emily Rinaldi

Date Photographed: April 17, 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0001)

North (Rochester Circle) and west (side) elevations of main house and front yard, view looking southeast.

2 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0002)

North elevation of house and front yard, view looking south.

3 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0003)

Main entrance to house, view looking south.

4 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0004)

Porte-cochère, view looking south towards rear yard.

5 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0005)

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South (rear) elevation of house and rear yard, view looking west towards inground pool and pool house.

6 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0006)

South elevation of house and rear yard, view looking north.

7 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0007)

South elevation of house and rear yard, view looking east towards inground pool and ancillary office building.

8 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0008)

Pool house to the rear of the house, view looking west.

9 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0009)

Interior, foyer on first floor of house, view looking south.

10 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0010)

Interior, family room on first floor of house, view looking northeast.

11 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0011)

Interior, family room on first floor of house, view looking northwest.

12 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0012)

Interior, living room on first floor of house, view looking northwest.

13 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson House_0013)

Interior, staircase and corridor on second floor of house, view looking east.

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14 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson
House_0014)

Interior, bedroom on second floor of house, view looking northwest.

15 of 15 (CA_Los Angeles_African Americans in Los Angeles MPS_EAnderson
House_0015)

Interior, bedroom on second floor of east wing, view looking northwest.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Location Map

Latitude: 34.020889

Longitude: -118.315000

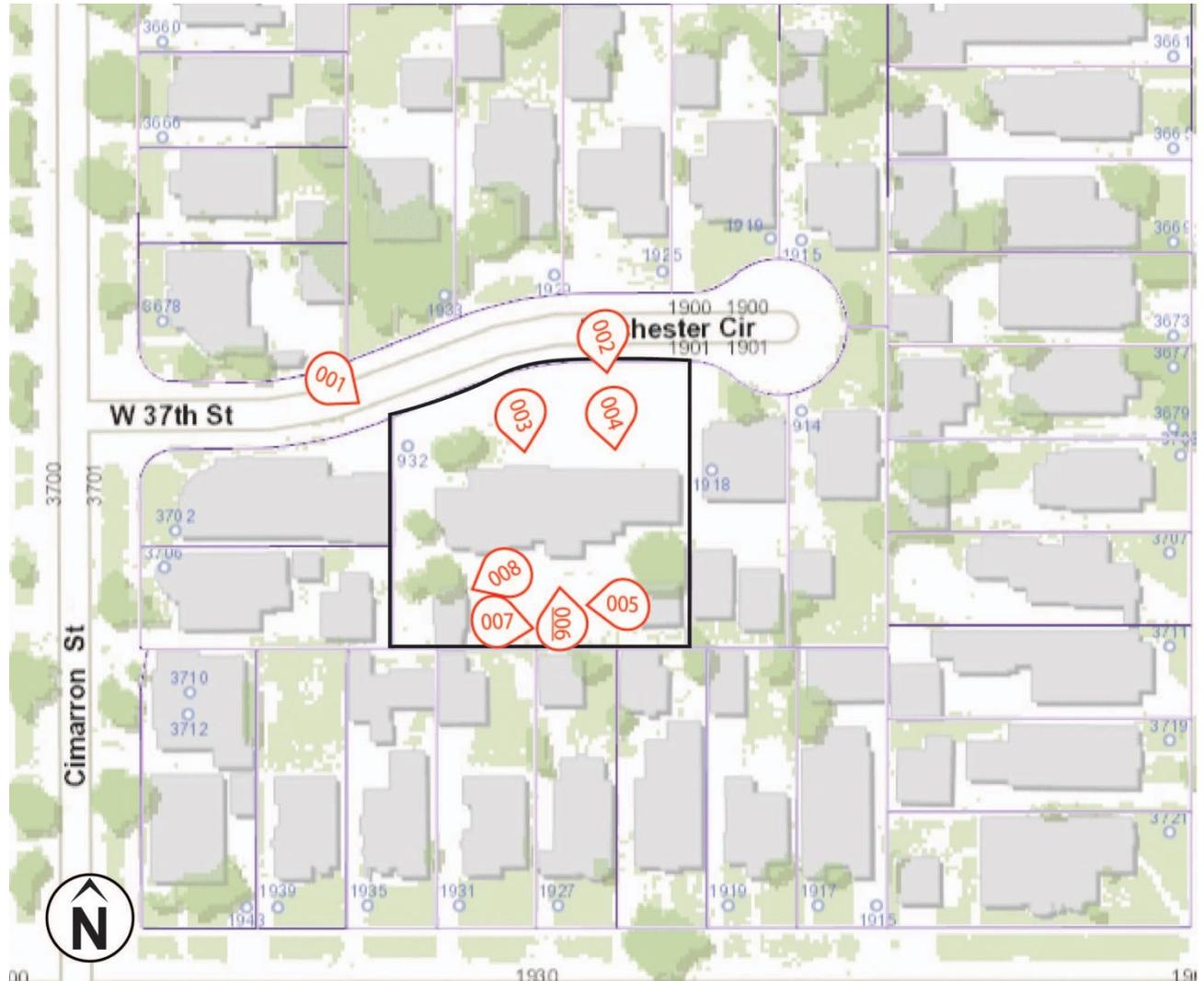


Base image courtesy of Google Earth. Property indicated with placemark. Property boundary indicated with black boundary.

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Photo Key (Exterior):

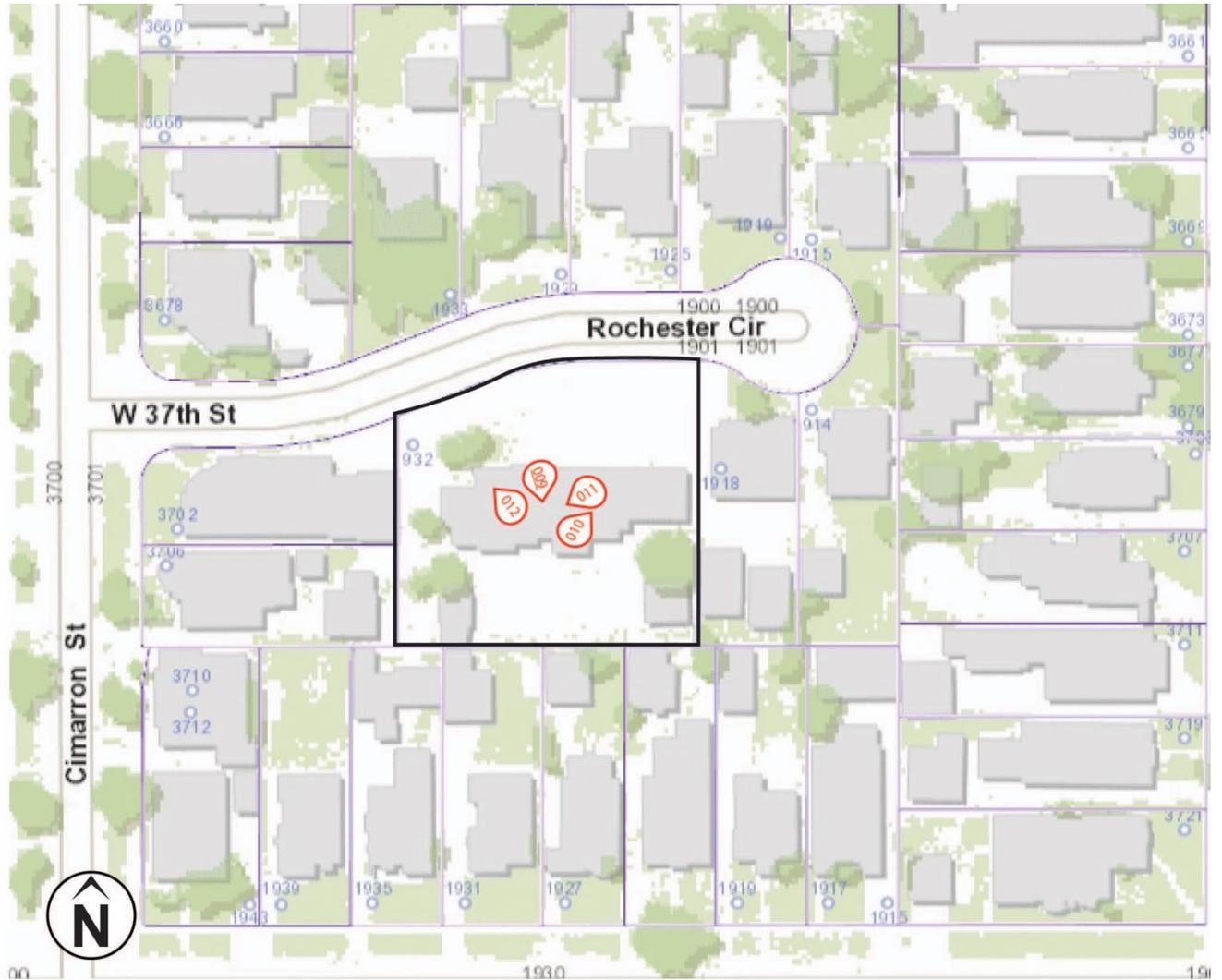


Property boundary indicated with black outline. Photo Key base images courtesy Los Angeles County GIS.

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Photo Key (Ground Floor):



Property boundary indicated with black outline. Photo Key base images courtesy Los Angeles County GIS.

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Figure 1: 1922 Sanborn Map, Los Angeles, Vol. 6, Sheet 631, property not yet subdivided (Los Angeles Public Library)

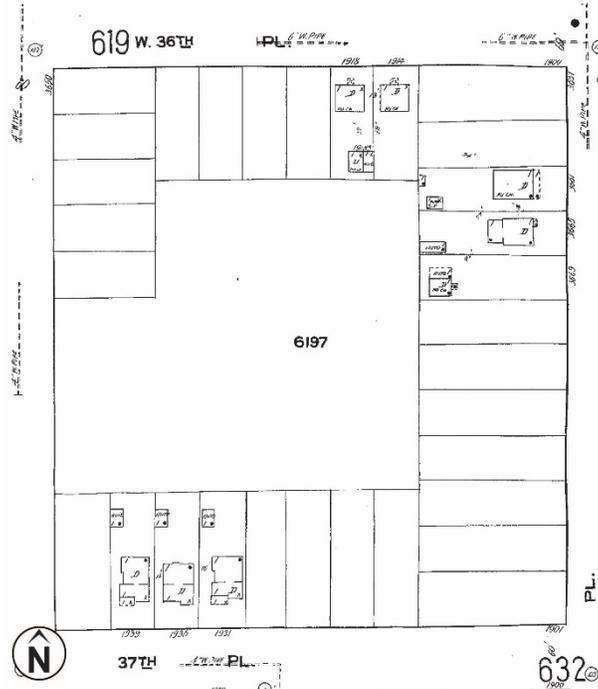
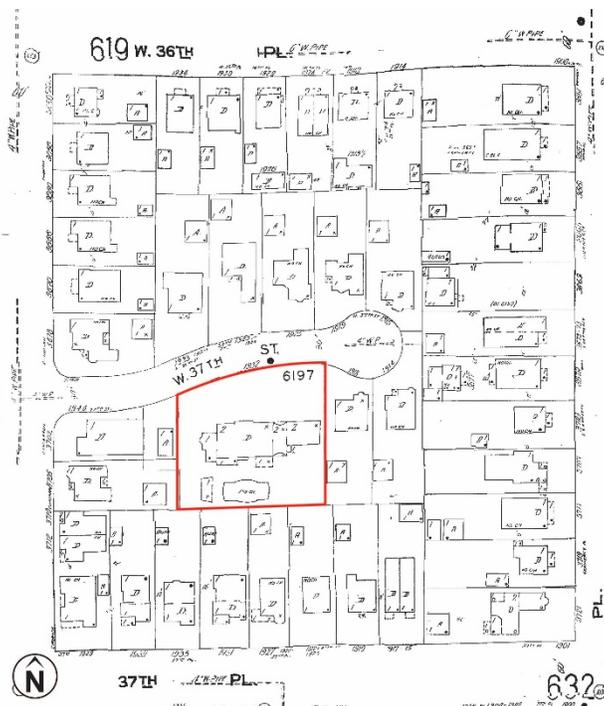


Figure 2: 1951 Sanborn fire insurance map of Los Angeles, Vol. 6, Sheet 631, property outlined in red (Los Angeles Public Library)



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Figure 3: Vintage post card of Edmund "Rochester" Anderson House, date unknown (en.wikimedia.org)



Figure 4: Mamie Anderson at home in 1940s, photographer and date unknown (UCLA Library, Walter L. Gordon and William C. Beverly Jr. Collection)



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Figure 5: Anderson (third from left) holding model airplane. Julius Crouch and his wife are standing to the left and a woman named Angela to the right, Ted Merriman photographer and date unknown, circa 1945 (Los Angeles Public Library)



Figure 6: Anderson as "Rochester" with Jack Benny, date unknown, circa 1950 (Radio Spirits)



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Figure 7: Portrait of Anderson, photographer and date unknown (Radio Classics)

