United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form  
This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

___X____ New Submission  ________ Amended Submission

A.  NAME OF MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING

*Prince, 1958-1987*

B. ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

There are no associated historic contexts as developed by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, as they all end in the year 1945. Urban Centers would be the closest context in theme, but not temporally.

C. FORM PREPARED BY:

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D. CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

_______________________  ____________________   _____________
Signature of certifying official  Title      Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper  
Date of Action
Table of Contents for Written Narrative
Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below. Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form for additional guidance.

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E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS
Prince (Prince Rogers Nelson, 1958–2016; hereafter referred to by his primary stage name “Prince”) was an international music superstar and the principal architect of the music genre referred to as the “Minneapolis Sound.” This document focuses on identifying places associated with his musical development, creation of the Minneapolis Sound in the early 1980s, and his ascent and peak of fame and influence throughout the 1980s. The chronological period begins in 1958, when Prince was born, and encompasses when he mastered his first instrument, the piano; began songwriting; became proficient on the guitar in his early teenage years; formed his first band and performed throughout the Twin Cities; worked as a local session musician; mastered studio engineering; landed a major recording contract at age nineteen; developed a new musical style in the early 1980s; rose to superstardom through the release of the movie and accompanying soundtrack for Purple Rain in 1984; scored three Billboard Number One hits (“When Doves Cry” [1984], “Let’s Go Crazy” [1984], and “Kiss” [1986]) along with numerous other high placing singles and albums; and completed his other widely recognized masterpiece, Sign O’ The Times, in 1987. The context ends at 1987 because in October of that year, Prince opened his artist compound Paisley Park in Chanhassen, Minnesota, marking a shift in the location of the residential, recording and performing aspects of his life.

This context is associated with the themes of Urban Centers, African-American history, and Arts and Entertainment. Geographically, the context is limited to the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, as well as the nearby southwestern suburbs of Eden Prairie, Orono, Wayzata, St. Louis Park, and Chanhassen.

Prince

Really, I'm normal. A little highly-strung, maybe. But normal. But so much has been written about me, and people don’t know what’s right and what’s wrong. I'd rather let them stay confused.

– Prince, 2004

Prince Rogers Nelson (June 7, 1958 – April 21, 2016), who performed under only his first name or, for a seven-year period between 1993 and 2000 under his Love Symbol (a symbol developed by him and Sotera Tschetter with no pronunciation; Figure 1), was an American singer, songwriter, musician, music producer, studio engineer, actor, dancer, video and movie director, and cultural icon/music legend. With a career spanning over four decades, he is known as a musical innovator and the main creator of the “Minneapolis Sound,” a blending of rhythm and blues (R&B), jazz, funk, new wave, punk and rock 'n' roll. Prince's exposure to R&B, funk and rock growing up in Minneapolis, along with his integration of music trends (punk and new wave) in the late 1970s and early 1980s, led to his development of a new musical genre that defined the sonic landscape of the 1980s. Prince is cited as a major influence by wide-ranging artists today, such as Lizzo, Usher, Lady Gaga, Questlove, D'Angelo, Brittany Howard, Beck, Janelle Monáe, and St. Vincent. When asked to define the Minneapolis Sound, producer James “Jimmy Jam” Harris III (Prince’s former protégé and member in one of his many side bands, The Time), said, “It’s a Prince Sound. I think that’s where it all began, and everyone’s taken different pieces of it and turned it into their own sound” (Goldberg 1988).

While Prince was a wide-ranging collaborator, working with scores of artists and creating multiple side bands and projects, he was also a famously independent artist who could compose, perform and produce...
entire studio albums alone (Thorne 2016; Ro 2016). As Jimmy Jam once described him, “If he was just a song writer; hey, he’d already be great. But then he’s also a great singer, and a performer, and a musician, and on most of his tracks, plays every instrument. And was the engineer. Nobody else has that reach, like that total reach” (Knoss 2004).

The 1980s were Prince’s most critically and commercially successful years. Prince’s first two albums For You (1978) and Prince (1979) made their mark on the R&B and soul charts but did not see the crossover to white audiences that he wanted. His early recordings did, however, show his musical virtuosity, as they included the soon-to-be common credit “produced, arranged, composed and performed by Prince,” a remarkable feat for such a young artist. At the time of his debut album, he was Warner Bros. Recording Company’s (Warner Bros.) youngest producer ever. While both albums also highlight Prince’s Minneapolis musical roots in R&B, funk and rock, they had not fully incorporated the synth-pop, punk and new wave music that was coming out of England and New York City. Bandmate Dez Dickerson exposed Prince to much of that music, such as Devo, Generation X, and Spandau Ballet, which would become a key component of the Minneapolis Sound (Dickerson 2004). Prince ushered in his most successful decade with the release of his third album, Dirty Mind (1980), which Rolling Stone described as “one of the most radical 180-degree turns in pop history” and is arguably the first album to fully capture the Minneapolis Sound, which incorporated synth-pop, new wave and punk sounds (Shawhan 2014). Prince’s commercial and critical success grew with his two subsequent releases (Controversy, 1981; and 1999, 1982). His videos with his “multicultural, rainbow-coalition” and mixed-gender band, The Revolution, on the new music channel MTV (his were some of the first videos by an African-American artist to get frequent air play) helped define the fashion, dance moves, and sounds of the new decade (Zschomler 2017; Ro 2016; Thorne 2016; Shawhan 2014).

With no number one hits and only one Top Ten album under his belt (1999), Prince pitched the idea of a major motion picture to his label. While initially unsure, Warner Bros. eventually backed the artist’s effort, and Prince spent most of 1983 and early 1984 writing, recording, and filming the movie and album Purple Rain (1984). Prince and the Revolution recorded three of the album’s songs live at the local venue, First Avenue, during a fundraiser in 1983, including the title track. The album is the first to have substantive contributions from the members of the Revolution; all previous Prince records were essentially solo efforts with the members providing only limited vocals, guitar or keyboard work. The album (released June 25, 1984) and film (July 27, 1984) were instant commercial and critical successes, as the film went on to receive an Oscar in 1985 for Best Original Song Score. The album also gave Prince his first Number One hits (“When Doves Cry” and “Let’s Go Crazy”). With the triple hit of a successful movie, soundtrack and massive tour for Purple Rain, Prince became one of the biggest musical performers in the world and a cultural icon. Through his many side projects during this time, such as Morris Day and The Time, Vanity 6, Apollonia 6, and The Family, and those of his protégés producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis of Flyte Tyme Studios in Minneapolis, who worked most notably with Janet Jackson (Control, Rhythm Nation 1814), the Minneapolis Sound dominated the 1980s airways (Light 2014; Toure 2013, Zschomler 2017).

During the last half of the 1980s, Prince continued to explore new musical sounds, such as the psychedelic pop feel of Around the World in a Day (including the hit “Raspberry Beret” [1985]) that was a strong counterpoint to the rock-heavy Purple Rain. He disbanded The Revolution in 1986 after the release of Parade, which provided him another number one hit, “Kiss”, and was the soundtrack to his less successful
second movie *Under the Cherry Moon*, now considered a cult classic. In 1987, he returned to his roots by completing his next studio album and widely considered second masterpiece *Sign O’ the Times* primarily alone. He closed out the most successful decade of his career with a Number One soundtrack for the Tim Burton movie *Batman* (1989) and single, “Batdance”. *Rolling Stone* magazine (1989) named four of Prince’s albums from the 1980s as the top 100 of the decade, with *Purple Rain* coming in number 2 (after The Clash’s *London Calling*), 1999 at 16, *Dirty Mind* at 18, and *Sign O’ The Times* at 74. Only Bruce Springsteen matched with four albums.

In 1991, Prince formed his next band, The New Power Generation, and began incorporating more hip-hop and rap into his work. The 1990s were defined by his stand against what he saw as unfair practices regarding a musician’s intellectual property. He took on the music industry and its contracting procedures, changing his name to the unpronounceable Love Symbol #2 (see Figure 1) and often appeared with the word “slave” on his face in protest of his recording contract with Warner Bros. and his fight to gain ownership of his masters. His efforts helped other artists have more control over their intellectual property. Prince saw less commercial success with hit songs and album sales in the 1990s through the time of his passing in 2016 (his last Number One song was “Cream” in 1991). In the early 2000s, Prince influenced the business side of the music industry more than the sonic landscape. With slipping record sales but continuing success touring, Prince found innovative ways to distribute his albums through the internet in order to reach Number One, such as selling them with concert tickets (*Musicology*, 2004), and giving record purchasers the chance to enter a sweepstakes to win a private performance (*3121*, 2016). However, he continued to collaborate extensively, perform massive worldwide tours as well as more intimate performances in his Paisley Park compound (built 1987) and innovate methods for music distribution and sales. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2004 on his first year of eligibility (Ro 2016; Thorne 2016; Zschomler 2017).

Over his career, Prince sold over 100 million records worldwide, received an Oscar for Best Original Song Score for the music in *Purple Rain* (recorded at First Avenue), and won seven Grammys, two for *Purple Rain*. Prince was a spectacularly prolific artist, collaborator, and music and business innovator. He left a lasting legacy on music, culture, and the recording industry. Prince was not just a recording artist, and he was more than a musical genius. There are many talented, great musicians but not all become legends. Prince was able to tap into the *zeitgeist* of the 1980s, and offer an entire generation characterized by fear (of nuclear war, AIDS, and divorce) the right to party and gave Gen Xers permission to have some fun (Berman 2016: 25; Farber 2016: 55-60; Hampton 2016: 94; Toure 2013).

Since his untimely passing from an accidental fentanyl overdose on April 21, 2016, there have been numerous tributes and recognition of his impact. Scores of articles, books, documentaries, and essays discussing his influence on music and society have been published. Minnesota Public Radio launched a streaming music service, Purple Current, in April 2018 that plays primarily Prince music, along with artists who influenced him and he influenced. Museum exhibits have been held in London, Amsterdam and Minneapolis; and scholarly conferences in Minneapolis, Atlanta, New York City, and Manchester, England.\(^1\) The author Lynn Stuart Parramore (2016) summarized Prince’s influence:

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\(^1\) Sample titles from the University of Minnesota’s April 2018 symposium include: “Minnesota as a Microcosm of America: Prince as a Thumbnail of Double Consciousness”; “Inventing Uptown: Prince’s Heterotopian Minneapolis”; “Trans Girls and Boys: Prince’s
Prince, a child prodigy who taught himself to play a wide range of instruments, explored daring erotic themes in his music. He played with new ways to be a man of color in America, putting on theatrical stage performances in which the musician/sex symbol showed off his feminine side in purple silk and diamonds.

Creating a style never before heard, Prince blended pop, funk, blues, jazz and rock ‘n’ roll. He set his own rules in the music industry and branched out from music into film. His songs could be explicitly raunchy (“Darling Nikki”) but could also bring passion to a spiritual plane (“Adore”). Prince broke with pop tradition to include frequent religious motifs in his songs, such as the messianic “I Would Die 4 U.”

Prince will be remembered as an artist who not only remade the sonic landscape but also left us with expanded notions of what it means to be male and female, black and white, erotic and spiritual.

On September 26, 2018, the University of Minnesota’s School of Music bestowed upon Prince an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, the highest award it confers to recognize individuals who have achieved acknowledged eminence in cultural affairs. The full text from the Honorary Doctorate reads as follows.

Prince Rogers Nelson, born and raised in Minneapolis; graduated from Minneapolis Central High School in 1976; self-taught musician renowned as a multi-instrumentalist, singer, songwriter and producer; released 39 studio albums, four live albums, four movie soundtrack albums, six compilation albums, 136 music videos, 13 extended plays, and 104 singles between 1978 and 2015, and sold more than 100 million records; won seven Grammy Awards for albums and albums tracks; won the Academy Award for Best Original Sound Score with “Purple Rain” in 1985; featured performer Super Bowl XLI in 2007; inducted into the Rock N’ Roll Hall of Fame in the first year of eligibility in 2004; hailed posthumously by Billboard Magazine as “the greatest musical talent of his generation.” Because you are one of the most influential musicians of the 20th Century and exhibited extraordinary virtuosity and musicianship; because you brought the Minneapolis Sound to an international audience; because you addressed gender identity, sexuality, economic disparity, racial tensions and other issues through music; because you were among the first mainstream artists to integrate their backup bands with respect to racial and sexual identity; because you established a new model for music distribution using the internet and other innovative sources; because you gave generously of your music to emerging artists and provided numerous opportunities to help them advance professionally; because you boldly stood up for artistic freedom and artist’s rights; and because you gave legions of fans a way to experience the sheer exuberance that great art brings to life, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, upon recommendation of the Faculties, confer upon you, Prince Rogers Nelson, the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters.

*Under the Cherry Moon* in the Context of Minneapolis Transgender History”; “I am Fine: Eschatology in Prince’s 1999 and Purple Rain”; and “Prettyman in the Mirror: Dandyism in Prince’s Minneapolis.”
The Great Migration: Prince's Family's Relocation from Louisiana to Minnesota

I'm as much a part of the city where I grew up as I am anything. I was very lucky to be born here because I saw both sides of the racial issue, the oppression and the equality. – Prince, 1987

To better understand the man who was the principal architect of the “Minneapolis Sound,” it is helpful to explore how he came to be from Minnesota, and how the city of Minneapolis shaped his childhood and led to the creation of a new musical genre. Three of Prince’s grandparents arrived in Minnesota from Webster, Bienville, and Lincoln parishes in northern Louisiana (Figure 2) during the first wave of the “Great Migration” (his paternal grandfather remained in the South).

From 1910 to 1970, millions of African Americans fled the South due to lack of jobs, Jim Crow laws that perpetuated segregation and an apartheid system, and the promise of a better future for their families in northern industrialized cities. The migration occurred in two waves: 1910–1940 and 1940–1970. According to the U.S. Census bureau:

The Great Migration generally refers to the massive internal migration of Blacks from the South to urban centers in other parts of the country. Between 1910 and 1970, an estimated 6 million Blacks left the South. This graphic (Figure 3) compares the early migration (1910–1940), sometimes referred to as the First Great Migration, and the later (1940–1970) also known as the Second Great Migration.

In the early 20th century, strict legislation limited immigration into the U.S. and brought about a shortage of labor in many industrial and manufacturing centers in the Northeast and Midwest. These cities became common destinations for Black migrants from the South. Cities that experienced substantial changes in racial composition between 1910 and 1940 include Chicago, Detroit, New York City, and Philadelphia. During and after WWII, Black migrants flooded into many of the cities that were destinations before the war, following friends and relatives that had already made the journey. Poor economic conditions in the Jim Crow South spurred a larger migration flow than was the case in the 1910-to-1940 period and resulted in the creation of large Black population centers in many cities across the Northeast, Midwest, and West (U.S. Census Bureau 2012).

In 1910, only 0.3 percent of Minnesota’s population was Black. By 1930, around the time Prince’s three grandparents arrived during the “First Great Migration”, there were 9,445 Blacks in the state, or roughly 0.4 percent of the population. The years between 1950 and 1970, the “Second Great Migration,” saw Minnesota's biggest influx of Blacks from the South. Minneapolis’s Black population grew 436 percent; St. Paul's by 388 percent; and the state’s overall population by 1,583 percent to 34,868. Even though the overall percentage increased greatly, Blacks still accounted for only about one percent of Minnesota’s overall population in 1970 (Hobbs and Stoops 2002: A-21, A-26).

While the North offered hope of a better future, the new arrivals faced de facto segregation in Minnesota, with restrictive housing covenants on deeds preventing Blacks from purchasing homes in many areas. As a result, three distinct Black neighborhoods developed in Minneapolis: the Northside, the Seven Corners area, and the Southside as illustrated on demographer Calvin Schmidt’s map from 1937 (Figure 4).
Prince’s paternal grandmother settled in the Southside, while his maternal grandparents found a new home in the City’s Northside. The Southside neighborhood was located between roughly 38th and 46th Streets and bounded by Chicago Avenue on the east and Nicollet Avenue on the west. “The corridor along Fourth Avenue South was the Black community’s residential heart. Thirty-eighth Street and Fourth Avenue was the center of the Black business district, with over twenty Black-owned businesses from the 1930s to the 1970s.” The Northside, a predominately Jewish community during the 1920s with numerous business along Plymouth and 6th Avenue (later Olson Memorial Highway), experienced a demographic shift throughout the mid-twentieth century as more African Americans settled in the neighborhood and the area’s Jewish occupants moved into the surrounding suburbs of Golden Valley and St. Louis Park (Burnside 2017; Zellie and Peterson 1998: 27–29, 39).

Prince’s early years were defined by the neighborhoods in which his grandparents settled. Four of his childhood homes were located in North Minneapolis, within a mile of where the Shaws (his mother’s parents) moved to by 1930, along with various schools, churches and community centers where he furthered his musical skills and performed as a teenager in his early bands. Prince attended Bryant Junior High School (extant) and Central High School (razed), located in the Southside neighborhood a few blocks from the house his paternal grandmother Carrie Ikner rented along with two of her daughters when they first arrived in the 1920s, and where his father and his first family lived in the 1940s and early 1950s. Prince even pays homage to Minneapolis’s Seven Corners neighborhood, setting his 1990 film Graffiti Bridge there during its heyday in the 1950s (Karlen 1990).

Prince’s Parents

*My mom's the wild side of me; she's like that all the time. My dad's real serene; it takes the music to get him going. My father and me, we're one and the same.*” – Prince, 1985

John L. Nelson—Prince’s father John L. (Louis or Lewis in various records) Nelson was born June 29, 1916, in Cotton Valley, Webster Parish, Louisiana, to Carrie (née Jenkins) Nelson (1883–1933) and Clarence Allen Nelson (1882–unknown), who appear to have divorced just after his birth. On Clarence’s World War I draft card recorded September 12, 1918, his closest relative is listed as "Emma Nelson" in "Chicago, Illinois" and not Carrie Nelson. By the 1920 census, Carrie was married to Charles Ikner and living in Webster, Louisiana, with her children, three-year-old John and his older siblings Gertrude (17), Olivia (15), Ruby (10), and James (5). By 1920, Clarence was married to a woman named Gertrude from Arkansas, and the couple lived with Gertrude’s daughter Annie in Webster Parish. Clarence’s occupation is listed as a farmer. In 1922, Clarence married Mary Hall in Arkansas and by 1940, the couple and their seven children were living in the town of Washington, Arkansas, and his occupation is listed as a minister (Social Security Administration 2008; United States Census 1920; Arkansas County Marriage Indexes; United State Census 1940).

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Prince’s father, Edward Nelson, was described by Geni.com as “the son of a wealthy white slave owner and a freed Cherokee Slave. Denounced by his half-brothers for his marriage to a black woman, Nelson left Louisiana and traveled throughout Arkansas and Louisiana as a minister for the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church." [https://www.geni.com/people/Rev-Edward-Ed-Nelson/60000000007748585361](https://www.geni.com/people/Rev-Edward-Ed-Nelson/60000000007748585361). However, no census or other records were identified during this research to indicate that Edward’s parentage was white and Cherokee, or that he worked as a minister.
By the time of the 1930 census, Carrie Ikner is widowed, and living at 3724 4th Avenue South, Minneapolis (built 1925; extant). The rental property was in the heart of the residential area of the vibrant and growing Southside neighborhood. Carrie lived with her daughters Gertrude and Ruby and their husbands and children. The sons-in-law worked as a porter and a car washer; no occupations were listed for the women in the household. It is unknown if Carrie and her children moved to Minneapolis with Charles or after his passing. No death record for Charles was found as part of this research. John and James were not listed in the 1930 census records, either in association with their mother or individually (United States Census 1930). Olivia was living in Minneapolis by 1925, when she married Edward Mason Lewis (State of Minnesota Marriage Record 1925).

Many secondary sources state that John came to Minneapolis in the late 1940s or early 1950s and worked as a jazz pianist, and that it wasn’t until the late 1950s or 1960s that he had to take other employment to support his growing families. Based on census records and other primary sources, however, John likely arrived in Minneapolis sometime between 1930 and 1935 and he was not a full-time musician. John married Vivian Howard on October 25, 1938, in Ramsey County. He appears in the 1940 census, living in a duplex at 2929 5th Avenue (extant) in Minneapolis with Vivian (recorded as Veran) and newborn daughter Sharon (recorded as Shaon). He is in the “same place” as the 1935 census, meaning he was in Minneapolis five years before but not necessarily living at the same residence. The 1940 census lists his occupation as “hotel doorman,” and his second daughter Norrine’s birth certificate from 1941 lists his place of employment as the Andrews Hotel. Also, by the time of Norrine’s arrival, the family had moved to 344 E. 38th Street (demolished), around the corner from his sister’s house. After John landed a job with Honeywell’s “Minneapolis War Plant” at 2719 4th Avenue South as the company expanded during World War II, the Nelsons purchased a home for $3,800 at 3728 5th Avenue South (extant) in Minneapolis in 1944, just one block east of his sister’s house. The couple had two other children while residing here — Lorna (1942–2006) and John Rogers (1944) (US Census 1940, FamilySearch 2014; Minnesota Courts Norrie Nelson Affidavit and John Rogers Nelson Affidavit 2016).

On April 23, 1945, John enlisted in the military at Fort Snelling for “the duration of the War or other emergency, plus six months, subject to the discretion of the President or otherwise according to law.” It does not appear that he saw active duty. He was noted to have had one year of high school and his civilian occupation was listed as “Semiskilled machine shop and related occupations” (United States World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938–1946).

While John’s musical influence on his son is evidenced by stories of Prince learning the piano from watching his father play and by their later songwriting collaborations, it is unknown when and where John learned to play the piano. Most likely he was self-taught, like his son, and was born with an innate musical talent. By the time he was living at 3728 5th Avenue South, he was a professional piano player using the stage name “Prince Rogers”, and at some point became the leader of the Prince Rogers Trio (Figure 5; Prince 2019: 105). While labeled a jazz trio, according to Prince biographer Matt Thorne, John’s music

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ii Duane Joseph Nelson (1958–2011) was born to Vivian on August 18, 1958, and John Nelson was listed on the birth certificate as the father, even though John and Vivian divorced in March 1957. Prince and Duane were close throughout their childhood, and Duane provided security for Prince (Draper 2011). Prince referred to Duane as “my brother, handsome and tall” in the song “Lady Cab Driver.” However, during the effort to identify heirs to Prince’s estate after his death, the courts determined that Joseph Griswold was Duane’s father and therefore he and Prince were not related by blood (Nelson 2016).
“was not straightforward jazz but something far stranger, perhaps closer to outsider music.” Prince said of his father in a 1984 interview, “His songs were different, ‘unique.’ He doesn’t listen to any other music. I respect anybody who doesn’t try to copy other people.”

Segregation during the mid-twentieth century meant that Black artists such as Nelson could typically only play at burlesque or strip clubs in downtown Minneapolis or in African-American-owned establishments such as the Cozy Bar (demolished) or the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center in North Minneapolis (809 Aldrich Avenue North from 1929-1969; demolished). It was at this later location that John met Mattie Della Shaw (Prince 2019: 105; Thorne 2016: 12; Graustark 1984; Goetting 2011).

Mattie Della Shaw—Like her future husband John Nelson, Mattie Della (Del in some records) Shaw’s family had roots in Louisiana. Her father, Frank Shaw, was born in Arcadia, Bienville Parish, Louisiana on December 6, 1896, one of 10 children listed in the 1900 census of Preston and Eliza Shaw. Her mother Lucille was the first child of Sam and Katy Barnell (Bonnell in some records) and was born on July 31, 1899, in Ruston, Lincoln Parish, Louisiana. Frank registered for the draft during World War I from Polk County, Iowa, and his employer was listed as “Chi., RI & P. Ry Co RR” (aka the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad or “the Rock”) and his place of employment as Valley Junction, Iowa. Frank and Lucille married April 30, 1919, in Des Moines, Iowa. The couple is first listed in the 1930 Minneapolis City Directory (he is listed as a porter and she is an elevator operator), although a Frank Shaw is listed in the 1927, 1928, and 1929 directories alone, so they likely moved to the city in the late 1920s or 1930 (United States World War I Draft Registration Card 1917–1918; Iowa State Archives Marriage Certificates; Minneapolis City Directories 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1930).

Mattie Del Shaw and her twin sister Edna Mae were born November 11, 1933, at Minneapolis General Hospital. The Shaws (Figure 6) lived at 821 Dupont Avenue North in the city’s Northside in an area that was cleared a few years later for the construction of Minneapolis’s first public housing project, Sumner Field. The Shaws moved around for the next twenty years, living in various Northside properties on Aldrich, Bryant, Clinton, Girard, Royalston and Irving Avenues, including in the Sumner Field projects (Minnesota Historical Society Index Birth Certificate 1933-38494; Minneapolis City Directories 1930–1958).

Mattie married Alfred Jackson in Missouri in February 1953. On the marriage license, she listed her birth year as 1931 and that she was 22 years old; however, based on her birth certificate, she would have been 20 years old at the time. The license also notes she was divorced. No evidence of a previous marriage was identified during this research. Mattie and Alfred had one child in 1953, Alfred Jackson Jr. (1953-2019), and divorced at an unknown date.

“Outsider music” is typically considered music that does not follow the industry standards or musical conventions of the time, and in jazz is applied to a specific improvisation style. An album of compositions by John Nelson was released in March 2018, giving the chance to modern listeners to hear Prince’s father’s compositions. John gave his daughter Sharon the compositions in 1978 when she was living in New York City with the idea they would record and produce the album together; however, that was the year when Prince’s fame was ascending. John returned to Minnesota to be near his son, and nothing came of the collaboration. Sharon recently rediscovered the scores, and hired jazz musicians to perform the patriarch’s work. The album, Don’t Play With Love, was the first recorded at Prince’s Paisley Park Studio since Prince’s passing in 2016. Sharon Nelson also “remembered how her younger sister, Norrine, would find crates of Nelson’s sheet music behind the furnace in the basement in their south Minneapolis home (Bream 2018),” echoing a scene in Prince’s semi-autobiographical movie Purple Rain, when his character “The Kid” found his father’s compositions hidden in a trunk in the basement. While Prince and his half-sisters grew up in different houses, it is intriguing to think that Prince also found his father’s music tucked away in the basements of his childhood homes, or was inspired by these stories from his half-sisters.
A jazz singer in the style of Billie Holiday, Mattie sang with the Prince Rogers Trio, and a romance developed between the pianist and the young singer. John left Vivian in October 1956 and his divorce was finalized March 1957. Five months later, on August 31, 1957, John and Mattie married in Northwood, Iowa. The most likely reason for the interstate marriage was that, prior to 1979, Minnesota residents had to wait six months after a divorce before remarrying in the state. On the marriage license, John’s occupation was listed as a machine operator, and Mattie was a “dress examiner for Coat Co.” (Figure 7) (Minnesota Courts Affidavit Norrine Patricia Nelson 2016; Social Security Administration 2008).

Prince’s Early Childhood and Musical Development

“Around the time I was 8, I had a pretty good idea what the piano was all about.” – Prince, 1978

Almost nine months to the date after their wedding, on June 7, 1958, John and Mattie welcomed their first child together. Prince Rogers (Roger on the birth certificate) Nelson was born at Mt. Sinai Hospital (now the Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge opioid recovery center), located on Chicago Avenue between East 22nd and 24th Streets in Minneapolis. When asked about naming him, John said “I named my son Prince because I wanted him to do everything I wanted to” (Minnesota Birth Certificate 1958-MN-055705; Current Affair 1991).

The Nelson family—John, Mattie, Alfred Jackson Jr. and Prince—lived at 2201 Fifth Avenue South in Apartment 203 (extant) until Prince was six months old. On New Year’s Eve Day 1958, the Nelsons bought their first house at 915 Logan Avenue North (demolished) in North Minneapolis for $12,000. The Nelsons likely moved to the Northside to be closer to John’s work at the Honeywell Regulator Company (in the Ford Building on 5th Avenue North) as well as Mattie’s parents, sister and cousins who all lived in the area. According to Prince’s cousin Charles “Chazz” Smith, the Smith and Nelson families were close, socializing and spending holidays together. The Nelsons’ daughter Tyka Evene (spelled as Tika on the birth certificate), Prince’s only full sibling, was born May 18, 1960 while the Nelson’s were living at the Logan house (Figure 8; Minneapolis City Directories, 1958; State of Minnesota Hennepin County Deed Book 2198; Page 527; Minneapolis City Directories 1956–1959; Smith 2017; Minnesota Department of Health Birth Certificate SS-000020430).

In his partially completed, posthumously released autobiography, Prince wrote of key events that occurred while he lived at the Logan house. In addition to discussing epileptic seizures that began when he was around three years old, he also chronicled his first memories and his parents’ influence on his imagination, style, song writing, and even perhaps his vision for his future home and studio, Paisley Park (built 1987).

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Prince wrote in his autobiography of his first home on Logan Avenue: “My house—it was pink. It’s since been knocked down. It looked like Mad Men, but not as nice. Simple furniture. I remember this funky energy about it. People, voices, energy. Like the Kennedys, but black. Women had hats–like Jackie. Look up black bourgeois Midwest style. Right after Ellington. Not Ellington, but the time after him. My dad’s hero was Ellington. He patterned himself on him. Ellington was on top of everyone (Prince 2019: 79).”
My Mother’s eyes. That’s the first thing I can remember. You know how you can tell when someone is smiling just by looking in their eyes? That was my mother’s eyes. Sometimes she would squint them like she was about to tell you a secret. I found out later my mother had lots of secrets. vi

My father’s piano. That’s the first thing I remember hearing. As a younger man his playing was very busy but fluid. It was a joyous sound.

The eyes and the ears of a songwriter can never get enough praise. The way things look and the way things sound, when conveyed lyrically, can give a song space and gravity.

There were two Princes in the house where we lived. The older one with all the responsibilities of heading a household and the younger one whose only modus operandi was fun. Not just any run-of-the-mill childhood board-game fun, but fun with a wink attached. My mother liked to wink at me. I knew what a wink meant before I knew how to spell my name. A wink meant something covert was going on. Something special that only those who were in on it could attest [to]. Sometimes when my father wasn’t playing piano he’d say something to my mother and she would wink at me.

She never told me what it meant and sometimes it would be accompanied by a gentle caress of her hand to my face. But I am quite sure now this is the birth of my physical imagination.

An entire world of secrets and intrigue, puzzles to solve and good ol’ fashioned make-believe. A place where everything for a change goes your way. One could get used to this. Many artists fall down the rabbit holes of their own imaginations and never return. There have been many who decry this as self-destruction, but I prefer the term FREE WILL. Life is better lived. What path one takes is what sets us apart from the rest.

Those considered “different” are the ones most interesting to us.

A vibrant imagination is where the best songs are found. Make-believe characters wearing make-believe clothes all together creating memories and calling it life.

My parents were beautiful. To watch them leave the crib dressed up for the night on the town was one of my favorite things to do. Even though my mother was walking funny when she came home it was all worth [it] to me just to see them happy.

Whenever they were happy with one another all was right [in] the world.

Thinking back, my father’s mood used to change instantly whenever my mother was dressed up.

She craved attention and he gave her plenty of it when she was sharp. Of all the family, friends and

vi Prince’s handwritten notes for his autobiography were printed in the book, The Beautiful Ones. He used shorthand spelling (e.g., “U” for “you”, “c” for “see” and “2” for “to”), abbreviations (e.g., “B4” for before), and variable capitalization (e.g., sometimes “father” was capitalized and sometimes it was not). All quotes included herein have been modified to use standard spelling and capitalization.
relatives my parents were the sharpest! No one could accessorize like they could. My mother’s jewelry, gloves & hats all had to match. My father’s cuff linx [sic], tie-pins and rings all sparkled within the sharkskin frame of his suit. My father’s suits were immaculate. There were so many of them... Every shirt had a corresponding tie to go with it. My favorite were the arrowhead style that rested just under the collar...

Matter of fact, my father always out dressed my mother. Maybe there was a secret contest going on that we weren’t aware of. She never gave me the wink on that.

Only thing better than watching Mother [and] Father getting dressed up for a night on the town was watching them leave.

That’s where the Imagined Life began. A place where I could pretend dress-up and enter a fantasy of my own direction. A different storyline every time, but always with similar outcomes—I am always sharp and I always get the girl. In my fantasy world, I always live far away from the public at large, usually on a mountain, sometimes a cloud, & even in an underwater cave. (How that was accomplished was never divulged but somehow it worked out.)

Superpowers–optional but always with secret flying abilities to enter and exit a location anytime I chose.

Hidden places, secret abilities. A part of oneself that is never shown.

These are the necessary tools for a vibrant imagination and the main ingredients of a good song (Prince 2019: 79-83).

As he absorbed the sights and sounds in his pink house on Logan Avenue, Prince’s own musical abilities became evident at an early age. In a 1984 interview, his mother recalled:

He could hear music even from a very early age. When he was 3 or 4, we’d go to the department store and he’d jump on the radio, the organ, any type of instrument there was. Mostly the piano and organ. I’d have to hunt for him, and that’s where he’d be – in the music department” (Star Tribune 1984).

When he was around five years old, his mother took him to see his father perform during a burlesque show. The impact of seeing his father perform also had a lasting impression. “As the dancers did their thing, the theater vibrated with screams and excitement. From then on, I think I wanted to be a musician,” Prince later said (Thorne 2016:46). Journalist Joe Levy suggests that at that moment, “Eros and music were fused, the power of the combination imprinted on his mind. It would never leave.” Its result would be evident in Prince’s and his protégées’ lyrics, fashion, and stage performances (Levy 2016).

On March 26, 1965, just a few months before Prince’s seventh birthday, the Nelsons purchased and moved to 2620 8th Avenue North (extant, Figure 9), located eight block west of the Logan house, down the alphabet streets of Minneapolis between Thomas and Upton Avenues North. They retained ownership of
the Logan house and rented it out. During this time, Mattie stayed home with the children, and John is listed in Minneapolis City Directories as working for the Honeywell Corporation as a machine operator (Minneapolis City Directories 1965–1970; State of Minnesota Hennepin County 1965 Warranty Deed 803253).

While Prince stated in early interviews that his father kept him and his sister away from his piano “because we would just bang on it,” according to Tyka Nelson, while that was true when she and her brother were very young, as they got older, John enrolled the children in piano lessons across the street from their 8th Avenue North house and encouraged both of their natural musical abilities. However, Nelson said she did not like practicing, and her brother wanted to play music of his choosing, not the scales the teacher assigned, so the lessons did not last for long. Prince was essentially self-taught and did not learn to read music. John showed him some chords but for the most part, Prince learned from watching his dad, and playing around on the instrument (Graustrak 1983; Nelson 2017). Prince’s cousin Charles, who grew up with Prince and lived nearby at 927 Sheridan Avenue North (extant), said that the 8th Avenue North house was “where it all happened” for Prince musically. vii Prince himself said that by the time he was eight, he had figured out the piano (Carr 1978). It was the location where he mastered the piano; he was able to play anything he heard on TV or the radio by ear, such as The Man from U.N.C.L.E. and Batman theme songs (Smith 2017; Nilsen 1999: 17). viii His sister recalled Prince’s musical experiences in the 8th Avenue North house:

He lived on the piano, played it as much as he could. Daddy didn’t run him off it unless he needed to practice. I remember him [Prince] playing “Watermelon Man” [by Herbie Hancock], he played it so much! Daddy rehearsed every day after work. I would sing, Skipper [Prince’s nickname] would watch Daddy closely, and maybe hit on a box as a drum (Nelson 2017).

When he was older, around the age of nine or ten, Prince developed another practice while living at the 8th Avenue North house that aided in his musical development. Local disk jockey Jerry “Motormouth” Mac and his wife Tracy (who Prince describe as the “Ike & Tina Turner of North Minneapolis”) was a friend of the family. Mac had access to the latest record releases, as well as a drum, piano, mic and amplified set up for his radio show. Prince would spend hours looking at Mac’s collection of “8 x 10 glossies of the greatest RnB stars” as well as his equipment, noting that at the time he had no idea the amplifier would “become more important to my life than a stove (Prince 2019: 98).” Mac also introduced him to Dee’s Record Shop (Dee’s Record Center in some sources; address unknown), and Prince remembered that “a trip to Dee’s was a happy day (Prince 2019: 98).”

Any song that caught my fancy was first purchased then transcribed. Lyrics only, as I never learned to read music. Re-copying a lyric helps you to break down a line to see what it’s made [of]. “If you feel like loving me, if you’ve got the notion, I second that emotion.” Then while reading the copied lyric I’d learn the chords that went with each lyric, as the record played behind me. I learned to play

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vii Smith also said that Prince and he would spend time at their Aunt Mary Hill’s (née Barnell) house at 1209 Penn Avenue North, where Prince would constantly play and practice on her organ for hours. Aunt Mary is technically Prince’s great-aunt, as she was his mother’s (Mattie’s) mother’s (Lucille’s) sister.

viii Many sources state he wrote his first song “Funk Machine” at age seven, though this may be apocryphal. No primary sources were identified during this research to confirm he ever wrote a song by that title.
and sing along with every record of choice. It didn’t matter whether it was male or female—it was the overall arrangement I was most interested in.

Singing along with all records—James Brown, Ray Charles, Smokey Robinson, and Aretha Franklin—helps to develop range and a sense of soul that can cover all bases. There are many great singers but [not] that many funky singers. How a word is shaped in the mouth and the velocity or subtlety that a word is sung [with] is what characterizes a funky singer or not.

Truly funky singers actually sound like they’re singing in everyday conversation. Look at an interview with some of the greats. You know the names. If you feel like dancing while they’re just talking, that’s funk (Prince 2019: 98).

It was during Prince’s time at the 8th Avenue North house, therefore, that he mastered the piano, and developed his song-writing, performing and singing abilities. Prince’s song writing and piano playing remained inextricably linked for the remainder of his life. While he also composed songs on his guitar, notably for his seminal album Dirty Mind (1980), the piano appears to have been the key instrument he used throughout his musical career. The posthumous release of the album Prince: Piano & A Microphone 1983 (September 21, 2018) illustrates his process. The 35-minute release captures the 25-year-old Prince during a demo recording session where he moves through sketches of songs on his piano, from “17 Days,” which would end up as the B-side to his first number one hit “When Doves Cry” (1984); to a 90-second exploration of the already-recorded “Purple Rain”; to the African-American spiritual “Mary Don’t You Weep”, which was used in the 2018 Spike Lee movie BlacKkKlansman. As Prince’s sound engineer at the time, Don Batts, recalled Prince’s process of composing, performing and producing hits on his piano:

With astonishing one-take accuracy, Prince composed, performed, and produced hit after hit right before my eyes. These songs are how things started out; I call them ‘refs.’ These are sometimes crude and quick recordings of an idea on tape, around which Prince would then build the finished multitrack recording (Aswad 2018).

While living at the house on 8th Avenue North, Prince had other experiences that also appeared to have a lasting impressions on the young artist. His family attended church at the nearby Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church at 1138 Glenwood Avenue (extant). He stated in his autobiography that the church is where he first met the Anderson family—Fred, Bernadette and their children including André, who became Prince’s best friend and musical collaborator. Prince, who blended sexuality and religion in his music and who became one of Jehovah’s Witnesses in 2001, would say later that the most he got out of religion as a child was “the experience of the choir.” He told Chris Rock on MTV in 1997 that the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s message “was based in fear,” including the Book of Revelation. He famously used the idea of the imminent apocalypse as a reason to celebrate and have some fun with his 1982 release 1999 (Prince 2019: 94; Smith 2017; MTV News 1997; Ro 2016: 46).

When speaking of his childhood, Prince often reflected on the limitations and the opportunities that growing up in Minneapolis presented. One of the opportunities he referenced was the strong music programs in the

ix André said he and Prince met on the first day of sixth grade at Lincoln Junior High School (fall of 1969) (Danois 2012).
schools he attended. He also spoke of oppression he experienced, and many biographies about Prince discuss his school experience in relation to desegregation efforts. The common narrative in many Prince biographies is that he was bused to schools in other parts of the city due to forced citywide desegregation efforts. The timelines, however, of when Prince was attending non-neighborhood schools and the City’s required desegregation efforts do not fully align. Prince’s autobiography also indicates a different narrative. The City of Minneapolis passed a law in 1869 that desegregated schools (in theory at least), and after Brown vs. the Board of Education in 1954, Minneapolis was heralded as “A Citadel of Civil Rights” that was an example of how other cities could desegregate their schools (Rush 2001). A report at time highlighted Black and white students riding buses together, playing on the same sports teams and being in classes together. In reality, while all minority students in Minneapolis technically had the right to choose what school to attend since the mid-1800s, most Black students stayed at their neighborhood schools, which aligned with the rising number of housing covenants previously mentioned, thereby creating de facto school segregation. African-American students who attended neighborhood schools experienced underfunded and over-capacity schools, high dropout rates, channelization into vocational trades, few African-American teachers, and very little fraternization with white students. By the late 1960s, some parents and politicians began challenging the city’s approach to school choice, saying that more needed to be done to help students partake of the city’s open enrollment. A few minor changes were proposed in the late 1960s, including a “voluntary urban transfer program,” which was approved by the School Board on December 12, 1967. Prince referenced that year in his song “The Sacrifice of Victor” (1992):

In 1967 in a bus marked public schools
Rode me and a group of unsuspecting political tools
Our parents wondered what it was like 2 have another color near
So they put their babies together 2 eliminate the fear (“The Sacrifice of Victor” [^
0^ and the New Power Generation, 1992]).

Prince’s reference to parents making the decision was literal. The program was not a citywide desegregation effort, but rather a weak attempt to improve the distribution of minority students within the already “desegregated” school district—and also a chance to allow white students a way to transfer out of predominately Black schools. However, it put the entire burden of choice on individual families and the city simply footed the bill for the busing costs (Rush 2001).

The Nelson family took advantage of the voluntary transfer program in 1967, when Prince was in his 4th grade year—prior to that he attend his neighborhood school John Hay Elementary (1014 Penn Avenue North, demolished) (although many sources state he attended Kenwood up through 4th grade). Prince was one of only approximately 80 African-American children to participate in the program in 1967 and was only one of a handful to attend Kenwood Elementary school (2013 Penn Avenue South; extant). It is unknown if he attended Kenwood for his entire 4th grade year (27 students from Willard Elementary transferred to Shingle Creek Elementary at the beginning of the 1967 school year under the draft terms of the plan) or just for the second half after the plan was approved (Rush 2001: 58). The experience was not positive for either Nelson child—Tyka described taunting, name calling, and bullying in her 2008 autobiography and Prince did not mince word, stating that he and the other children were political tools (Nelson 2008).

By 5th grade, Prince was back at his neighborhood elementary school John Hay, and the following year,
he moved next door to Lincoln Junior High School for his 6th grade year. In the fall of 1970, Prince attended Bryant Junior High School on the city’s Southside (310 East 38th Street; extant). Again, many sources state his transfer to the Southside school was due to the city’s desegregation efforts. Other than some continuation of the voluntary busing program and the combing of the all-white Hale Elementary School with the predominately Black Field Elementary School in 1970, the city had still not begun to implement a specific desegregation program. It would take two more years and a court order for Minneapolis to develop and implement a required program by which to attempt to fully integrate city schools (an effort that to this day has not been achieved). By that time in 1972, Prince was attending Central High School on the City’s Southside. Prince's transfer from Lincoln Junior High to Bryant Junior High, and his attendance at Central High School instead of North High School—all predominately African-American schools located in historically African-American neighborhoods—was not tied to desegregation efforts but rather due to a personal choice. Bryant and Central both had strong music program that Prince often spoke of in later interviews. Bryant Junior High teacher Jimmy Hamilton, for example, taught classes on the Business of Music and Music Theory, and such offerings drew the young artist to the school. Further, Prince states in his autobiography that “The Northside of Minneapolis had too much testosterone for my taste growing up. After I moved to the Southside I had to change schools (Prince 2019: 109)” meaning his attendance to the City’s Southside schools was his choice instead of a decision the school district made for him (Delegard 2013; United States Commission on Civil Rights 1977; Smith 2017; Minutaglio 2016).

During the late 1960s, as Prince was experiencing the turmoil of transferring to a different elementary school, things at home weren’t much better—his parent’s marriage was failing. In earlier interviews, Prince often cited the tension between his parents stemming from Mattie wanting John to be a family man, and John wanting to be out performing at night and pursuing his dreams of being a full-time musician. In his autobiography, however, he offers a different perspective.

My mother, although very loving and nurturing, the outgoing life of the party, sometimes could be very stubborn and completely irrational. No one could reason with my mother when she was in this state.

The sound of your parents fighting is chilling when you’re a child. If it happens to become physical, it can be soul-crushing.

One night I remember hearing them arguing and it got physical. At some point my mother crashed into my bedroom and grabbed me. She was crying but managed a smile and said, “Tell your father to be nice to me.” She held me up as a buffer so that he wouldn’t fight with her anymore.

Things calmed down then. For a while. My mother subsequently got a lawyer to defend herself again my father. She basically wanted to run the household not him. She considered him weak and narrow-minded, as opposed to the practical man that he was. Where she wanted adventure and traveling… he just wanted [to] make sure there was food on the table.

Some topics can’t be glossed over. After several breakdowns of communication and even occasional violence, my mother and father divorced. I had no idea what impact that would have on me. I was 7 years old and more than anything I just wanted peace. A quiet space where I could
hear myself think and create. The separation was good for both of them at the time. They needed to explore themselves without interference from each other. For a time everyone was happier. My father would come by every weekend and take us to church and then to dinner afterward. Just like before except now my mother was absent. This stubbornness on her part would be their ultimate undoing. I missed seeing her get dressed up in her Sunday best. I missed the admiring eyes from the other kids cause I had the most beautiful mom. Most of all I missed the knowing wink that she’d give me whenever I was unsure about something. That wink meant everything was alright. When in fact… everything was different now. I didn’t actually begin to know my father until he left my mother. Being the only male in the house with her, I understood why he left (Prince 2019: 97).

While Prince dated his parent’s separation to when he was seven years old in his autobiography and many other interviews, his sister Tyka Nelson states in her 2008 autobiography that “somewhere between 1966 and 1967 [Prince would have been eight or nine], my mother and father separated” and that her father moved back to the Logan house. Mattie officially filed in September 1967 and the divorce decree was issued September 24, 1968, when Prince was 9 and 10, respectively (the petition cites physical abuse as the main cause for the divorce). Even though the official documents place the divorce at a later date than what Prince remembers, an unofficial separation likely occurred earlier. Mattie was granted full custody of Prince and Tyka in the divorce settlement, and in lieu of child support, she retained ownership of the Logan and 8th Avenue North houses as well as another property in Golden Valley. John’s piano remained at the 8th Avenue North house, giving Prince unfettered access to the instrument. John moved briefly to the Logan Avenue house, and then into apartment 105 at 1707 Glenwood Avenue (extant) (Prince 2019: 97 and 99; Nelson 2008; Graustark 1983; State of Minnesota 1968, 1970; Minneapolis City Directories, 1965–1970).

According to Prince, his mother married Hayward Baker in Chicago in either 1967 or 1968, and Baker moved into the 8th Avenue North house (Prince 2019: 99). Since her divorce from John was not finalized until September 1968, it was mostly likely towards the end of that year and again the reason for an out-of-state marriage could have been that the couple married within less than six months of her divorce. Baker and Prince had a strained relationship. Prince described the breakdown of his relationship with his mother and stepfather in a 1983 interview:

My step-dad came along when I was nine or ten, and I disliked him immediately, because he dealt with a lot of materialistic things. He would bring us a lot of presents all the time, rather than sit down

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x In 1965–1966, when Prince would have been seven and eight, John and Mattie were noted in the Minneapolis City Directory as residing at the 8th Avenue North house, and “Prince Rogers” was listed at the Logan Avenue house. Assuming that the young Prince Rogers Nelson was not living there alone, it is possible that John and Mattie separated and John was living in the Logan Avenue house under his stage name. However, it is also possible that by the time of the City Directory recording, the Nelsons had not found renters for the Logan Avenue house after moving to their new home, so they included John’s stage name to not have it listed as vacant. In the 1966–1968 directories, other individuals were listed at the Logan Avenue house, presumably renters, and John and Mattie were at the 8th Avenue North house. In 1969 after the divorce, John is listed at the Logan Avenue house, but he is also listed with Mattie at the 8th Avenue North house. City directories can have lag time between when someone lived at a residence and what is recorded, so the information does not necessarily provide the most accurate timeline or certainty on who was living where, but may suggest a possible separation when Prince was 7.

xi No marriage license for Hayward Baker and Mattie Shaw or Mattie Nelson was found during the research for this context. Their son, Omarr Julius Baker, was also unable to produce his parent’s marriage license during the identification of Prince’s heirs.
and talk with us and give us companionship. I got real bitter because of that, and I would say all the things that I disliked about him, rather than tell him what I really needed. Which was a mistake, and it kind of hurt our relationship. I don’t think they wanted me to be a musician. But I think it was mainly because of my father, she disliked the idea that he was a musician, and it really broke up their life. I think that’s why he probably named me what he named me, it was like a blow to her—"He’s gonna grow up the same way, so don’t even worry about him." And that’s exactly what I did. I was about thirteen when I moved away (Graustark 1983).

The reasons for Prince’s departure from the 8th Avenue North house range from accusations of abuse (such as Prince’s pastor, who claimed that Prince told him stories of abuse from Baker [Hahn and Tiebert 2016: 64]) to simple teenage-parent tension (his sister Tyka stated in her 2008 autobiography that “. . . an argument between my parents and my older brother resulted in my brother moving out” [Nelson 2008]). While Prince told Graustark in 1983 that he moved out of the 8th Avenue North home when he was thirteen, he presents a slightly revised timeline in his posthumously released autobiography.

Ideally parents should stay together. The day my mother re-married was the day I decided I wanted to live with my real father, who loved the Bible and had a keen sense of morality and class. None of which my stepfather possessed. The best thing that can be said about him was that he made my mother happy. At 12 years of age, I left them to each other to go live with my father. It was the happiest day of my life. I could only go so far alone with no teacher. I needed to be near my hero. The day I was to go live with my father, there was a drop-off time set … 6:00. I didn’t know that until later… because out of spite My Mother told me she had somewhere to be and rushed me to pack so that she could drop me off some 2 hours earlier. I didn’t care one way or another and not a single word was spoken on the 12-minute trip over to his apartment. My mother pulled up, I got out and she left. I sat there emotionless at first, then a subdued joy entered my soul. I knew the best was yet to come. I wanted to prove to my first love, my mother, that the name Prince… my father’s stage name and now my given name, was worthy of her love, adoration, and respect.

He also recounted that soon after moving in with his father, Prince convinced the elder Nelson to take him to see the movie Woodstock. While the film was released on March 26, 1970, it did not open in Chicago and San Francisco until May of that year, and likely did not make it to the Twin Cities market until around the same time or later, supporting Prince’s account in his autobiography that he was twelve when he moved out of his mother’s home and into his father’s apartment (he turned twelve on June 7, 1970) (Prince 2019:105-107). The viewing of the movie marked a shift in the relationship between the two musicians. Prince remembered:

My father and I had our lives changes that night. The bond we cemented that very night let me know that there would always be someone in my corner when it came to my passion. From that moment on—he never talked down to me. He asked my opinion about things. He bought me my first guitar because we couldn’t fit a piano into my aunt’s house. The apartment we lived in was getting to small for us. So my father suggested my aunt take care of me for a while (2019: 107).

Prince and his new guitar moved in with his Aunt Olivia Lewis (née Nelson), his dad’s older sister, and her
husband Edward Mason Lewis at 3537 4th Avenue South, Minneapolis (extant), and began attending school around the corner at Bryant Junior High School in the fall of 1970. He stated in his autobiography that the Southside was “a much more wholesome environment” than what was happening in his Northside neighborhood at the time—“serious fights, unwanted pregnancies, sometimes even shootings (Prince 2019: 109).”

Prince’s partially completed autobiography does not provide any further details on where he lived during the remainder of his teenage years. Based on other primary sources and other interviews with Prince, it appears Prince lived with his aunt and uncle during the school year and, after his father purchased a house at 539 Newton Avenue North in December 1972, when Prince was fourteen-and-a-half years old, he would go back and forth between the two homes (Figure 11). Prince’s residency at his father’s house, however, did not last very long. He likely moved out completely in late 1973 or early 1974 when he was approximately fifteen years old, possibly because Prince broke John’s rules about have young women over unchaperoned. Prince moved back to his Aunt Olivia’s house, around the corner from Central High school where he was attending school. His aunt grew tired of Prince’s late night comings-and-goings and the noise from his constant guitar playing, so he asked friend Terry Jackson if he could move in with him at 1248 Russell Avenue North, but Terry’s mother Glenda opposed it. She felt Prince was arrogant and worried the teenager wouldn’t mind her. He did not have to look far for another option—Prince moved in next door to his best friend André Anderson’s (later André Cymone) house at 1244 Russell Avenue North when he was 16, likely in early 1975 just before his 17th birthday. According to Prince:

André Cymone’s house was the last stop after going from my dad’s to my aunt’s, to different homes and going through just a bunch of junk. And once I got there, I had realized that I was going to have to play according to the program, and do exactly what was expected of me. And I was sixteen at the time, getting ready to turn seventeen (Graustark 1983).

Prince shared André’s room for a while but, claiming he couldn’t handle how messy André was, he eventually moved into the basement. André’s mother Bernadette was supportive of Prince and her children’s interest in music, and only required that they went to school and completed their studies. Prince later recalled, “When I was in André’s basement. I found out a lot about myself then. The only reason I stayed was because of André’s mother. She would let me do anything I wanted to, but she said all I care about is you finishing school.” Prince found the independence and freedom to pursue his passion of music at the Anderson home (Minneapolis City Directories 1970s; Smith 2017; Jackson 2004; Graustark 1983) (Figure 12).

— Paul Mitchell, Prince’s presumed half-brother Duane’s best friend, told Laura Tiebert, co-author of The Rise of Prince, that Prince lived with him during the school week at 3613 5th Ave South, and spent weekends at André’s house. Also, André Cymone has stated that Prince moved when he was thirteen years old.

— Prince wrote of Bernadette’s importance in a side note to his editor in his autobiography, and the differences between his Northside and Southside homes. “She was a big community figure. . . .Whenever there are documentaries about North Minneapolis, they bring her up before they bring me up. You’d asked about the feminine principle. I’d say it’s that African women have an unspoken language. It’s almost primordial. No one can run a village like African women. On the one hand, they’re always in each other’s hair—you can’t keep a secret because they’re talking to everyone. On the other hand, they know you need someone to survive. There’s a kind of agreement: If I die you take care of my children, if I die I take care of yours . . . It’s about religion and family. It’s unwavering. All birth comes from the feminine principle. Every kingdom. It’s about community, not competition. When there’s too much testosterone in a room, men can understand it. They’ll understand why a woman goes with a man who’s not in completion, who understand the feminine. It’s desirable. North Minneapolis was highly competitive, a lot of testosterone. It had lost the feminine. South Minneapolis was a tight knit community. Not competitive (Prince 2019: 94).”
During the time of his residency at his aunt’s, his father’s and the Anderson homes between the ages of approximately thirteen and sixteen, Prince became proficient on the guitar. A portable instrument like a guitar was ideal for Prince’s peripatetic teenage years, though it is hard to pinpoint the location of where he mastered the instrument, unlike the piano which can directly be tied to the house at 2620 8th Avenue North.

**Early Bands, Performances and Recordings**

“I think it is very hard for a band to make it in this state, even if they’re good. Mainly because there aren’t any big record companies or studios in this state. I really feel that if we would have lived in Los Angeles or New York or some other big city, we would have gotten over by now.” – Prince, 1976

From an early age, Prince and his cousin Charles “Chazz” Smith, two years Prince’s senior, would practice in the den of Charles’s house at 927 Sheridan Avenue North (extant). Charles played the drums and sang, and Prince was on the keyboard, and neighborhood kids would come to listen to them practice. Around the time Prince and André Anderson were attending Lincoln Junior High in the fall of 1969, André them joined as the bassist. After seeing the trio perform at the Lincoln Junior High talent show, Prince’s elementary school friend Terry Jackson, André’s next door neighbor, joined as a percussionist. In its earliest manifestations, the band was essentially egalitarian, with Charles as the *de facto* leader, since he was older, the original founder, and the lead singer. The band experimented with several names at first.

We went through a number of names for the group —Charles; Cousin & Friends was one name. Then after we won our first talent show, Charles called the group Phoenix after a song by Grand Funk Railroad [released September 1972]. We said we’re not from Phoenix and we didn’t like the name. Both James Brown and Sly & the Family Stone had popular songs out called “Sex Machine,” [released September 1970 and May 1969, respectively]. Even though we were 12- or 13-years-old, we wanted to name our band Sex Machine. Our Moms said, “No.” So, we finally came up with the name Grand Central (Jackson 2004).xiv

Smith also recounted that Grand Central seemed a fitting moniker, since it partially referenced one of their favorite bands, Grand Funk Railroad, and was an apt description of the coming and goings of the various musicians and rehearsals between André’s house at 1244 Russell Avenue North (Figure 12) and Terry’s, who lived next door at 1248 Russell (both extant). The band rehearsed in André’s attic or basement, or in Terry’s house, including occasionally setting up in the enclosed back porch at 1248 Russell, and as with Charles’s house on Sheridan Avenue, neighborhood kids would hang out in the alley to listen and dance. Percussionist William “Hollywood” Doughty joined Grand Central, and André’s sister Linda began playing with the group after John gave Prince a Farfisa organ. With Linda on keyboards, Prince was freed up to play lead guitar (Figure 13). They covered their favorite bands, like Sly and the Family Stone, Grand Funk Railroad and Santana, and began branching out with original songs primarily written by Prince and André. The band would perform at school dances, parties, and “Battle of the Bands” competitions throughout the

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xiv If Jackson’s dates are correct, while the band had been playing together for a while, the name Grand Central was likely settled on in late 1972 since that is when the song ‘Phoenix’ was released. Prince, André and Terry would have been 14; Charles 16. Prince also stated to Graustark in 1983 that he formed his first official band when he was around thirteen years old.
Twin Cities (Smith 2017; Jackson 2004; Danois 201; Thorne 2016). Prince’s Northside neighborhood was undergoing dramatic changes in the late 1960s and early 1970s. During the 1960s, frustration grew among many African-American communities that were not seeing the economic growth and equality that the majority of other Americans experienced following World War II. Even with a small African-American population and collaboration between Black advocates and White supporters in the liberal-leaning city of Minneapolis, tensions still boiled over in the summer of 1966 and again the following year. Riots tore through the Northside, especially on Plymouth Avenue, and National Guard troops were called in to keep the peace (Rosh 2013).\footnote{Prince would have been eight and nine respectively when the riots happened, and while he did not specifically address his memories of the events in any interviews found during this research, it is likely Prince was aware at some level of the events. In response to police shooting of African-American men, at a 2015 performance at Paisley Park, Prince improvised: “See in Chanhassen we ain’t scared of police at night. But I didn’t always live in Chanhassen. I used to live on Plymouth, Russell, and Penn. Clutching the steering wheel too tight while the helicopter circles at night” (Swensson 2016: 52).}

After the riots, community leaders and local and state politicians met to try to address some of the disparities experienced in the community. While arguably little systemic change resulted from the discussions, one positive outcome was the creation of The Way Community Center in August 1966 (Figure 14; 1900 Block of Plymouth Avenue North; demolished). The center became a key hangout location for area youth, and offered a strong music program:

> Before long, The Way had an official band – The Family – that merged covers of songs by Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, and Earth, Wind, & Fire with its own R&B originals. It was a magnet for talented black youth in the city, starting with a core group of northsiders, include Joe Lewis Sr., Randy Barber, Pierre Lewis, and Sonny Thompson (Swensson 2016: 53).

As older teens, Prince, Charles, Terry, André and other musically inclined kids hung out at The Way, absorbing the music of The Family and other local musicians, even joining in and jamming, and trying out the various musical instruments The Way provided local youth. This interaction was critical in Prince’s early musical development, including the exposure to live R&B and rock music, and also created important connections—Prince would perform as a session musician with Sonny Thompson when he was 17, and Thompson would later join Prince’s 1990s band The New Power Generation (Swensson 2016: 53). As one of his many side projects during the 1980s, Prince also created a band called The Family in 1984 in an apparent nod to the band from his childhood neighborhood.

Prince made another important connection during this time. Pepe Willie was a Brooklyn-based musician and music producer who was one of Prince’s first conduits to the professional music industry and a key player in helping the young artist get discovered (Figure 15). Willie was dating Prince’s cousin Shauntel Manderville (Prince’s Aunt Edna Mae Shaw’s daughter), and met Prince once when he was visiting Minnesota in the late 1960s. Willie was about 10 years older than Prince, so he didn't pay him much attention on that first visit; however, Willie would soon become a mentor and guiding force to the young musician (Grow 2016; Willie 2017; Ro 2016).

The democracy of the band was soon challenged through two incidents that resulted in a major power shift and established Prince as the clear front man. First, Charles, André, and Terry wanted to add saxophonist
and rhythm guitar player David Eiland. Many R&B and even rock bands had a solid horn section, and they thought Grand Central would benefit from adding this traditional element. Prince was apoplectic and threatened to quit over the suggestion. Jackson claims they all backed down, letting Prince have his way. The reason for Prince’s vehement opposition to the suggestion is unclear. However, shortly after, Terry and Prince attended a Sly and the Family Stone concert. Prince closely studied the trumpet player Cynthia Robinson, and realized he could create a similar sound and effect via the keyboard (Jackson 2004). Thus, at an early age, he eschewed the standard horn section common in funk and R&B, showing an early aptitude for redefining musical genres and establishing another key early step in the development of the Minneapolis Sound—the use of keyboards to emulate horns. This decision would also help him in future compositions, when he wrote and performed all instruments. While he attempted to learn the saxophone through a musical education program, he hated the way it irritated his lips and soon abandoned it. Defining a musical genre where he could play all of the instruments afforded him the freedom to pursue numerous solo efforts.

Prince was also part of the decision to replace his cousin Charles, the band’s original leader, with a drummer from North High School, Morris Day, in late 1974. Charles was quarterback for the North High School football team, and that practice often conflicted with band practice, frustrating Prince and the other members. Morris was aware of Grand Central reputation as a top Northside band and convinced André to listen to him play. Morris nailed the complicated drum part in Tower of Power’s song “What Is Hip?” André was very impressed with Morris’s abilities and hesitantly approached Prince and Terry about him joining the band. Expecting pushback because of Prince’s family ties and long-standing relationship with his cousin, he was surprised to learn that they were open to the idea. Morris’s mother, Lavonne Daugherty, promised the young artists that if her boy was in the band, she would work to get them a record deal with Isaac Hayes’s recording company. She also formed a private corporation for the band named Grand Central Corporation. While the band practiced in private with Morris, Charles was eventually told. The betrayal the founder and former front man felt cut deep, especially when he found out his cousin was part of the decision. Nonetheless, the band’s new lineup was set (Figure 16) (Jackson 2004; Ro 2016: 11; Smith 2017).

Pepe Willie, now married to Prince’s cousin, heard Grand Central playing covers at a party, and was impressed with the young musicians. Willie came to one of the rehearsals on Russell Avenue to hear some of their original tunes soon after, and recalled that their songs did not have good construction. They were all singing and playing over each other. Willie spent time working with them on how to craft songs that would have radio appeal (Grow 2016).

So we started having rehearsals. This was 1975; Prince had just turned 16 at that point. Grand Central, the band members, were Morris Day on drums, André Cymone on bass, Prince on guitar, André’s sister Linda on keyboards, and William Doughty, we called him Hollywood, playing on percussion. I asked to hear one of their original songs. Prince had this song called “Sex Machine.” It was a really good, good song, but it lasted for 10 minutes. And I said, “Wow, that's a nice song, but for it to be on the radio, you have to use a certain formula.” So they started using that formula in their material. André had a song called “You Remind Me of Me,” and they played some other stuff.

Prince’s birthday was June 7, 1958 so in 1975 he turned seventeen. It is assumed that Willie’s listening session occurred just after Prince turned sixteen in 1974.
Prince and André used to have contests of who could write the most songs.

At one of the rehearsals, I remember Prince stopped, took off his guitar and he went over to Linda, and he says, “Linda, this is what I want you to play.” And I was going, “Wow. He plays keyboards and guitar. That's great.” Then he goes over to André and says, “André, let me hold your bass for a second.” And Prince starts thumping. And I was going like, “Wow. What is going on?” (Grow 2016).

Willie was so impressed with Prince’s abilities that he soon gave him his first recording opportunity. Willie’s band, 94 East, had a session at Cookhouse Studio (extant, Figure 17) in December 1975 and January 1976, and he invited the seventeen-year-old to join them. The building formerly housed Kay Bank Studio, where the Top 10 hit “Surfin’ Bird” by the Trashmen was recorded in 1963 and The Castaway’s “Liar Liar” a year later (Kenney and Saylor 2013: 79). This first professional recording gig for Prince was only a few short years after Prince began playing guitar. Willie recounted the session:

I had four hours of studio time, and we just kicked it off, right there. We did five songs in four hours. It was just unbelievable. I didn't even know what they were going to play. We didn't have rehearsal or nothing; I just trusted that everyone had their parts. Those recordings came out as The Cookhouse 5.

Prince played better than a professional session player, and I’ve been to a lot of sessions. None of the guitar players I’d worked with played as well as Prince for his first time in a recording studio. It just totally blew my mind. He was definitely a better guitar player than me (Grow 2016).

By early 1976, Prince, André, and Morris continued doing live performances (Figure 18), and recorded six original songs at A.S.I. studio in north Minneapolis as a band called Champagne (711 West Broadway Avenue; demolished) (Renzetti 2016; Nilsen 199: 25; 259). David Rivkin was sound engineer at the studio, and helped them record their original songs “39th St. Party,” “Grand Central,” “Lady Pleasure,” “Machine,” “Whenever,” and “You’re Such a Fox.” St. Louis Park-native Rivkin and his younger brother Bobby would play a key role in Prince’s rise to fame over the next few years.

It was around this same time that the seventeen-year-old Prince made another key connection. Daugherty took Prince, André and Morris to record a demo at Chris Moon’s Moon Sound Studio near Lake Nokomis in the spring of 1976. Chris Moon was an Englishman who first set up a studio in an unassuming home in South Minneapolis at 5708 Stevens Avenue (extant) (which Moon said Prince was never at), then near Lake Nokomis at 4937 28th Avenue South (extant) during the first half of 1976 (Figure 19), and finally at 2828 Dupont Avenue South (demolished) by late 1976 (Nilsen 1999: 259; 1976 Minneapolis City Directory page 978; Hoskins 2016; 1977 Minneapolis City Directory; 1978 Minneapolis City Directories page 1008; Moon 2018).xix

xiv Some sources spell it as “Shampayne.”

xv The Rivkin brothers grew up at 3725 Glenhurst Ave. So., St. Louis Park.

xvii Identification of the location of the Moon Sound Lake Nokomis location was an iterative and interesting process. In 2018 communications between Zschomler and Moon via Facebook, Moon stated he could not remember the exact location of the Lake Nokomis studio, which he rented for less than a year. Zschomler examined the Minneapolis City Directories from the mid-1970s, and only the Stevens and Dupont studio locations were listed. Moon described his studio’s location in a previous interview, stating that “right across the street from me was a Baskin-Robbins 31 Flavors ice cream shop” (Thorne 2016: 22). Only one Baskin Robbins is listed in the city directories near Lake Nokomis for the mid-1970s, at 4956 28th Avenue South (today the Nokomis...
Moon’s modest recording fees, compared to other studios, allowed numerous Black artists to record demo tapes. A writer, producer and sound engineer, Moon had no interest in performing, and was looking for a band who would record his songs (Thorne 2016: 22–23). After the trio recorded for a while, André and Morris took a break, strolling across the way for some ice cream. Moon remembers the quiet Prince, whom he described as "Mr.-Personality-I’d-rather-be-by-myself, little five-foot-four afro-headed kid, who was more afro than kid," stayed behind.

So I’m sitting there drinking a can of pop with my feet up and I look through the window and there he is on the drums. I have another sip and there he is on the piano. Another five minutes go by and there he is on the bass guitar. So I cranked up the mics in the room to see if he’s any good. He’s not bad. He seems to be confident, better on some, not so good on others, but generally confident on all of these instruments. And I realize if I only have one artist, I don’t have to worry about the drummer not showing up and screwing up the whole session (Thorne 2016: 23).

After hearing Prince play, he made him a proposition: “I wondered if you’d like me to package you up and promote you and write your songs and teach you how the studio works and see if we can make something happen for you?” Moon cut Prince a set of keys to the Lake Nokomis studio, and then later to the Dupont Avenue location in the late fall of 1976, Prince would come over and learn how to do multi-track recording, and how to record and mix all of the instruments he played—and even some sound trickery that he would employ in later recordings, including the use of mobile recording studios for his masterpiece album, Purple Rain (Thorne 2016: 23; Nilson 1999: 259).

Even with Prince’s immense talent, Moon was unable to land him a recording contract. Prince asked Moon to set up some meetings with record companies while visiting his half-sister Sharon Nelson in New York, but nothing came of it. While Prince claimed he received two offers, he said he turned them down because “I didn’t have a cat in there fighting for me, to get me artistic control over the production end of it (Schwartz 1981).” Prince asked Moon to manage him, but Moon had no interest in the more mundane aspects of managing. In late 1976, Moon contacted Owen Husney, a music and advertising industry executive in Minneapolis, and gave him a demo tape (Thorne 2016: 31–32). Moon and Husney recounted Husney’s introduction to Prince in the 1988 Minnesota Public Television Special The Minneapolis Sound.

Chris Moon: “Owen. I’ve got the next Stevie Wonder!”

Owen Husney: “Every day I’d come in, he’d say, ‘I have the next Stevie Wonder! I’ve got the next Stevie Wonder!’” I’d say, ‘Thanks, sounds great. I’ll see you in an hour,’ which I never did.”

Moon: “I said, ‘No, really! He’s the next Stevie Wonder!’ I said, ‘Here’s the tape. Listen to it and see what you think.’”

Husney: “And I put in this tape, and... I had goosebumps! I said, ‘Oh, my God! Who’s the group? And he said, ‘Well, you’d better sit down.’ And I said, ‘Why?’ And he said, ‘Well, it’s one kid playing

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Beach Coffee Shop). Zschomler sent pictures of two commercial buildings “across the street” from that location, and received a (literal) “thumbs down” emoji back from Moon. Finally, Zschomler inquired if the building at 4937 28th Avenue South was the correct location for the Lake Nokomis studio, and she received a “thumbs up” from Moon on May 23, 2018.
Moon: “Owen kinda looks at me incredulously and says, ‘Plays all the instruments?’ And I said, ‘He does! You won’t believe it! It’s amazing!’”

Husney: “I looked at him, you know – I had my business face on and I said, ‘[in an exaggerated voice trying to mask his excitement] Does he live here? Can I see him here?’” (Goldberg 1988).

Moon brought the young artist to Husney home at 4248 Linden Hills Boulevard (first floor of duplex), Minneapolis (extant), and Husney became Prince’s first official manager. He found Prince an apartment at 2012 Aldrich Avenue South in Uptown (extant) and paid for it so Prince could focus on his music. Prince said of the that time “Once I got out of high school it was interesting for a while because I didn’t have any money, I didn’t have any school, and I didn’t have any dependents, I didn’t have any kids, or girlfriends or anything. I had cut myself off totally from everything. And that’s when I really started writing. I was writing like three or four songs a day (Graustark 1983).” Husney also set up photo shoots for Prince, including at Moon Sound’s new Dupont location (Figure 20), and time for Prince to record demo tapes at the premier Minneapolis studio, Sound 80 (2709 East 25th Street, Minneapolis; extant), where Husney’s former bandmate and David Rivkin (aka “David Z”), was a sound engineer (Figure 21) (Neilsen 1999; State of Minnesota Certificate of Title 1977). David’s brother, Bobby was a drummer and met Prince at Moon Sound when they both were recording there. Bobby later worked for Husney, and became Prince’s driver, then friend. Prince would later tap the younger Rivkin brother as his drummer when he formed a touring band a few years later (Chick 2018: 58).

Sound 80 was widely recognized as the top recording location in the Twin Cities at the time. National artists Bob Dylan (Blood on the Tracks, 1975) and Cat Stevens (Izitso, 1977) recorded there, along with local artists such as Leo Kottke, the Lewis Connection, the Suicide Commandos (Make A Record, 1977). “Funkytown” by Lipps, Inc. was recorded at Sound 80 in 1979 and charted at Number One in 28 countries the following year. The studio also holds the distinction of being the location of the world’s first multi-track digital recording for commercial release. The Grammy-Award-winning album, recorded in 1978, featured “Appalachian Spring” by Aaron Copeland and “Three Places in New England” by Charles Ives, performed by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and recorded on 3M recording equipment (Kenney and Saylor 2013: 78–101).

xx Husney’s office was located in the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company building at 430 Oak Grove. The building is extant and listed on the National Register of Historic Places; Husney’s office was demolished and the space reconstructed into apartments.

xxi Cat Steven's Izitso is considered a pioneering album in the synth-pop genre, with its use of the LinnDrum machine and Polymoogs. Prince was recording in the studio at the same time as Stevens, and he would observe the older artist, noting his professionalism and musical skills. It is intriguing to think about how the experimental sounds that Stevens was creating inspired the young artist, who would come to define his sound with LinnDrum machines and Polymoogs, and was considered the King of Synth-pop by the early 1980s. (Kenney and Saylor 2013: 95).

xxii Ironically, the song laments about wanting to leave Minneapolis for a funkier place—New York City—and was recorded at the same time Prince was creating a new, funky sound in Minneapolis that would dominate music in the 1980s and make the city a major music center.
Between approximately December 1976 and April 1977, Prince worked at Sound 80 to record his demo tapes with no backup band (Nilsen 1999: 260). He sang all of the parts and played all the instruments himself. Engineer David Rivkin, who worked with Prince at Sound 80, explained the process:

We'd have everything set up, drums in one corner, piano in the next, guitar in the next. He'd play the drum part on his cassette machine and he'd sit down and play the drums. Then when it came time to play the bass, he had a separate part that he hummed into the machine, played the bass part in his ear, and he played the bass part. He did the same thing to all of the horns, synths, guitars – he had them all. He hummed them into the cassette machine. It was kind of interesting because he played everything, so he needed to arrange it in his head ahead of time, have the parts laid down on this little cassette machine, so he could remember what they were (Kenney and Saylor 2013:93).

Working with the state-of-the-art equipment at the premier Minneapolis studio also gave the young artist the opportunity to “get hip to Polymoogs”, which he used as the main keyboard on several songs on his first album and became a key sonic element in “the Minneapolis Sound”, which he developed and which dominated the airwaves during the 1980s (Carr 1978).

As Prince was leaving Sound 80 after a long day of recording, one of his mentors, Pepe Willie, was coming in with his band 94 East to record. Prince asked if he could sit in on the session, to which Willie readily agreed. Willie said “He never even went home after his session, he just hung out with us in the studio and played guitar on ‘10.15’ and ‘Fortune Teller’.” Prince also contributed background vocals and guitar on another Sound 80 recording from the time, “Got to be Something Here,” by the Lewis Connection with one of his mentors, Sonny Thompson (Grow 2016; Thorne 2016: 33).

Prince recorded five tracks at Sound 80, including the song “Soft and Wet”, co-written with Moon (the titles of the other tracks are unreported in available sources). Rivkin said the music did not fit into one musical category (pop, funk, etc.) but said, “The kid’s music was really just well-made rock and roll.”

Prince asked Herb Pilhofer and Tom Jung, the owners of Sound 80, if they would sign him to a recording contract. The studio had previous unsuccessful experience trying to market albums, but they agreed to meet with Prince. Jung came away awestruck:

I sat down with him, and he had a cassette… I listened to it with him and I thought. ‘Holy s**t!’ It was the one time that I felt I was really out of my element. The first thought I had when I heard a few bars of it was Stevie Wonder, somebody who was on a level with Stevie in terms of writing and playing. …I recognized the talent instantly. I guess I felt, you know, I’m probably not the guy to work with him because I know he’s a monster talent… I was probably instrumental in making this decision to say “Look, I don’t think we can help you. I think you need to be with a major label” (Kenney and Saylor

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xxiii Morris Day claimed in his 2019 autobiography that the demo tapes were not of Prince alone playing all the instruments, but rather of Grand Central, with him on drums, André Cymone on bass, and Prince on vocals, keyboards and guitar (Day 2019:30-31). No other books over the past several decades or individuals who were in the studio with Prince have ever claimed that anyone but Prince performed on the demo tapes. Rivkin, Moon, and Husney all state that Prince did the demo tapes alone.

xxiv Although the demo tapes are not available to refute Rivkin’s claim that Prince played horns, it does seem unlikely. Most sources state that Prince only played the saxophone briefly in junior high. It also seems unlikely that he brought in horn players, since most sources state that he played all the instruments on his demos.
Early Recording Contract and Albums

“Don't make me black. My idols are all over the place.” – Prince, 1978

With the Sound 80 tapes, Husney was able to shop Prince around to several major recording studios. He finally had “a cat in there fighting for him.” Prince stated that when he first met him, Husney told the young musician that no one should produce his records, only he should do it. “Owen believed in me (Graustark 1983).” While Prince often spoke resentfully of Husney after their falling out following the release of his first album in 1978, Husney gave the young artist the connections and resources needed to land a major recording contract. In addition to paying for Prince’s housing and studio time, he created deluxe press kits (including images taken of Prince by photographer Robert Whitman) to accompany the demo tapes that eventually created strong interest by several major labels (Figure 22) (Thorne 2016: 33). Husney recalled this effort in two separate interviews.

We put together 15 press kits and sent out seven or eight to the major labels. The first marketing move was I put his age back a year. I knew if he was worth so much at 18, he was worth that much more at 17. I knew that he was shy, so the second marketing move was that “less is more.” I didn't want any press clippings or 8 million pictures. I just wanted one line [of copy]. The music would speak for itself. We also wanted to be different. L.A. at that time was jeans; open, untucked shirts, and cowboy boots. We were all wearing three-piece suits; we had one made for Prince, too. And we sent the tape on a silver reel - it was reel-to-reel, not cassette (Star Tribune 2016).

It was really something to be a part of. We got romanced. I mean, one record company offered us three homes in Beverly Hills for the duration of the contract. I wish I would have taken that now. I mean, they were falling over themselves to make deals. We had three labels in a bidding war, which were A&M, CBS and Warner Bros. records (Goldberg 1988).

Prince eventually signed a contract with Warner Bros. on June 25, 1977, a few weeks after he turned nineteen, even though Husney sold him as being seventeen (Figure 23) (Berman 2016: 23–24; Ro 2016: 22). Biographer Ronin Ro details the terms of the contract:

His contract reportedly called for three albums in twenty-seven months, the first to be recorded within six months. The three were to cost $180,000—the usual $60,000 per disc allocated to acts like the Ramones. If he submitted them by September 1979, Warner could renew the contract for two years (for another three albums) and an additional advance of $225,000. If Warner wanted a second option period after this—in September 1981, for a year and two more albums—the company would advance him yet another $250,000.

Husney called it perhaps the most lucrative contract ever offered to an unknown. “Well over a million
dollars,” he said. Another time, he said it set a precedent and was “the biggest record deal of 1977” (Ro 2016: 22).

The state-of-the art equipment and professionalism at Sound 80 provided Prince with the tools he needed to demonstrate his remarkable musical abilities to the world and to launch his career to the next level. Prince’s later career in the 1990s was famously marked by conflict with his record label over what he saw as unfair practices regarding control and ownership of his masters, leading him to change his name to the unpronounceable Love Symbol (see Figure 1) in an attempt to void the recording contract Warner Bros. had with “Prince.” However, Prince’s first battle with the recording industry came shortly after signing with the company.

As to be expected, Warner Bros. wanted the young, untested artist to work with a seasoned producer and suggested Maurice White of Earth, Wind & Fire fame or his brother Verdine to mentor Prince and help produce the album. Warner Bros. did not doubt Prince’s musical and studio abilities, but they wanted someone with “record sense”—the ability to recognize a hit—to be involved. Prince rejected the notion, saying that Earth, Wind & Fire’s horn heavy music did not align with the musical aesthetic he was trying to create. He feared too much involvement from others could regulate his music to an R&B audience instead of the crossover to white audiences he sought. He informed Husney, “I gotta do my own album. Maurice White is not producing. You go tell the chairman of Warner Bros. that I’m producing.” Prince also confronted Warner Bros. executive Lenny Waronker, saying, “Don’t make me black. My idols are all over the place.” Waronker was taken aback but resolved that they “shouldn’t mess around with this guy”. A compromise was eventually reached. After putting Prince through the wringer and having him produce numerous demos to further demonstrate his ability to compose, perform, record and engineer the music on his own, they agreed to let him produce the album, making him the youngest producer ever for Warner Bros. However, they insisted on the involvement of veteran engineer Tommy Vicari, who previously worked with Santana, one of Prince’s many idols (Ro 2016: 22–23; Star Tribune 2016).

Prince returned to Sound 80 to begin work on his debut album in the second half of 1977 (Figure 24). According to the notes from the editor of his autobiography, Dan Piepenbring:

> He [Prince] briefly began work on For You at Sound 80—and in the comfort of his hometown, where he hoped to remain—before he was forced to relocate. He’d convinced Warner Bros. that he could produce the album himself, but they’d compromised by sending Tommy Vicari, an industry veteran, to oversee the engineering of the record. Sound 80 had recently installed a new studio console—so new, in fact, that Vicari felt it would take months to work the kinks out of it. Rather than lose time, Prince and the label agreed to move production to the Record Plant, in Sausalito (Prince 2019: 260).

Prince described his studio process at the time to Insider magazine:

> For me, there’s nothing like working in a recording studio. It’s satisfying. It’s like painting. You begin with a conception and keep adding instruments and laying tracks down. Soon, it’s like the monitors

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xxv Prince stated that “I wanted to make a different-sounding record. We originally planned to use horns, but it’s really hard to sound different if you use the same instruments. By not using horns on this record, I could make an album that would sound different right away. So I created a different kind of horn section by multi-tracking a synthesizer and some guitar lines (Carr 1978).”
are canvases. The instruments are colors on a pallet, the mikes and board are brushes. I just keep working it until I’ve got the picture or rather the sound that I heard inside my head when it was just an idea. (Schneider 1978).

Prince’s early recordings with Warner Bros., therefore, showed his musical virtuosity, and they included the soon-to-be common credit “produced, arranged, composed and performed by Prince,” a remarkable feat for such a young artist. Throughout his almost 40-year career, the majority of his albums were solo efforts, which he composed, performed and engineered. The foundational studio time and experience he gained at Sound 80 was crucial in his development into an accomplished studio engineer.

The album took six months and over $100,000 to create, $40,000 over his budget from Warner Bros. Prince later admitted that he focused too much on making the album perfect, re-recording tracks multiple times to get the perfect sound. The result was a “light, pleasant soul-pop, impressive mainly for his virtuosity of writing, producing and playing all instruments. The songs were well received by Black and R&B audiences, but had little crossover appeal” (Salewicz 1981; Ro 2016: 26; Ohmes 2009). With modest album sales, Warner Bros. was interested in getting their new artist national exposure through tours and television spots. The problem of being a one-man show in the studio, however, was that he could not perform alone live. At first, Warner Bros. attempted to set him up with musicians from Los Angeles, but Prince returned to his Minnesota roots and recruited some familiar faces for his touring band.

Childhood friend and bandmate André Cymone was tapped to play bass, and Bobby Z (Rivkin) was selected as the drummer. Prince’s cousin Charles introduced him to Gayle Chapman, a keyboardist from Duluth, who auditioned for Prince at his rented house at 5215 France Avenue South (extant).xxvi Chapman and Matt Fink (later known as “Dr. Fink” for his on-stage medical scrubs attire with The Revolution) provided the keyboards and synthesizers. The band practiced at the U-Warehouse at 400 East Lake Street (extant). While Prince planned on playing the guitar on stage, he wanted another guitarist to help fill out the band’s sound. St. Paul native Dez Dickerson auditioned for Prince at Del’s Tire Mart, the band’s new rehearsal location (1409 2nd Street South, Minneapolis; demolished). Prince was impressed; the two jammed and while Dez could nail an excellent solo, he wasn’t a show boater and could play backup as well as lead. The newly formed band continued to practice at Del’s, until the speakers and other equipment Willie had loaned the nascent band were stolen. Willie stepped in to help, allowing the musicians to practice in his basement at 3809 South Upton Avenue in Minneapolis (extant) (Smith 2017; Keller 1979; Dickerson 2004; Willie 2017). It was also during this time that Prince fired Husney. Some say he did this because Husney did not drop everything to bring Prince space heaters when he wanted them for his rehearsal space. Willie claimed that was just a symptom of a larger problem. Prince, Willie and others felt that Husney should have solely focused on Prince; however, Husney still worked as an advertising executive. Prince became frustrated that he was not Husney’s sole focus at this critical time of launching his career. Even with all of Husney’s efforts in getting Prince a major recording contract, Prince remained

xxvi The France Avenue house is Prince’s first in a long series of westward relocation, taking him to the most southerly point in the City, then on to Orono and finally Chanhassen. While it is believed that he wanted to be in a more suburban location so that his late-night music would not disturb his neighbors and to give him more privacy as his fame grew, the western suburbs in the Twin Cities are also associated with wealth, affluence, and “making it,” so there may also have been pride in achieving the financial independence to be able to afford living in those areas.
almost hostile about Husney, denying that he really did that much for him as a young artist. Willie stepped in to fill the gap as temporary manager and was key in coordinating Prince’s first live performance as a national recording artist (Willie 2017; Thorne: 46–47).

Warner Bros. executives flew into Minneapolis to see Prince and his Minnesota musicians’ premier performance at the Capri Theater in North Minneapolis (Figure 25) (2027 West Broadway Avenue; extant). The Capri was a movie theater, but Prince chose to hold the concert there in part to help the owner, who was experiencing financial difficulties and also wanted to convert the theater into a concert venue (Bream January 5, 1979; Smith 2017). Three performances were scheduled on January 5, 6, and 7, 1979, with the executives watching the performance on January 6:

When local disc jockey Kyle Ray introduced Prince’s debut concert at the Capri Theater in north Minneapolis earlier this month, he hallelujahed in the tradition of Muhammad Ali: “The power and the glory, the Minneapolis story—PRINCE.”

He wasn’t just fanning the audience. At 18, this young black wizard from the Twin Cities plays countless instruments, and wrote, arranged, produced, played and sang everything on his first album. He is indeed powerful (Keller 1979).

Local music critic Jon Bream stated that Prince “strutted across the stage with grand Mick Jagger-like moves and gestures. He was cool, he was cocky, and he was sexy. […] As a whole, Prince’s performance clearly indicated he has extraordinary talent,” and he predicted a “royal future for Prince” (Bream January 7, 1979).

Warner Bros. did not agree that the band as a whole was ready for prime time. Dickerson recalled technical sound difficulties and that their overall performance wasn’t tight. Prince was devastated and the show on January 7 was cancelled, in part due to low ticket sales. Yet he channeled his energy into practices and his next studio album, recorded between April and June, 1979. The eponymously named album was released in October, but the song “I Wanna Be Your Lover” was released two months prior. It was “Prince’s biggest hit to date, reaching Number One on the US Billboard Hot Soul Singles chart, Number 3 in the Billboard Disco 100 chart and Number 11 in the Billboard Hot 100” (Dickerson 2004: 36, Nilsen 1999: 261). Prince also had his first foray into music videos with the song. In August 1979, Prince recorded the video in California. It showed the feather-haired artist playing the piano, guitar, bass, and drums, highlighting his prodigious talent (PrinceVault.com, “I Wanna Be Your Lover” music video page).

Warner Bros. felt Prince and his band were finally ready for touring and even television spots. On January 8, 1980, Prince debuted on Burt Sugarman’s show Midnight Special, performing “I Wanna Be Your Lover” and “Why You Wanna to Treat Me So Bad” in animal print bikini briefs, a tank top, and thigh-high boots (Marquina 2016). On January 26, Prince and his band lip-synched their way through the same songs on
American Bandstand, and “stonewalled” Dick Clark’s interview attempts: xxviii

The Eighties were just weeks old when Prince took the stage of American Bandstand for the first time, but the artist took command and pointed the way for the decade to come. Fey and coy, the 21-year-old relative unknown lies to Dick Clark by saying he's only 19, then tells Clark he turned down numerous major-label record deals because, simply, “they wouldn't let me produce myself.” It's not a boast, just a statement of intent. Then, when asked how many instruments he plays, Prince gazes at his shoes for a moment before answering, “Thousands.” Paired with striking lip-synched performances of “I Wanna Be Your Lover” and “Why You Wanna Treat Me So Bad?” – in which Prince prances in gold lamé pants, André Cymone goes full Rick James and Dez Dickerson taps into his inner Sid Vicious – his multi-racial, multi-styled band left disco in the dust and paved the way for pop's future (Heller 2016).

Prince began touring extensively in support of the new album, from November 28, 1979 (opening in Los Angeles) through April 27, 1980 (ending in Nashville), with the shows between February 21 and April 27 as the opening act for Rick James (Figure 26) (Nilsen 1999). His solo tour run included a night at the Orpheum Theater in downtown Minneapolis on February 9, a few blocks from First Avenue (which was Sam's at the time and was formerly known as Uncle Sam's). The show drew an audience of about 1,000 people, less than half of the theater's capacity. Kevin Cole, a longtime DJ at Sam's, recounted the Orpheum show: “They were giving away tickets to try and get people in there. He hadn't really found his audience yet” (Light 2014: 9-10).

Even though ticket sales were less than ideal, the significance of a local African-American musician headlining a show at a major venue in the segregated downtown Minneapolis music scene cannot be understated. Prince appears to be one of the first local Black artists to have accomplished this feat of performing at the Orpheum. The fact that this event occurred only 9 years before Prince was able to purchase and run his own major music venue in downtown Minneapolis (Glam Slam opened in 1989) and only 36 years before his death in 2016, when considering the international fame and influence the artist from the Northside had, is equally remarkable.

Prince's “Creation Story”: Dirty Mind

“I wasn't being deliberately provocative. I was being deliberately me.” – Prince, 1981

Having spent the majority of his money and most of his contractual time on his first two records, Prince produced his third studio album in six weeks. Even though he had unprecedented control over his first two albums for a young, untested artist, they were still produced in California and overseen by studio executives. Knowing that he had to produce another album quickly and for little money in order to meet the terms of his contract, Prince conceived, wrote and recorded his next effort quickly in 1980.

xxviii After the band completes their first song, Clark walks on stage and marvels, asking Prince “You learned to do this in Minneapolis?”, to which Prince response, “Where?”. Clark agrees, stating that, “Yeah, I mean this is not the kind of music that comes from Minneapolis, Minnesota!”, to which Prince simply says “No”, shakes his head, raises his eyebrows and laughs.
The exact location of the recording studio had not been identified in previous books or articles on Prince. While the Dirty Mind album sleeve states it was “Recorded in Uptown” (Minneapolis), it appears that Prince meant that in the more metaphorical state of mind that he sang about in his song “Uptown” from the album as opposed to an exact geographic location. Biographers Per Nilsen (1999: 261) and Ronin Ro (2016: 45–46) gave a general description of it being recorded in a rented house on Lake Minnetonka, where Prince lived from late 1979 or early 1980 through early 1981. His sound engineer from the time, Don Batts, stated that the house was located on the “north arm” of Lake Minnetonka, but no address was provided. Based on items contained in a recent Prince auction and subsequent reviews of city property records, however, there is now documentation that the house was located at 680 North Arm Drive in Orono, Minnesota, on the North Arm Bay of Lake Minnetonka (demolished and a new house built on the original foundations).

Prince recounted the album’s creation and recording: “Nobody knew what was going on, and I became totally engulfed in it,” he says. “It really felt like me for once” (Adler 1981). Prince described his process for conceiving and recording Dirty Mind in a 1981 interview:

Strange as it may sound, this last album, a lot of it was done right there on the spot, writing and recording. That's how a lot of the stranger tunes came out . . . Most of the stuff was written on guitar, that's why the album is pretty guitar-oriented. I'd just got that real raggedy guitar and it sounded real cool to me. But like I said, I guess that's where the lines came from, the swearing and like that - it's basically what I was feeling at the time.

See, this album, it was all supposed to be demo tapes, that's what they started out to be. The previous albums were done in California where they have better studios – I'd never wanted to do an album in Minneapolis. So they were demos and I brought them out to the Coast and played them for the management and the record company. They said. "The sound of it is fine. The songs we ain't so sure about. We can't get this on the radio. It's not like your last album at all." And I'm going, 'But it's like me. More so than the last album, much more so than the first one.' We went back and forth, and they

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xxix “Now, where I come from we don’t give a damn; We do whatever we please; It ain’t about no downtown, nowhere-bound, narrow-minded drag; It’s all about being free. Everybody’s going Uptown; It’s where I want to be; Uptown; You can set your mind free, yeah; Uptown; Keep your body hot; Get down; I don’t want to stop, no” “Uptown” lyrics by Prince, 1980.

xxx The fan website PrinceVault.com was updated on January 20, 2018, to list the address as 680 North Arm Drive in Mound. Zschomler contacted the website to request the source of their information and was provided a link to an auction of Prince-related items. Several of the auction items included an address from a handwritten note on Prince letterhead (though it is not signed or dated) providing directions to 680 North Arm Drive and a certified Western Union Mailgram letter to “P. R. Nelson” dated May 9, 1980, at the North Arm Drive address, stating that he and his music was being recognized through several awards. The mailgram listed Mound as the city. Subsequently, Zschomler called the City of Mound, and was informed the property was actually located in the City of Orono, the city boundaries of which are covered by five adjacent zip codes, including Mound. A search of the City of Orono’s property files for 680 North Arm Drive resulted in a site inspection requested by “Prinz [sic] Nelson, renter” and the form is dated September 20, 1979. The City had cited the property owner, Richard Hollander, numerous times for not connecting to the City’s sewer system. Prince’s studio engineer at the time, Don Batts, described the conditions at the North Arm house: “The drum booth was under water with sand bags along the sides. There was a drain of water, due to a cesspool that was cut into a hill that was abandoned” (PrinceVault.com: North Arm Drive Studio page). By June 9, 1980, Hollander was in compliance and the house was hooked up to the city’s sewer system. The city files also showed that the house suffered fire damage in early 1982 and was demolished and a new house built on the original foundations that year (City of Orono permit files).

xxxi Prince later remember that during the recording, he said to himself “If I could put my bloodstream on vinyl, then this is what it would be (Normant 1986”).
finally released it.

I don't know how anybody could spend a million dollars on an album. I couldn't take that long to make a record - if I did, it would be like a ten-album set. My album took about twelve days for the tracks, and about a week and a half for mixing. If you really listen to it, you'll hear that a lot of the harmonies aren't perfect, that I was just singing whatever I felt, playing whatever I felt. The rhythm tracks I kept pretty basic. I didn't try a lotta fancy stuff so I didn't have to go back and do things over (Schwartz 1981).

In a 1981 article, journalist Bill Adler claims that “the result of this increased freedom was a collection of songs celebrating incest (“Sister”) and oral sex (“Head”) in language raw enough to merit a warning sticker on the album’s cover.” Prince is quoted as saying, “When I brought it to the record company it shocked a lot of people,” he says. “But they didn’t ask me to go back and change anything, and I’m real grateful. Anyway, I wasn’t being deliberately provocative. I was being deliberately me.” (Adler 1981).

Released on October 8, 1980, the album’s cover and back featured provocative images of Prince in a studded trench coat, bandana, and bikini briefs—standard fare from his stage performances. The inside included a picture of his band mates, though only Fink and new keyboardist Lisa Coleman contributed minor tracks to the studio album. As with his previous two releases, Prince did it all (Figure 27).

Warner Bros.’ fears about limited radio air time proved true due to the explicit nature of many of the songs. The album did peak at Number 7 on the Soul charts, continuing the success of his previous albums on that chart. However, none of the released singles (“Uptown,” “Dirty Mind” and “Do It All Night”) broke the Top 100, and the album only reached Number 45 on the Top 100 chart. Even with this placement, the album was critically praised, marked the fruition of Prince’s musical vision, and is arguably the first album to fully capture all elements of the Minneapolis Sound.xxxii As described by music journalist Jeremy Ohmes:

Prince was already pushing the boundaries of sexuality, prancing around stage in boots and briefs and little else, but he wanted to break down racial barriers in music, too. He wanted to appeal to the Ohio Player and Parliament fans as much as the Rolling Stone and Blondie fans. He wanted to bring about a utopian musical paradise that looked past race, age and gender. His album Dirty Mind would be his creation story.

When Prince released Dirty Mind in the fall of 1980, no one was prepared for, as Rolling Stone put it, “one of the most radical 180-degree turns in pop history.” Gone was the simply enjoyable, slightly suggestive commercial R&B of Prince’s previous albums; in its place was a visionary, wildly ambitious amalgam of funk, punk, new wave, R&B, pop and experimental rock, laced with sexually explicit lyrics and over-the-top shock. On the album’s cover he stands defiant and seductive, wearing nothing but a bandanna, black bikini bottoms and a bedazzled jacket. And the music finally matched the image, too. From the title track’s robotic funk to the synth pop of “When You Were Mine” to the

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xxxii Prince and his backing touring band made videos of “Dirty Mind” and “Uptown” at the Producer’s Studio Stage 9 in Hollywood, California, on October 24, 1980. While the influential music video channel MTV did not launch until August 1, 1981, and these videos did not receive much nationwide air play, they are noteworthy for Prince’s wardrobe. For the first time, the distinctive look of the shoulder-studded trench coat, bikini briefs and thigh-high boots is branded on the album cover, the tour, and the video (PrinceVault.com Music Video Page for “Dirty Mind” and “Uptown” videos). Also, the videos mark the first appearance of keyboardist Lisa Coleman and the last for bassist André Cymone, who split with Prince shortly after.
hyper-drive punk of “Sister” to the straight-up dance party jams, “Uptown” and “Partyup,” Prince experiments with everything on Dirty Mind and fuses black and white musical styles with little regard for established genres. This breathtaking, newfangled fusion of electro-pop, hard rock and funk not only won over rock and new wave audiences, but it also held on to his R&B audience. More importantly though, Prince’s audacious third album set the style and tone for much of the innovative urban music the Twin Cities would soon be known for (Ohmes 2009).

A contemporary reviewer summarized the impact of Dirty Mind, but also the work that laid ahead for the young artist:

The music is an eminently danceable mesh of funk, hard rock, and electronic pop; Prince's airy falsetto recalls the young Smokey Robinson; the lyrics are blatantly sexual and seethe with teenage rebelliousness; and topping everything off is Prince's persona, that of a kinky but lovable new age/new wave androgynous waif.

But talent and outrageousness might not be enough. . . .. First he has to demonstrate that he's capable of “crossing over.” Prince is already a huge star in black markets, and could easily sell out a big arena in a city like Detroit. But neither Prince nor his record company want him to end up being exclusively a black act. So now he's hitting the “white” venues in selected major cities, hoping that he'll be able to rise above racial categorization (Katz 1981).

Prince, André, Bobby, Dez, Lisa, and Matt hit the road again, targeting the “white” venues that Katz described, including the Ritz in New York. As Steve Holden summarized his performance in the New York Times, “Prince is such a charismatic performer, though, that his stylized salaciousness does not offend. With his sassy grace and precocious musicality, he is heir to the defiant rock ‘n’ roll traditions of Elvis Presley, Mick Jagger, and Jimi Hendrix.” The also tour brought Prince home for his first show at the venue he would soon make famous. He played at Sam's on March 9, 1981 (Figure 28), which would be renamed First Avenue on New Year’s Eve of that year. He played there 10 more times during his career. The tour also took him to Europe for the first time, where he performed in Holland, England and France (Sutherland 1981; Nilson 1999: 271).

While the album did not provide the Top Ten hits Warner Bros. hoped for, they saw enough excitement and critical acclaim around Prince's latest work that they extended his contract, allowing him to branch into side projects. Moving out of the rental property in Orono, Prince purchased a home at 9401 Kiowa Trail (demolished) in the southwestern suburb of Chanhassen, where he lived and recorded from 1981 through November 1985 (Nilsen 1999: 261–262). Numerous important recordings were made at this location, including portions of Controversy, 1999, and Sign O’ The Times; and side projects such as records by the Time, Vanity 6, and The Family.

Licentiousness and Religious Devotion: Controversy

“All people care about nowadays is getting paid, so they try to do just what the audience wants them to do. I’d rather give people what they need rather than just what they want.” – Prince, 1982
Controversy was a more refined and commercial version of Dirty Mind. The majority of the songs on the album were recorded at Prince’s new home studio on Kiowa Trail in the spring and early summer of 1981 and remixed in Hollywood Studios in August 1981. Released October 14, 1981, the album peaked at 21 on the US charts and had four commercial singles, though none came close to the Billboard Top Ten (“Controversy,” “Sexuality,” “Let’s Work,” and “Do Me, Baby”). The album, again an essentially solo work, its tour, and music videos are notable for several reasons. First, the title track is one of Prince’s earliest attempts to mythologize himself, repeating questions that many asked about the artist at the time, and that he apparently wondered why people cared. As biographer Thorne (2016: 69) explains, “In the midst of all this egoism, however, he finds time to recite the Lord’s Prayer (always popular with musicians, from Elvis Presley to David Bowie), answering the question he poses in the song as to whether he believes most in himself or God.”

The album also includes one of Prince’s first forays into political issues with the “brief, inconsequential vamp ‘Ronnie, Talk to Russia,’” and his first use of the Linn LM-1 drum machine, which became the foundation of his sound. Finally, the album, videos and tour blend the “licentiousness and religious devotion that would later become Prince’s signature blend.” The video for the title track has Prince and the band playing in the light of a large stained-glass window and the stage is flanked by two angel statutes. The tour began with the never-released song “The Second Coming,” which was not meant to refer to Prince as a Christ-like figure, but rather as a reference to the Book of Revelation and a warning about the impending apocalypse, the dominant theme in his next album (Thorne 2016: 69; 71) (Figure 29).

Capturing the Zeitgeist: 1999

I don’t try to trick people. Life is too confusing itself, and I wouldn’t put any more on anybody else”. Prince, 1983

1999 did not present a pessimistic view of the impending end of the world. Rather, Prince turned the apocalypse into a celebration and gave voice and relief to an entire generation raised in the shadow of fear of the nuclear annihilation. The message was clear: be glad, because through death we shall be liberated, but until that time, just have some fun (Toure 2013). Prince told Larry King in 1999 that he was inspired after watching a documentary with his bandmates on Nostradamus’s prediction of the world’s end in 1999. He remembered:

…A lot of people were talking about the year and speculating on what was gonna happen. And I just found it real ironic how everyone that was around me—whom I thought were very optimistic people—were dreading those days. And I always knew I’d be cool. I never felt like this was gonna be a rough time for me. I knew there were gonna be rough times for the earth, because this system

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xxxiii “I just can’t believe all the things people say. Controversy. Am I black or white, am I straight or gay? Controversy. Do I believe in God, or do I believe in me? . . . I can’t understand human curiosity. Controversy.” “Controversy” (Prince, 1981).

xxxiv The filming location for the “Controversy” and “Sexuality” videos is unknown. The website Prince Vault states they were filmed at an “unknown soundstage” in Minneapolis in October 1981. The videos are the first appearance of new bassist Mark Brown, to whom Prince bestowed the stage name BrownMark.
is based in entropy and it's pretty much headed in a certain direction. So, I just wanted to write something that gave hope.

Music Journalists Rob Sheffield marveled at Prince’s audacity as expressed in the album’s songs:

“Don’t worry,” announces the warped robot voice at the start of Prince’s ‘1999.’ “I won't hurt U. I only want U to have some fun.” . . . Is this the voice of God? Or Prince's synthesizers talking back to him? Either way, this guy's got his own idea of fun. And he spends the next 70 minutes building his spiritual and political philosophy around the urge to party. He sets off security sirens at the club by masturbating on the dance floor. He solves the nation's evils by staging a sex-as-redemption ritual with his lady cabdriver in the back seat. He dances under the shadow of the mushroom cloud, as the double-drag warmongers finally hit the little red button and blow up the planet – but not before Prince squeezes in one more Saturday night of letting that lion in his pocket roar. He gathers musicians of different races and genders into a communal church, dedicated to the higher purpose of getting Prince more action. You can't accuse the man of thinking small (Sheffield 2017).

The title track, however, was written last, and the other songs on Prince’s first double album reflect a trend for the majority of the rest of his career—the gradual accumulation of songs that later turned into a concept album. As Thorne notes:

Prince’s ‘new direction’ was not as drastic as some of the changes he would pursue later, but there was definitely an increased ambition evident on the album. While Controversy felt like Prince consolidating the success of Dirty Mind by producing a slightly watered-down sequel, this new album showed him making a definite creative progression, both in the sound of the music and the ambition of the lyrics. But as would be the case with almost every subsequent Prince album, the record would come together first through a gradual accumulation of songs, before the process picked up speed and turned into a coherent concept, with the title track written last. It’s this song that hints at the precision-toolled tracks of Purple Rain; the rest of the album is much looser, jam-based, and though always poppy and easy on the ear, experimental (2016: 91).

In 1989, after Rolling Stone included 1999 in its Top 100 albums of the 1980s, Keyboardist Matt Fink reflected on what Prince was trying to accomplish with the album:

I think he was trying to become as mainstream as possible, without violating his own philosophy, without having to compromise any of his ideas. To some extent, he was trying to make the music sound nice, something that would be pleasing to the ear of the average person who listens to the radio, yet send a message. I mean, “1999” was pretty different for a message. Not your average bubblegum hit (Sheffield 2017).

Sheffield expands on Prince’s motives, going so far as to say that the album was one of the decade’s most influential and that it established Prince as the King of Synth-Pop:

xxxv Prince’s bandmates remember that after watching the show in the evening, they all went to bed and by the time they saw Prince the next morning, he had penned the song, “1999”.

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Strange as it seems in retrospect, there was no reason to think his new music had any shot at pop radio. He was three years past his only Top 40 hit, ‘I Wanna Be Your Lover.’ But he clearly wasn't thinking in those terms – he made the music even more outrageous than the lyrics, experimenting with the newfangled technology of Oberheim synthesizers and Linn drum machines.

He’d obviously studied the latest New Wave records in the import bin. As guitarist Dez Dickerson recently told *Billboard’s* Michaelangelo Matos, Prince was inspired by ‘the New Romantic thing,’ especially Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet, who were in rotation at First Avenue, the Minneapolis club immortalized in *Purple Rain*.

1999 came on as the ultimate New Romantic statement. It was the synth-pop album to beat all other synth-pop albums, in the year synth-pop took over. 1982 was full of futuristic electronic records mixing disco beats with arty concepts – from the Human League’s *Dare* to Yazoo’s *Upstairs at Eric’s*, from George Clinton’s *Computer Games* to Duran Duran’s *Rio*. Hip-hop went techno with Afrika Bambaataa’s ‘Planet Rock’ and ‘Looking for the Perfect Beat’ and Grandmaster Flash’s ‘The Message’; so did the goth-punk kids in New Order with their club hit ‘Temptation.’

But as any of these artists probably would have conceded, Prince topped them all, creating his own kind of nonstop erotic cabaret. Instead of just overdubbing instruments to replicate a live band, he built the tracks around a colossal synth pulse, which made *1999* one of the decade’s most influential productions. ‘Little Red Corvette’ became such a massive pop hit, it's easy to overlook how radical it sounded at the time. All through the song, you can hear the machines puff and hiss, as if Prince's engines are overheating, with his studio as a Frankenstein lab full of sparks flying everywhere. It's sleek on the surface, but the rhythm track keeps sputtering and threatening to blow up (Sheffield 2017).

*1999* was released October 27, 1982, and by the next month it peaked at Number 9, Prince’s highest ranking album to date. It remained on the chart for an impressive 153-week run. While the single “1999” was released a month before the album, it did not chart well initially. “Little Red Corvette” was released as a single in February 1983 and made it to Number 6 that month. With the success of that song, “1999” was re-released in July of 1983 and hit Number 12 on the charts. The success of the album was also due in part to Prince’s use of music videos on the nascent music video channel MTV, which was launched the previous year. Prince was “part of a new breed of musicians who understood the power of the music video as a way to market an artist and build their own iconography and mythology.” With his heavy rotation on the music channel, fans were already copying his look (Forde 2015). Sheffield further explains MTV’s influence:

MTV was clearly a huge influence on *1999*—not just as a format for exposure, but as a source for the latest European synth sounds. Here was a network where David Bowie and Roxy Music were legacy artists while Depeche Mode and Adam Ant were *bona fide* stars. This place was made for him. A Flock of Seagulls—even their name sounded like a Prince lyric.

Also significant about MTV in 1982 was that it was a nationwide rock & roll network with black
artists in the mix, and one ripe for a black art rocker like Prince to take over. Which he did. MTV played the “1999” video like it was manna from heaven. Radio still resisted—the “1999” single stalled short of the Top 40. But MTV played the video so heavily that it was even used in the network's own stereo-demonstration ads. When “Little Red Corvette” went into rotation, MTV kept right on playing “1999,” even though both videos looked suspiciously like they were filmed on the same day with the same cast wearing the same clothes.

It didn't matter. The network couldn't get enough of the “Minnesota Monarch,” as MTV's J.J. Jackson called him. (The nickname didn't catch on, though “His Royal Badness” did.) By the time Michael Jackson came out with his much-ballyhooed “Billie Jean” video, Prince was already MTV's signature artist (Sheffield 2017).

Sheffield’s analysis that the videos for “1999” and “Little Red Corvette” were filmed on the same day based on clothing is not accurate. “1999,” “Automatic,” and “Let’s Pretend We’re Married” were all filmed at the Minneapolis Armory at 500 South 6th Street in October 1982 (a display case in the Armory commemorates the filming). “Little Red Corvette” was filmed at the Lakeville, Florida Civic Center in late January 1983 while Prince was on tour with The Time and Vanity 6 (Turner 1983). Regardless, the videos are noteworthy for three reasons. First, Prince again is branding and controlling his image and look with consistency between his album cover, tour and videos. His hair, makeup, clothing, and stage sets are the same for all (Figure 30). Second, the videos appear to be the last that are filmed in Minnesota until Prince completes construction of his Paisley Park compound in 1987 (although the videos for “Purple Rain” and “Let’s Go Crazy” include footage from the movie filmed in Minneapolis). Finally, the videos mark the beginning of more defined, increasingly elaborate choreography, another element for which Prince would become well known. “Little Red Corvette” shows him doing a complicated James Brown-esque dance during the guitar solo, and “1999” opens with Prince, BrownMark and Dez dancing in unison. Prince and The Revolution perfected their onstage dancing in the live stage performances in their next endeavor.

“Baby I’m A Star”: Purple Rain

“Before Purple Rain, all the kids who came to First Avenue knew us, and it was just like a big, fun fashion show. The kids would dress for themselves and just try and look really cool. Once you got your thing right, you’d stop looking at someone else. You’d be yourself, and you’d feel comfortable. When the film first came out, a lot of tourists started coming. That was kind of weird, to be in the club and get a lot of ‘Oh! There he is!’ It felt a little strange. I’d be in there thinking, ‘Wow, this sure is different than it used to be.’” – Prince, 1985

With no number one hits and only one Top Ten album (1999), Prince pitched the idea of a major motion picture to his label. While initially unsure, Warner Bros. eventually backed the artist’s effort, and much of

xxxvi Brown was a dancer, and recounted: “Through my time with him, I’d witnessed the evaluation of Prince. He used to stand with his back to the audience. Then I joined the band, and I’m a dancer. Next think I knew, he was like, ‘I’mma wear you out tonight!’ and we were trying to outdo each other, leaping off the speaker stacks. He was a frickin’ tiger, a roaring lion onstage. You couldn’t stop him (Chick 2018: 62).”
1983 and early 1984 was spent writing, rehearsing, recording, and filming the movie Purple Rain. A local Minneapolis music landmark, First Avenue (701 North 1st Avenue; extant), played a prominent role in the movie and soundtrack, along with the city’s favorite musician. Both would become world famous and iconic as a result (Figure 31).

Prince was no stranger to First Avenue or its earlier incarnations. Owner Allan Fingerhut allowed him in as a teenager in the 1970s to see shows featuring national Black bands, an unusual occurrence at the time because Black artists were typically not allowed to play downtown clubs. But First Avenue’s location on the north edge of downtown, away from the rest of the city’s nightclub scene, made the venue “neutral ground” in a city where Blacks and Whites rarely socialized with each other. In March 1981, manager Steve McClellan booked Prince in the Mainroom during his Dirty Mind tour, a different story than his previous performance nearby at the Orpheum a year earlier. According to Cole, who mixed the sound for the concert, “That first Prince show (at First Avenue) was one of the best shows I ever saw. You could see him connecting. I got a sense that he felt like, ‘This is my audience.’” (Matos 2016; Light 2014: 9–10).

On August 3, 1983—three months before filming for the movie was set to begin—Prince and The Revolution, played a benefit concert for the Minnesota Dance Theatre, which was housed in the Hennepin Center for the Arts, located at 528 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis; extant), where the rockers prepared for dance scenes (choreographed by BrownMark) for their cinematic debut (Chick 2018: 62). The sold-out concert raised $23,000 for the dance troupe, and the nightclub provided an ideal backdrop for recording a new single that would go on to become Prince’s signature anthem and “one of popular music’s greatest landmarks” (Light 2014: 2–3). Although they had not heard the ballad before, “fans in attendance seemed to understand it was a landmark moment,” wrote one music journalist recounting that evening’s concert in the days following Prince’s death in 2016 (Riemenschneider 2016). Light characterizes the performance in his book, Let’s Go Crazy:

When [Prince] reaches the chorus, repeating the phrase “purple rain” six times, the crowd does not sing along. They have no idea how familiar those two words will soon become, or what impact they will turn out to have for the twenty-five-year-old man onstage in front of them. But it’s almost surreal to listen to this performance now, because while this thirteen-minute version of ‘Purple Rain’ will later be edited, with some subtle overdubs and effects added, this very recording—the maiden voyage of the song—is clearly recognizable as the actual ‘Purple Rain’, in the final form that will be burned into a generation’s brain, from the vocal asides to the blistering, high-speed guitar solo to the final, shimmering piano coda (Light 2014: 2–3) (Figure 32).

Employing a trick he learned from Moon, Prince brought in a recording truck for the evening, and at the helm was former Sound 80 Studio engineer David Z (Rivkin), the brother of Bobby Z, drummer for The Revolution. With the exception of 19-year-old guitarist Wendy Melvoin, who debuted with The Revolution that night, recording live was par for the course for the band members. Many did not realize, however, that that evening’s set would be featured on the soundtrack. Apparently neither did Prince, who had not “necessarily planned on using the First Avenue recordings on the actual album.” But when he listened to the tapes, he found that some of the new songs sounded good, in both performance and audio quality. Incredibly, not only “Purple Rain,” but also two other songs that were debuted that night—“I Would Die 4 U” and “Baby I’m a Star”—wound up on the final Purple Rain soundtrack (Light 2014: 6). While the live recording was used in the film and soundtrack, the footage used in the film was actually recorded later as
part of the overall filming: Prince and the band were lip-syncing to the previously recorded music.

Prince captured First Avenue’s magnetism and raw energy through the live recordings that ended up on the soundtrack, as well as in the filming for the movie. Over half of the semi-autobiographical film was shot in the club, with the backstage scenes filmed nearby at the Orpheum Theater. Although it was a relatively low-budget production ($7 million) with a rookie cast and crew—including Prince as the main character—the movie grossed $80 million at the box office. The release propelled Prince into superstardom. More than 20 million copies of the album were sold internationally by the fall of 1984, and it topped the Billboard charts for twenty-four weeks. As journalist and rock critic Alan Light remarked in Let’s Go Crazy: Prince and the Making of Purple Rain (2016): “Prior to this release, Prince was nowhere near a household name: while he had established himself in the R&B community, he had just one album that could be considered a mainstream hit, and no singles that had peaked above number six on the pop charts. He was shrouded in mystery, surrounded by rumors about his ethnic background and sexual preference, and had completely stopped talking to the press as of the release almost two years earlier of his previous album, 1999.”

First Avenue became similarly enshrined in popular culture, as author Rebecca Noran relayed in First Avenue and 7th St. Entry: Your Downtown Danceteria since 1970:

The success of the film brought an unprecedented amount of national attention to the club. Although it had always been the music that drew crowds to First Avenue, after Purple Rain was filmed it became something of a tourist club. . . . There was an undeniable influx of fans who had seen Apollonia speak the words “Everybody’s heard of First Avenue,” and they’d come down with demo tapes thinking they might get a chance to give one to Prince and catch their big break. The club was bombarded with calls from Prince fans. . . To this day [2000], First Avenue receptionists still get calls asking if Prince is going to be in that night or if they know how to reach him (Noran 2000: 22–23).

Although Purple Rain’s title track only reached number two, the two singles “When Doves Cry” and “Let’s Go Crazy” topped the charts. The critically acclaimed album garnered two Grammy awards and the film’s score won an Oscar for Best Original Song Score. Prince said of the album in 1986:

I think Purple Rain is the most avant-garde purple thing I’ve ever done. Just look at “When Doves Cry” and “Let’s Go Crazy.” Most black artist won’t try a groove like that. If more would, we’d

xxxvii Other key Purple Rain locations included rehearsal space at The Warehouse at 6651 Highway 7 in St. Louis Park (demolished), the house of Prince’s character “The Kid” (aka the “Purple Rain” house) at 3420 Snelling Avenue, Minneapolis (exterior shots only; the property is extant and was purchased by Prince when it went up for sale in 2015; he continued to own at the time of his passing); and Flying Cloud Warehouse at 6472 Flying Cloud Drive, Eden Prairie (interior for The Kid’s house; demolished). Limited portions of the movie were filmed in California. The videos for “Purple Rain” and “Let’s Go Crazy” consists of film footage from First Avenue. For a full listing of all filming locations, see PrinceVault.com/Purple Rain page under the “Shooting Schedule & Locations” heading. It is interesting to note that the exterior shots for Morris Day’s character’s apartment was located just a few blocks from Owen Husney’s office building, that the character Apollonia’s apartment was on Glenwood Avenue, near John Nelson’s apartment, and that the club Apollonia’s group performed in was called The Taste, which appears to be a reference to The Taste Show Lounge which was a major Black performance venue in downtown Minneapolis.

xxxviii “When Doves Cry” is notable for Prince’s innovated decision to drop the bass line from the song.
have more colorful radio stations. In the sixties, when everybody tried to be different, you had War and Santana, and Hendrix, and Sly, and James, and they were all uniquely different. Now, everyone just jumps on what they think are the hottest sounds... Sometimes I just wish that when I turn on the radio I could get that many different colors (Normant 1986).

*Purple Rain* has consistently ranked highly among the entertainment industry’s list of superlatives. The album’s accolades are summarized in *Let’s Go Crazy*:

In 1993, *Time* magazine ranked it the fifteenth greatest album of all time, and it placed eighteenth on VH1’s 100 Greatest Albums of Rock & Roll. *Rolling Stone* called it the second-best album of the 1980s and then placed it at number 76 on its list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time, saying that it is a record “defined by its brilliant eccentricities”; the magazine also included both ‘Purple Rain’ and ‘When Doves Cry’ high on its list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

In 2007, *Vanity Fair* labeled *Purple Rain* the best soundtrack of all time. . . . In 2008 *Entertainment Weekly* listed *Purple Rain* at number one on its list of the 100 best albums of the past twenty-five years, and in 2013 came back and pronounced it the second-greatest album of all time, behind only the Beatles’ *Revolver*, adding that *Purple Rain* might be the “sexiest album ever” (Light 2014: 8).

The album’s significance has not only been recognized in popular culture, but also by the National Recording Preservation Board, which was created by the Library of Congress in 2002. It is Prince’s only album to receive this distinction. In 2012, the organization listed *Purple Rain* in the National Recording Registry, a compilation of audio recordings that are “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant.” Works included in the registry are considered “of enduring importance to American culture and . . . in need of permanent preservation.” The following is excerpted from *Purple Rain’s* nominating essay:

Prince was already a hit-maker and a critically acclaimed artist when his sixth album, the soundtrack for his 1984 movie debut, launched him into superstardom. Earlier, he had played all the instruments on his records to get the sounds he wanted, but now he led an integrated band of men and women who could realize the dense, ambitious fusion that he sought, blending funk, synth-pop, and soul with guitar-based rock and a lyrical sensibility that mixed the psychedelic and the sensual. Prince experimented throughout the album, dropping the bass line from ‘When Doves Cry’ to fashion a one-of-a-kind sound, and mixing analog and electronic percussion frequently. Portions of ‘Purple Rain’ were recorded live at the First Avenue Club in Prince’s hometown of Minneapolis, and the success of the album served notice that the Twin Cities were a major center for pop music as numerous rock and R&B artists from the region emerged in its wake. Like much of Prince's other work, ‘Purple Rain’ was provocative and controversial, and some of its most explicit lyrics led directly to the founding of the Parents Music Resource Center (Library of Congress 2012).

As mentioned in the Library of Congress’s write up, the album received another type of notoriety – the explicit nature of the song “Darling Nikki” raised the ire Tipper Gore, wife of then Tennessee Senator Al Gore. Tipper Gore bought the *Purple Rain* soundtrack for her daughter and was shocked by the song’s lyrics upon hearing them. Gore helped form the Parents’ Music Resource Center (PMRC), along with Susan Baker (whose daughter asked her what a “virgin” was after hearing Madonna’s song “Like A
Virgin”), which took the issue up with the recording industry and Congress. The PMRC came up with the notorious “Filthy 15,” a list of the top fifteen songs that they felt glorified sex, violence, drug and alcohol use, and the occult. Prince holds the distinction of the only artist to appear twice on the list: he also wrote the song “Sugar Walls” for Sheena Easton. While artists such as Dee Snider from Twisted Sister, John Denver and Frank Zappa testified against what they saw as censorship, the Recording Industry Association of America convinced record labels to warn of potentially offensive content through the use of the Parental Advisory: Explicit Content warning label still in use today (Grow 2015) (Figure 33). Labelling had the opposite effect, typically resulting in increased sales numbers over albums that were not labeled. Prince and The Revolution embarked on a massive tour in support of thePurple Rainalbum, and with this effort, his superstardom was solidified. Prince and the Revolution, with opening act Sheila E., sold out major arenas across the United States. The tour began with seven shows in Detroit, a city with a fan base that supported Prince from his earliest recordings. He also played five arena shows in St. Paul at the Civic Center (demolished) between December 23 and 28, 1984. By early 1985, Prince was exhausted by the pace of the high-energy performances, bored by the repetitiveness of the show, and began to fear that his career would be defined by this album. He ended the tour six months early, and with his next release, once again reminded the world that he was a music innovator and would not rest on his rock-heavyPurple Rainlaurels (Nilsen 1999: 274–275; Brown 2017).

**Counterpoint: Around the World In a Day and Parade**

“But life ain’t really funky, unless it’s got that pop.” – Prince, “Pop Life,” 1984

Without his band members or record company’s knowledge, Prince began work on his next effort in 1984, during the height of thePurple Rainsuccess. Released two weeks after he abruptly ended hisPurple Raintour in April 1985, Around the World In A Day was a sharp counterpoint, not only in the album’s sound but also in its imagery and message (Figure 34):

With the momentum ofPurple Rainbehind it—or, more precisely, with the momentum still going full tilt—Around the World sold over two million copies; no Prince record would ever be as commercially successful in his lifetime. But the album didn’t capture the public imagination to anywhere near the degree thatPurple Rainhad. If anything, its lilting textures and cryptic lyrics served to confuse a large portion of the fans attracted by the girls-and-guitars spirit of the motorcycle riding, Jimi Hendrix-meets-James Brown image the movie had cultivated. Which, of course, seemed to be his intention, his only possible way out of competing with a world-changing, life-changing phenomenon. But it’s unfair to only consider the album as a defensive maneuver or a strategy to keep his future options open. It was also a brave and deeply personal project, exploring sounds and ideas that were almost shocking coming from a pop icon at his peak. “I sorta had an f-you attitude,” Prince told legendary Detroit DJ The Electrifying Mojo about his mood while recording Around the World in a Day, “meaning that I was making something for myself and my fans. And the people who supported me through the years—I wanted to give them something, and it was like my mental letter. And those people are the ones who wrote me back, telling me that they felt what I was feeling” (Light 2016).
The album was the first to be released on Prince's newly founded recording label, Paisley Park, a subsidiary to Warner Bros., and included two top ten hits: "Raspberry Beret" and "Pop Life." The album is also noteworthy for the song “The Ladder,” co-written with his father, John Nelson, with a string interlude composed by Lisa Coleman and Wendy Melvoin (Nilsen 1999: 280).

Primarily recording in California with some basic dubbing at the Washington Avenue Warehouse at 6953 Washington Avenue South in Eden Prairie (building extant; interior gutted), Prince again began work on his next album *Parade* just before the release of his previous work. The album is the soundtrack to his sophomore film, *Under the Cherry Moon* (1986; filmed in France). The soundtrack, released three months prior to the movie (which suffered at the box office), peaked at number 3 on the US Billboard chart and included Prince’s third Number One hit of his career, “Kiss.” The album was notable as the last album recorded with The Revolution, which he disbanded in 1986, and as his first collaboration on one of his releases with orchestral composer Clare Fischer. Prince had used Fischer’s arrangements on one of his side projects, The Family, and asked him to provide orchestration for all the songs on the album except “Kiss,” though he did not end up using them all. The album also marks the debut of Eric Leeds and Atlanta Bliss, who provided horns on the songs “Girls & Boys” and “Mountains,” the basic tracks of which were also laid down at the Washington Avenue Warehouse. The incorporation of orchestral elements into his synth-pop sounds, and his inclusion of horns which he previously eschewed, marks another step in the artist’s continual exploration of new musical sounds.

**Masterwork: Sign ‘O’ The Times**

“I hate the word ‘experiment’ – it sounds like something you didn't finish. Well, they have to understand that's the way to have a double record and make it interesting.” – Prince, 1990

The years of 1986 and 1987 were spectacularly prolific for this already prolific artist. With his songs in first and second place on the charts (“Kiss” and “Manic Monday” covered by The Bangles), he toured Europe, and wrote an amazing number of songs that came together first as the album *Dream Factory*. The songs were mainly collaborations with the members of The Revolution from the past five years, but once he disbanded the group, he made a clear break from them and their work, scrapping the album. He then moved on to manipulating his voice to a high-register and recording an album under the persona “Camille,” his feminine alter ego. He eventually also scrapped that album. His numerous side projects were ongoing. He began work on a new movie, *The Dawn* (never completed), while overseeing the design and construction of his new artist compound, Paisley Park, in Chanhassen. Prince then decided he would pull together various elements from all of these projects into a “three-LP, 22-track magnum opus titled *Crystal Ball*.” Warner Bros. did not feel the market would support such an expensive release, and told Prince no. While disappointed, he rechanneled his efforts into a new concept album that many critics consider to be his second masterpiece after *Purple Rain*. While the album was primarily recorded in California, it contains

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xxxix The album was recorded at five locations: live tracking was done for select songs during the *Purple Rain* tour at the St. Paul Civic Center, and other recordings occurred at the Flying Cloud Drive Warehouse and Prince’s Kiowa Trail home (all demolished). “Pop Life” was recorded at Sunset Sound in Los Angeles and “Temptation” was recorded at Capitol Studios in Hollywood.

xl In 1989, “Batdance” hit Number One, and the song “Cream,” released from *Diamonds and Pearls* in 1991, were Prince’s last Number One hits.
the first recordings from his state-of-the-art studio at his new home at 7141 Galpin Boulevard in Chanhassen (demolished) (Hermes 2017; George 2016).

The album was Prince’s first primarily solo effort since 1999, although sound engineer Susan Rogers was a key collaborator on developing the album’s sound and feel. Music journalist Will Hermes summarizes the album’s creation and result:

*Sign ‘O’ the Times* is Prince's recorded apex, the summation and greatest articulation of all the musical fusions he'd alchemized up to that point. It's the album where he does it all—combining his synth-drums and meta-funk explorations with psychedelia, rock-guitar heroics and mainstream pop on the order of 1999 and *Purple Rain*. Reflecting both hip-hop's early cutting edge and his own restless muse, with new twists on old themes, *Sign ‘O’ the Times* was at once more confident, rangy and visionary than its predecessors. It took Prince's beat-centered, future-forward songcraft not just to the next level but to multiple levels.

But unlike his earlier solo efforts, *Sign ‘O’ the Times* wasn't a record by an ambitious kid trying to make an impression. At 28, Prince had already made himself into a pop superstar (and movie star too), and he easily sold out arenas. In one sense, he had nothing to prove. Yet *Sign ‘O’ the Times* is the most varied, accomplished record of his prime 1980s period, a testament to the range of his gifts and the bold artistic ambition that gave his music shape.

The double LP, now titled *Sign ‘O’ the Times*, was stitched together carefully at Sunset Sound and finished in January 1987. "Sequencing a record with him was really extraordinary," Rogers says. "He put so much value in the sequence. Each side was like an act in a play: It had to have a beginning, middle and an end. Great artists understand that a work of art should give you a sense of momentum when you first encounter it, and a sense of momentum when you walk away from it."

The upshot was a record packed so full of groundbreaking ideas, reflecting both the mainstream moment and Prince's restless muse, that it was hard for some to wrap their heads around. "What people were saying about *Sign ‘O’ the Times* was, ‘There are some great songs on it, and there are some experiments on it,’” Prince told *Rolling Stone* in 1990. "I hate the word ‘experiment’ – it sounds like something you didn't finish. Well, they have to understand that's the way to have a double record and make it interesting." It's more than interesting – it's a pop-art landmark (Hermes 2017).

From the title track’s Run-DMC’s inspired minimalist rap sound to the RB-smoldering ballad “Adore” to the horn heavy “Housequake” to the whimsical “Starfish and Coffee,” the album’s sonic reach is expansive. The single “U Got the Look,” co-sung with Scottish artist Sheena Easton, shot to Number 2 on the Top 100 charts and included the sped-up vocals of Prince’s alter ego Camille. “Sign ‘O’ the Times” hit Number 3, and the album’s other release, “I Could Never Take the Place of Your Man” (written in 1982 with a definite 1999-feel to its sound) hit Number 10. While album sales were modest, the critical acclaim was clear. *Sign ‘O’ The Times* was the top pick on most critics’ “Best of” list for the year, as well as “Best Albums of the 1980s” or “Best Albums” of any decade list. Prince released a movie that mirrored the stage performance
from the tour, and filmed it at his new Paisley Park compound (Figure 35).

The year 1987 marks a major landmark in Prince’s life in many ways. The release of his second masterpiece *Sign ‘O’ The Time* bookended what most critics identify as Prince’s most commercially and critically successful era of his career, beginning in 1980 with the release of *Dirty Mind*. It is also the year that his new artist’s compound Paisley Park opened. The complex was a self-contained 55,000 square foot, $10 million creative-complex boasting two state-of-the-art recording studios, a 12,400-square-foot sound stage, rehearsal rooms/dance studios, performance area, common areas and offices. While he would still record at studios in California and New York and include live recordings from around the world on future albums, the majority of his studio work, from basic tracking to completion, from 1987 on occurred at Paisley Park. With the massive sound stage, Prince also filmed music videos and films, such as his third movie *Graffiti Bridge* (1991), within the compound’s walls.

The era from 1958 through 1987 includes key elements in Prince’s life, from his formative experiences through his two widely recognized masterpieces. The era encompasses his formative years from 1965, when he masters his first instrument (the piano) until 1976, when he enters into a contract with a professional manager. Unlike most children, Prince’s childhood was singularly focused on one thing: music. Whether teaching himself a wide range of instruments to learning how to write his own songs to performing in bands throughout Minneapolis to learning and listening in the Minneapolis's school music programs or those at The Way to learning studio recording techniques, Prince’s formative years were defined by learning and mastering. Through this effort, he was able to get management representation at age 18 and land a major recording contract the next year; record, perform, write and produce his studio albums; and change the sonic landscape by his early 20s. The era also includes his rise to superstardom and his most commercially and critically successful period, from 1980 when he released *Dirty Mind* through 1987, with the release of *Sign ‘O’ The Times*. While Prince would go on to produce numerous albums and side projects, and performed massive worldwide tours for another 29 years until his untimely death in 2016, his impact moving forward would never match that of his works between 1980 and 1987.

F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

Prince is a significant individual under Criterion B in the area of Performing Arts. Properties considered under the “Prince, 1958–1987” Multiple Property Documentation Form are those associated with the first twenty-nine years of the artist’s life. This period encompasses his early musical development, his creation of a new musical style in the late 1970s and early 1980s (the “Minneapolis Sound” as exhibited on *Dirty Mind* [1980]), his ascent to international fame following the release of *Purple Rain* (1984), through the completion of his other widely recognized masterpiece *Sign ‘O’ The Times* (1987). The decision to end the MPDF at the midway point of his career was based on the fact that the construction of Paisley Park in 1987 marked a turning point in Prince’s career, style, and process of creation. For example, prior to this time, he used private studio spaces to record basic tracking for many songs, and then would often take them to Los Angeles to do final recording and engineering. The MPDF as written reflects a desire to assess/evaluate the important places associated with the development of his career prior to that time. All properties will be evaluated for their National Register eligibility under Criterion B for their association with Prince. Criterion B applies to properties associated with significant individuals whose specific contributions to history can be
identified and documented. Although it is possible that some properties may be eligible under other National Register Criteria, those evaluations are not included in this study.

Criterion B guidance prepared by the National Park Service recommends looking at the productive years of an individual. However, guidance also indicates that properties associated with an individual’s formative or later years may qualify if the individual’s activities during that time were historically significant. In order to best assess the known properties associated with Prince’s formative and productive years up to the construction of Paisley Park, research on all known properties was conducted to prepare a comparative analysis. Through this effort, 51 Minnesota properties associated with Prince prior to the construction of Paisley Park were identified. Six Minnesota properties associated with Prince following the construction of Paisley Park were identified (see Table 1 and Map of Prince Properties in Additional Documentation). Further research into both eras may result in identification of additional properties associated with Prince’s formative and productive life. Additional information about the scope of survey, identification, and evaluation efforts can be found in Section H: Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods.

In addition to Prince’s birthplace and early residences, three property types with potential significance were identified:

- **Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations**: properties where Prince mastered song writing, key instruments, and dance/choreography.
- **Recording Locations**: properties where Prince recorded songs and albums and mastered recording techniques. Subtypes include Residential Studios, Commercial Studios, and Concert Venues.
- **Performance Locations**: properties where Prince performed live and in front of a camera. Subtypes include Concert Venues and Filming Locations.

Property types associated with Prince often blur traditional lines. For example, he recorded his music in every house he lived in as an adult, at live performances, and at professional studios, so instead of creating a “Studio” property type, they are grouped here as “recording locations.” Properties may also fall under more than one type. For example, the music club First Avenue is where Prince performed numerous live concerts, but it is also where the audio for three pivotal songs were recorded for the *Purple Rain* soundtrack, and the property served as a filming location for the movie. The audio and visual recordings were both used in music videos associated with the soundtrack and movie. Therefore, the evaluation of individual buildings may involve consideration under any or all of the three property types and/or more than one subtype. A list of properties known to fit within each property type is provided as part of the descriptions below. Additional information on these properties can be found in Table 1. Those marked with an asterisk (*) meet the Registration Requirements as presented. The others are either nonextant or are not yet evaluated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Only nine properties have been identified with an association with Prince that occurred more than 50 years ago. The National Register of Historic Places Evaluation Criteria therefore requires the application of Criteria Consideration G, which requires properties achieving significance within the last 50 years to have exceptional significance. The National Park Service recommends preparation of a Multiple Property Documentation Form as one way to evaluate groups of properties, including those with significance less than 50 years of age. The historic context provided in this MPDF demonstrates that Prince’s international
fame and influence on the Minneapolis and national music scene of the 1980s cannot be understated. Prior to and especially since the time of his passing, numerous books, articles and documentaries have been released evaluating his importance and influence in music and popular culture. Exhibits on his legacy have been created in Minnesota, Melbourne and Amsterdam, and scholarly conferences have been held in England and Minnesota. These publications and conferences confirm Prince’s exceptional importance due to his musical contributions and through the creation of an entirely new musical genre. Therefore, when considered eligible for listing pursuant to these registration requirements, the properties associated with him and the development of the Minneapolis Sound will meet the requirements of Criteria Consideration G.

**Name of Property Type: Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations**

**Description:** Buildings that served as Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations will have an association with Prince prior to and including 1987, but could date from any era. This property type is specific to locations where Prince mastered the skills needed for his craft, including songwriting, key instruments (vocals, piano, and guitar), and live performance (dancing ability and choreography). Because Prince’s most significant songs and albums were written and recorded in the same place, locations where Prince wrote significant songs are more appropriately evaluated under the Recording Location property type (see below). Due to Prince’s peripatetic adolescence and young adulthood, the length of his association with these properties might be a short number of months or years. Most properties will be within an urban setting, likely in Minneapolis or western suburbs such as St. Louis Park, Eden Prairie, Orono, and Chanhassen. Architectural styles and original functions will vary and do not factor into the potential significance of the property. Known extant examples include modest apartments, single-family residences, commercial, industrial, educational, and public buildings. In some cases these properties were owned or leased by Prince or his family, typically as residences. However, most are spaces owned or leased by others and simply utilized by Prince and his musical associates.

**Significance:** Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations where Prince mastered key instruments (vocals, piano, and guitar), songwriting skills, and the art of live performance are significant because they represent the key points in Prince’s formative years that led to his rapid rise to fame and influence, eventually transforming the sonic landscape of popular music. They also represent the places where he continued to expand his craft, and became a legend/icon. Because Prince was essentially self-taught, this mastery also provided a foundation for Prince’s personal drive to control every aspect of his sound and image. Although Prince might have learned and/or practiced these skills in numerous locations, only a select few will rise to the level of significance necessary for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Those that do will be well-documented through first-hand accounts of Prince’s activities.

**Registration Requirements:** Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations will be considered eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion B if they have direct associations with key points in Prince’s formative years and productive life through 1987, including the mastery of songwriting, dance and choreography, and key instruments (vocals, piano, and guitar). The properties must be well-documented as to their association with Prince and his mastery of the specific skill in that unique location. They must also retain sufficient integrity from the period Prince was associated with the property.

Integrity of these historic resources will vary. Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations must retain a setting similar to that present while Prince occupied them. If a resource has been moved, the move must
have been undertaken before or during the time period Prince was associated with the property. Because the properties are not being evaluated under Criterion C, more leeway is allowed in assessing integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. In general, the property should be recognizable by Prince or his associates from that era. The essential form, style, massing, and fenestration pattern that evoke the period Prince was associated with the building should remain intact. However, properties might be altered by changes to cladding materials, subordinate additions to the side or rear, and replacement of windows, doors, and storefronts. Alterations must be sympathetic and non-intrusive. Older buildings, those not owned by Prince or his immediate family, and those that have transferred ownership a number of times since Prince’s association are expected to have less integrity.

Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations – asterisked properties meet the Registration Requirements listed herein

- *Second childhood residence, 2620 8th Avenue North, Minneapolis (1965–ca.1972 or 1973)xli
- Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1138 Glenwood Avenue, Minneapolis (late 1960s–early 1970s)
- Charles Smith’s house, 927 Sheridan Avenue North, Minneapolis (ca. 1966–1972)
- Kenwood Elementary School, 2013 Penn Avenue South, Minneapolis (fall 1967-spring 1968; or just first half of 1968)
- Aunt Mary Hill’s house, 1209 Penn Avenue North, Minneapolis (1960s–1970s)
- Lincoln Junior High School, 2131 North 12th Avenue, Minneapolis (1969–1970)
- Spirit of the Lord Church, 1001 Penn Avenue North, Minneapolis (early 1970s)
- Bryant Junior High School, 310 East 38th Street, Minneapolis (1970–1972)
- John Nelson’s house, 539 Newton Avenue North, Minneapolis (ca. 1973)
- Aunt Olivia (Nelson) Lewis’s house, 3837 South 4th Avenue, Minneapolis (ca. 1973 and 1974 or 1975)
- Terry Jackson’s house, 1248 Russell Avenue North, Minneapolis (ca. 1972–1976)
- André Cymone’s house, 1244 Russell Avenue North, Minneapolis (ca. 1972–1976 [rehearsing]; ca.1975–1976 [residence])
- The Way Community Center, 1900 block of Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis (late 1960s–early 1970s)
- Minnesota Dance Theater, Oliver Baptist Church at corner of 4th Street Southeast and 13th Avenue, Minneapolis (1970–1971) [Nonextant]
- Minnesota Dance Theater, Horst Building, corner of 4th Street and Central Avenue, Minneapolis (early to mid-1970s)
- Central High School, 3416 4th Avenue South, Minneapolis (1972–1976) [Nonextant]
- *Sound 80, 2709 East 25th Street, Minneapolis (December 29, 1976 through fall 1977)
- Apartment, 2012 Aldrich Avenue South, Minneapolis (late 1976–summer 1978)
- U-Warehouse, 400 East Lake Street, Minneapolis (1978)

xli Prince’s first childhood home at 915 Logan Avenue North is not listed since it is demolished and pre-dates his musical practice.
Name of Multiple Property Listing

- Del's Tire Mart, 1409 2nd Street South, Minneapolis (1978) [Nonextant]
- Pepe Willie’s house, 3809 South Upton Avenue, Minneapolis (1978–1979)
- Minnesota Dance Theater, 528 Hennepin Avenue, Hennepin Center for the Arts, Minneapolis (1983)
- The Warehouse, 6651 Highway 7, St. Louis Park (1983) [Nonextant]
- Flying Cloud Drive Warehouse, 9025 Flying Cloud Drive, Eden Prairie (1983–1984) [Nonextant]

Name of Property Type: Recording Locations (Private Studios, Commercial Studios, and Concert Venues)

Description: This property type includes places where Prince recorded (and often wrote) songs and albums of his own and music associated with the Minneapolis Sound. It also includes locations where Prince learned to record and mix music, ultimately producing his own records and others associated with the Minneapolis Sound. Buildings that served as Recording Locations will have an association with Prince prior to and including 1987, but could date from any era. Architectural styles will vary and do not factor into the potential significance of the property. Known examples of Recording Locations in Minnesota can be grouped into the following three subtypes:

Private Studio: Beginning in approximately 1978 when Prince moved to his first house (5215 France Avenue South, Minneapolis), he established a recording studio in the basement. All of his subsequent residences included an in-home recording studio, where he recorded major albums and songs. Although Prince’s first residential studio was located in an urban setting, by late 1979 or early 1980 Prince moved his residential studio to suburban settings. This allowed him more privacy after his first albums and the freedom to record and play music loud at night without disturbing his neighbors. The residences were either rented by or owned by Prince. Prince also recorded at several warehouses that he rented; most also served as rehearsal locations. All known examples of Recording Locations: Private Studios are (or were) single-family residences or warehouse spaces augmented with a space for playing instruments and recording and/or mixing the sound. This space would have originally held equipment similar to that found in a commercial control room. For example, his home studio in Orono included a 16-track recording unit, and his Kiowa Trail home had an Ampex MM1200 24-track recorder with a Soundcraft 3B console. Unfortunately, although one of the known residences is extant, none of his residential studio spaces are known to survive (the studio in the France Avenue house was gutted and remodeled, and the Orono and two Chanhassen residences were all demolished). Similarly, two of the three known warehouse studio locations have been demolished; only the Washington Avenue Warehouse building is extant, and the interior recording spaces are nonextant.

Commercial Studios: Prince also used professional recording studios. Known commercial studios where Prince recorded and learned recording techniques in Minnesota include Cookhouse Studio (as a session musician with the band 94 East in 1976), two Moon Sound Studio locations (recording with Champagne and working with Chris Moon) and Sound 80 (demo tapes and singles with 94 East and the Lewis Connection in 1977). All are located in Minneapolis. Other commercial studios with associations with Prince may still be identified. These studios are typically located in commercial or industrial buildings in urban settings. Primary interior recording areas comprise one or more studio spaces, each of which might include...
a “live room” (where the music is performed) and a control room.

**Concert Venues:** In addition to using residential and commercial recording studios, Prince employed mobile recording studios to capture live performances for albums. The only known extant location where he did this was also one of his most important recordings: the live recording of the world premiere of the song “Purple Rain,” recorded at a benefit concert on August 3, 1983, at First Avenue. The songs “Baby I’m A Star” and “I Would Die 4 U” were also recorded live at that performance, and were included on the album Purple Rain. If any other Recording Locations: Concert Venues survive, they would likely be located within schools, theaters, or clubs in urban settings.

**Significance:** Recording Locations are considered significant under Criterion B for their association with Prince when they are locations where Prince recorded songs or albums that were important to the development of the Minneapolis Sound and/or were critically or commercially significant within his solo career. Critically or commercial significant solo albums during the period of significance include the following: *Dirty Mind* (1980), *Controversy* (1981), 1999 (1982), *Purple Rain* (1984), *Around the World in a Day* (1985), *Parade* (1986), and *Sign O’ The Times* (1987). Because Prince typically wrote the songs as an integral part of the recording process, by default Recording Locations also include the locations where the songs were written. Recording Locations are also significant if they are where Prince mastered studio engineering techniques. This skill was a key component in his ability to control and create his own sound at a very young age, since he did not have to rely on producers or engineers who could have tried to keep his sound within industry standards for Black artists. Recording Locations falling under the subtype Concert Venues may also be significant under the Performing Location—Concert Venue property subtype if the recording was done in front of a live audience.

**Registration Requirements:** Recording Locations will be considered eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion B if they have a direct association with Prince prior to and including 1987 and are well-documented as to their use as a recording location for songs or albums important to the development of the Minneapolis Sound, for critically and/or commercially significant songs or albums, or for Prince’s mastery of studio engineering techniques. The properties must retain sufficient integrity from the period Prince was associated with the property.

Integrity of these historic resources will vary. Recording Locations must retain a setting similar to that present while Prince occupied them. If a resource has been moved, the move must have been undertaken before or during the time period Prince was associated with the property. Because the properties are not being evaluated under Criterion C, more leeway is allowed in assessing integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. In general, the property should be recognizable by Prince or his associates from that era. The essential form, style, massing, and fenestration pattern that evoke the period Prince was associated with the building should remain intact. However, properties might be altered by changes to cladding materials, subordinate additions to the side or rear, and replacement of windows, doors, and storefronts. Alterations should be sympathetic and non-intrusive. Residential and commercial studios might retain sufficient integrity with additional exterior modifications if the primary interior recording areas are intact. Studios do not need to retain the recording equipment used by Prince. Older buildings, commercial studios and concert venues, and buildings that were not owned by Prince or that have transferred ownership a number of times since Prince’s association with the building are also expected to have less integrity.
Recording Location: Private Studios - asterisked properties meet the Registration Requirements listed herein

- Residence and studio, 5215 France Avenue South, Minneapolis (summer 1978–1979) (Interior nonextant)
- Residence and studio, 680 North Arm Drive, Orono (late 1979–very early 1981) [Nonextant]
- Residence and Studio, 9401 Kiowa Trail, Chanhassen (Jan 1981–Jan 1985) [Nonextant]
- Residence and Studio, 7141 Galpin Boulevard, Chanhassen (November 1985–2000) [Nonextant; demolished 2005]
- The Warehouse, 6651 Highway 7, St. Louis Park (1983) [Nonextant]
- Washington Avenue Warehouse, 6953 Washington Avenue South, Eden Prairie (July 1985–March 1987) [Building extant; interior studio space nonextant]

Recording Location: Commercial Studios

- Cookhouse Studio, 2541 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis (December 1975-January 1976)
- A.S.I. Studio, 711 West Broadway Avenue, Minneapolis (early 1976) [Nonextant]
- Moon Sound Studio, 4937 28th Avenue South, Minneapolis (First half of 1976)
- Moon Sound Studio, 2828 Dupont Avenue (late 1976 - 1977) [Nonextant]
- American Artists Studio/Owen Husney's studio, 430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis (1976-1979) [Building listed on the National Register for other associations; studio nonextant]
- *Sound 80, 2709 East 25th Street, Minneapolis (December, 1976 through fall 1977)

Recording Location: Concert Venue

- *Sam's/First Avenue, 701 North 1st Avenue, Minneapolis (various concerts in the 1980s and in 2006, August 1983 performance and recording, filming 1983)

Name of Property Type: Performance Locations

Description: Buildings that served as Performance Locations will have an association with Prince prior to and including 1987, but could date from any era. Architectural styles will vary and do not factor into the potential significance of the property. This property type is specific to visual performances, whether live (as in a concert) or filmed (as in a movie or music video). Known extant examples in Minnesota can be grouped into the following two subtypes:

Concert Venues – Concert venues are places where Prince performed live in front of an audience. These include community centers, schools, theaters, bars, and clubs. None of these buildings will have been owned by Prince (his Paisley Park and the Glam Slam would both come after 1987). Most properties will be within an urban setting, likely in Minneapolis or St. Paul. Depending on the building’s original function, the primary interior space will include a place for a raised stage and an audience. These areas might be one single large room or could comprise a more formal performance layout such as an auditorium adjacent to
the state and stage house. In some cases, live performances were filmed for incorporation into movies and/or videos, but the primary purpose of the event was the live performance (notably for the movie *Purple Rain*).

**Filming Venues** – Numerous properties and landscapes have served as filming venues for Prince’s movies and music videos. For the purposes of this MPDF, this subtype includes those properties that served solely as backdrops to the performance (e.g., the exterior of a Minneapolis house featured prominently in *Purple Rain*) or set locations (i.e., buildings where a temporary set was constructed for the purpose of filming a movie or video), rather than those that held a live performance that was also filmed (see the Concert Venue subtype). Properties could be in an urban or suburban setting and include warehouses, theaters, landscapes, streetscapes, and armories. Most of *Purple Rain* was filmed in Minnesota, at multiple locations. (Prince’s other pre-1987 movie, *Under the Cherry Moon*, was filmed primarily in France.) Five videos are believed to have been filmed in Minnesota prior to 1987: “Controversy” and “Sexuality” in an unknown location in October 1981 and “1999,” “Automatic,” and “Let’s Pretend We’re Married” in the Minneapolis Armory in October 1982. It is not known whether any of the sets used for Prince’s videos exist.

**Significance:** Due to the extremely brief association of performance venues with Prince, their significance may be difficult to assess. Concert Venues associated with Prince’s live performances are significant because they represent the most public location in which Prince interacted personally with his fans, received immediate feedback on his music, and exhibited his high-energy performances. Concert Venues where Prince performed a single night would not typically rise to the level of significance necessary for listing on the National Register unless the performance itself is well-documented as a key point in his career or in the development of the Minneapolis Sound. Similarly, Filming Venues are significant because they represent Prince’s efforts to reach a diverse audience through national distribution of the movie or music video. Prior to 1987, the movie *Purple Rain* and music videos for “1999” and “Little Red Corvette” were important vehicles for Prince’s rise to fame, including his image and musical genre. Although a number of Filming Venues might have gained notoriety for their appearance in one of Prince’s movies or music videos, they will not typically rise to the level of significance necessary for listing on the National Register simply because they are recognizable. The property itself must have played an important part in the movie or video.

**Registration Requirements:** Performance Locations will be considered eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion B if they have a well-documented and direct association with Prince prior to and including 1987. Concert Venues will be considered significant if they served as a regular live performance space or when a particular live performance is well-documented as being significant to the development of the Minneapolis Sound or within a significant era of Prince’s career. Filming Venues are considered significant only when the property is a regularly or prominently featured location in a critically or commercially significant movie or music video. Performance Locations must retain sufficient integrity from the period Prince was associated with the property.

Integrity of these historic resources will vary. Performance Locations must retain a setting similar to that present while Prince performed in them. If a resource has been moved, the move must have been

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\[xlii\] For a full listing of all filming locations associated with *Purple Rain*, which was the major film he recorded in Minnesota during this era, see the *Purple Rain* webpage under Films & Videos/Movies on the PrinceVault.com website - http://princevault.com/index.php?title=Film:_Purple_Rain
undertaken before or during the time period Prince was associated with the property. Because the properties are not being evaluated under Criterion C, more leeway is allowed in assessing integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. In general, the property should be recognizable by Prince or his associates from that era. The essential form, style, massing, and fenestration pattern that evoke the period Prince was associated with the building should remain intact. However, properties might be altered by changes to cladding materials, subordinate additions to the side or rear, and replacement of windows, doors, and storefronts. Alterations should be sympathetic and non-intrusive. A property might retain sufficient integrity with additional exterior modifications if primary interior performance spaces are relatively intact. Performance Locations do not need to retain the equipment or sets used by Prince for filming. Older buildings, commercial studios and concert venues, and buildings that were not owned by Prince or that have transferred ownership a number of times since Prince’s association with the building are also expected to have less integrity.

Performance Location: Concert Venues - asterisked properties meet the Registration Requirements listed herein

- The Way Community Center, 1900 Block of Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis (1960s and 1970s) [Nonextant]
- Capri Theater, 2027 W Broadway Ave, Minneapolis (January 5 and 6, 1979)
- *Sam's/First Avenue, 701 North 1st Avenue, Minneapolis (various concerts in the 1980s, August 1983 performance, filming 1983)
- Orpheum Theater, 910 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis (1980; 1983)
- Prom Center, 1190 University Avenue, St. Paul (1983, 1984, 1985) [Nonextant]
- St. Paul Civic Center, corner of Kellogg Boulevard and West 7th Street, St. Paul (1984, 1986, 1990) [Nonextant]
- Rupert's, 5400 Wayzata Boulevard, Golden Valley (1987 and 1990) [Nonextant]
- Fine Line Music Café, 318 North 1st Avenue, Minneapolis (1987) [Interior Nonextant]

Performance Location: Filming Venues

- Soundstage, location unknown in Minneapolis (October 1981)
- Minneapolis Armory, 500 South 6th Street, Minneapolis (November 1981)
- *Sam's/First Avenue, 701 North 1st Avenue, Minneapolis (various concerts in the 1980s, August 1983 performance, filming 1983)
- Orpheum Theater, 910 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis (1980; 1983)
- Flying Cloud Drive Warehouse, 6472 Flying Cloud Drive, Eden Prairie (1983-1984) [Nonextant]
- Purple Rain house, 3420 Snelling Avenue, Minneapolis (1983)

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The context is limited to Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and the southwestern suburbs of Orono, Eden Prairie,
Wayzata, St. Louis Park, and Chanhassen. He did live in California occasionally, and did record his first two albums and portions of his albums between 1981 and 1987 there, his primary and most significant locations are in Minnesota. It was beyond the scope of this research effort to consider properties in California.

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS
(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

Two of Prince Rogers Nelson’s childhood homes (2620 8th Avenue North and 539 Newton Avenue North) are located within the Area of Potential Effects for a federal undertaking. Originally determined not eligible as part of historic property identification efforts, their association with Prince suggested a closer evaluation of their National Register eligibility was warranted, especially following his unexpected death in 2016. Because Prince’s creative process (writing, recording, and performance) changed with the construction of Paisley Park in 1987, it was decided to create a context and MPDF document to better compare and analyze properties leading up to that year. Prior to creating studio space at Paisley Park, Prince would use private studios or home studios to lay down basic tracking, and then finish recording songs in professional studios, typically in California. After constructing Paisley Park, he did most of his recording at the property. Also, while he did perform at other locations, his use of a singular, private space as a performance and filming location stands in contrast to such endeavors prior to its construction. The decision to separate out the pre-Paisley Park years follows National Park Service guidance for properties associated with significant individuals (Criterion B):

Each property associated with an important individual should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person's historic contributions. The best representatives usually are properties associated with the person's adult or productive life. Properties associated with an individual’s formative or later years may also qualify if it can be demonstrated that the person’s activities during this period were historically significant or if no properties from the person's productive years survives. Length of association is an important factor when assessing several properties with similar associations.

A community or State may contain several properties eligible for associations with the same important person, if each represents a different aspect of the person's productive life. A property can also be eligible if it has brief but consequential associations with an important individual.

Research was conducted to identify properties with Prince in order to complete the comparative analysis and to determine the different aspects of Prince’s formative and productive life prior to the construction of Paisley Park. Through this effort, 51 properties associated with Prince up to 1987 have been identified. Along with Paisley Park, 5 other post-1987 properties were identified, though further research into both eras may result in identification of more (see Table 1). The properties in Table 1 were identified through primary resources, such as Prince’s partially completed autobiography, property deeds, census records, city directories and oral interviews with Prince’s family and associates; and secondary sources such as
biographies (see Major Bibliographical References).

Half the 1958-1987 era properties identified to date have been destroyed, demolished or extensively remodeled to the point that they cannot convey the time period with which they were associated with Prince. This includes some of the most significant properties associated with his productive solo years, including his home studios where he recorded his most important albums between *Dirty Mind* (1981) and *Sign O’ The Times* (1987). This loss of significant resources suggests careful consideration of properties associated with Prince’s formative years (those where he mastered the skills necessary for a career in music) and the need to consider not just Prince’s solo career but his participation and influence in the creation of the “Minneapolis Sound” in the late 1970s and 1980s. Although Prince’s length of association with Paisley Park extended through the vast majority of his productive life, the modest properties associated with Prince’s upbringing in Minneapolis’s Northside neighborhood tie him to the area’s African-American history and the musical heritage of the Twin Cities. The properties where he learned and mastered industry skills, including studio recording, shaped his decisions to buck music industry trends by telling Warner Bros. at age 19 that he didn’t want a producer or to be forced to alter his “sound” in order to fit industry standards, which would have kept him segregated to Black audiences.

In considering the National Park Service’s guidance, research was conducted on other Criterion B properties across the nation, and several “formative” properties were identified. Numerous presidential boyhood homes are listed, as it seems the National Register values the locations where a president was raised as a connection to their formative years and how that shaped their lives. The suffragette Susan B. Anthony’s childhood home in New York, portrait artist T.C. Steele’s childhood home in Indiana, and writer Wright Morris’s childhood home in Nebraska are all listed on the National Register as the places where these individuals learned their craft (Steele) or, an even more nebulous concept, developed their ideals and beliefs that were represented in their later work (Anthony and Morris). Each of these individuals also have properties associated with their adult “productive life” located in the same states as their childhood homes listed on the National Register, so they are not cases where no other properties survive. Johnny Cash’s boyhood home was recently listed on the National Register for association with Cash because “the property and the surrounding landscape had a profound impact on Johnny Cash’s later career as seen in his later music and in various recounting of his childhood in Dyess” (Salo et al. 2018). In the Cash example, however, there are no other extant properties in Arkansas associated with the singer/songwriter. The bulletin states that properties associated with formative years may qualify if the activities were historically significant, but does not define specifies what “historically significant” means in this context. In all these cases, as well as the presidential examples, it was argued that the historically significant events during the formative years were the mastering of a craft or the development of ideas that were key to their later, influential works.

While it appears length of association is valued in evaluating properties under Criterion B, in reality, properties associated with the formative years of significant individuals often are not always those with the longest associations. In the examples above, Steele and Cash stayed in one home throughout their entire childhood; however, such a stretch in one childhood residence seems to be the exception to the rule. Anthony’s association with her childhood home, where she developed her social ideals on gender equality, was only five years due to financial hardships that caused her family to move. Yet even with this shorter association and connection to the nebulous concept of forming beliefs and ideas, it was deemed worthy of
recognition. The National Register therefore provides the flexibility to look at the unique stories for each significant person, and make a case regarding what properties best represent them and their contributions. In other words, the “brief but consequential” length of time can be valued as equally as the “length of association” if the location was key in the individual’s development.

The evaluation of significance was based on the historic context developed herein in which the key elements of Prince’s formative and productive years through 1987 were identified. When applied to the properties identified to date, one formative property clearly meets the registration requirements for Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations: his childhood home at 2620 8th Avenue North, where he mastered the piano, developed singing and performance techniques, and began developing the art of songwriting. As argued herein, without the mastering of key instruments so that he could write and perform all songs by himself and without mastering studio engineering, he would not have been able to have complete control over his sound at such a young age, which allowed him to create the Minneapolis Sound. His association with this property is approximately seven years from age six through twelve, the longest association during his formative years.

The Newton Avenue house does not appear to meet the registration requirements. While Prince did live there and most likely practiced and continued to hone his crafts on the piano and guitar, it appears his time and association at this location was brief and possibly sporadic, so it does not appear to be a significant formative year property, such as the 8th Avenue North house. The other formative year properties identified to date were not fully evaluated under the registration requirements of this document; however, based on a preliminary analysis, it does not appear that most will meet the requirements.

Two properties associated with his productive years prior to 1987 clearly meets the registration requirements for both Recording Locations and Performance Locations. Sound 80, where he mastered studio recording and producing while under contract with his first professional management company, Owen Husney's American Artists Management. This was a critical step in his development as an artist, building from his time with Chris Moon at Moon Sound Studios, for without mastering studio engineering, he would not have been able to have complete control over his sound at such a young age, which allowed him to create the “Minneapolis Sound” a few short years later. Also, Sound 80 is the only extant recording studio in Minnesota from this era where he recorded as a Warner Bros. recording artist. First Avenue at 701 North First Avenue was the recording studio (via a mobile recording station) for three songs from his most famous, commercially successful and influential album, Purple Rain. The song “Purple Rain” was recorded here, along with two other tracks from the album of the same name, which won an Oscar in 1985 for Best Original Song Score. First Avenue is therefore not just one of the few extant recording locations in Minnesota for the era in which Prince achieved his fame and influence, it is where he recorded the song with which he is most associated. It is also significant as a Performance Location for its association with Prince for the frequency of his performances at the venue during this period. His association with these properties meet the “brief but consequential” consideration for Criterion B properties.

In total, the three properties that clearly meet the registration requirements represent approximately only four percent of the properties identified with Prince for the pre-Paisley Park years. Since likely only Paisley Park will be eligible for its association with Prince between 1987–2016, the four properties total for the state will equal about seven percent of the known properties associated with him. For such an influential and
famous individual as Prince, with a formative and productive period spanning almost 50 years and continued residency in one state, four is an appropriate number of properties to illustrate his impact in music and entertainment, as well as his connection to the city of Minneapolis.

When considering an individual of Prince’s international fame and influence, combined with his length of association with one state – Minnesota, where he lived and worked almost exclusively for his entire life of 57 years – it is argued here that a more inclusive application of Criterion B is needed. Having multiple properties associated with Prince and ones tied to his formative and productive years does not diminish their value, unless an attempt is made to find every place associated with him significant. If the criteria presented here is applied inclusively, several properties from throughout his life can be recognized, and his story and connection from the Northside to Paisley Park can be told. It was based on this more inclusive, but not excessive, approach that the significance statements for the identified property types were developed.

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Figure 1: The evolution of Prince’s Love Symbol

(Lane 2016)
Figure 2. Webster, Bienville, and Lincoln Parishes, Louisiana, where Prince’s grandparents were born

(Geology.com 2018)
Figure 3: The Great Migration

(U.S. Census Bureau 2012)
Figure 4. Location of Minneapolis’s Northside, Seven Corners, and Southside Neighborhoods

(Schmidt 1937)
Figure 5. John L. Nelson

Left: John Nelson working at Honeywell (Prince 2019: 102); Right: Prince Rogers Trio, late 1940s. John Nelson at piano; Fred Anderson (future Prince collaborator André Cymone’s father) on bass, other band members unknown (John Glanton Collection; Hennepin County Library)
Figure 6. Mattie Della (Shaw) Nelson

Top; The Shaw Family (from Mattie’s niece Shauntel Manderville’s Facebook page accessed July 29, 2017); Bottom: Mattie (Shaw) Nelson, October 1958 (Prince 2019: 81)
### Figure 7: Certificate of Marriage for John Nelson and Mattie Shaw

Figure 8. Prince’s early childhood

Top left: John Nelson with Prince (Skipper) on his lap and cousin Charles immediately to the left
Top Right: Edna Shaw (aunt), with Prince and Frank Shaw (grandfather), circa 1959, location unknown
(both from Charles Smith Twitter Account @ChazzSmith4; accessed July 2017)
Bottom: Mattie, pregnant with Tyka, and Prince at the Logan house May 1960 (Tyka Nelson’s Instagram
Account @tykanelson1999; accessed May 2018).
Figure 9. Prince’s second childhood house (ages 6–12)
2620 8th Avenue North, Minneapolis
Figure 10: Prince Nelson in 5th grade

Prince Nelson (red circle) in Mrs. Rader’s 5th grade class at John Hay Elementary, 1968–1969 School Year. His cousin Denise Smith sits behind him

(Minneapolis Star Tribune, July 28, 2016)
After moving in to his father’s apartment when he was twelve, Prince moved to the Minneapolis Southside neighborhood to live with his Aunt Olivia Lewis at 3837 South 4th Avenue between the ages of thirteen and sixteen and to attend school. He also lived with his father at 539 Newton Avenue North after December 1972, between the ages of fourteen and fifteen, going back and forth between the homes.

Figure 11. Prince’s residences, early to mid 1970s
Figure 12. Bernadette Anderson outside her home at 1244 Russell Avenue North

According to Prince, he moved into the Anderson home circa 1975 when he was sixteen (Graustark 1983; photo from People Magazine 1984).
Prince, 1958-1987

Figure 13. Prince and his cousin Charles Smith performing in the band Grand Central

Charles “Chazz” Smith (Prince’s cousin) on drums and Prince on guitar, early 1970s at the Plymouth Community Center (Prince 2019: 110).
Figure 14. The Way Community Center

The Way was located at 1913 Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis (demolished) (Sturdevant 2017). Prince and other Northside kids listened to The Way’s house band, The Family, and played the various instruments the institution provided. Sonny Thompson was a member of The Family, and became Prince’s mentor and future collaborator.
Figure 15: Pepe Willie, circa 1976 (Dyes 2013)
Figure 16. The band Grand Central, circa 1974-1975.

From left, Linda Anderson, André (Cymone) Anderson, Morris Day (who replaced Charles Smith on drums), Terry Jackson, Prince (approximately age 16), and William (Hollywood) Doughty outside the Anderson home (Star Tribune, November 1, 2017).
Location of Prince’s early recordings as a studio musician with Pepe Willie’s band, 94 East. The original address for Cookhouse was 2541 Nicollet Avenue South; the building now houses Creation Audio and the address is 2543 Nicollet Avenue South (Sturdevant 2015). The building previously housed Kay Bank Studio, where the founders of Sound 80 met.
Figure 18. Fashion show with Prince (keyboards) André Cymone (Anderson) (bass), and Morris Day (drums) performing

(Charles Chamblis, Minnesota Historical Society Collection I.368.127, circa 1975)
Figure 19. Chris Moon and Moon Sound Studio on South 28th Avenue

Moon Sound Studio’s owner Chris Moon, early 1970s (NumeroGroup Blog 2013); and Moon Sound studio location near Lake Nokomis where Prince first met Moon in 1976 (4937 South 28th Avenue, Minneapolis)
**Figure 20. Prince at the new Moon Sound Studio, circa late 1976**

Promotional photographs of Prince playing all the instruments at the new Moon Sound studio at 2828 Dupont Avenue South (demolished), circa late 1976 (Princesongs.org; Husney 2018).
An eighteen-year-old Prince Rogers Nelson playing piano and drums in Studio 1 at Sound 80 while recording his demo tapes that landed him a contract with Warner Bros. (Whitman 2017).
Figure 22. Promotional Press Packet Photos of Prince, 1977

(Whitman 2019)
Figure 23. Prince with Warner Bros. Executives and manager Owen Husney (second from right), June 25, 1977

Even though the caption lists Prince’s age as seventeen, he turned nineteen on June 7, 1977 (Kissell 2016)
Figure 24. Prince recording his debut album in Studio 1 of Sound 80, September 1977

A nineteen-year-old Prince (recording only under his first name) returned to Sound 80 in September 1977 to begin recording of his debut album for Warner Bros., For You (Prince 2019: 125; 153). The album was completed at The Record Plant in Sausalito, California.
Figure 25. Prince at the Capri Theater, January 5, 1979

From left, André Cymone, Matt Fink, Prince and Dez Dickerson
(Jon Bream Twitter Account @jonbream, Accessed January 5, 2018).
Figure 26. Prince’s first national tour, 1979–1980, including opening for Rick James, 1980

(Prince.org, 2017)
Figure 27. *Dirty Mind* Album Images

(Allen Beaulieu, 1980)
Figure 28. Concert Poster for Prince’s first show at Sam’s (later renamed First Avenue) on March 9, 1981

(Cole 2018).
Figure 29. Image clips from the “Controversy” (left) and “Automatic” videos (filmed October 1981)

Prince combined religious and licentious imagery and lyrics in his releases for his third studio album, *Controversy* (PrinceVault.com, 2018)
Figure 30. 1999 branding in video, tour (Detroit) and single release cover, 1982

(Allen Beaulieu, 1982)
Figure 31. First Avenue, 701 North 1st Avenue, Minneapolis, circa 1986

(Matos 2016)
Figure 32. Recording of the song *Purple Rain* at First Avenue on August 3, 1983

Still images from the video recording of new guitarist for The Revolution, Wendy Melvoin, and Prince performing the world debut of the song *Purple Rain* at First Avenue. The live recording, captured through the use of a mobile recording station, was used on the final soundtrack and in the film (Hamish 2015; Light 2014).
Figure 33. Parental Advisory label

The Parental Advisory Label was created in part from outrage over the lyrics of Prince’s song “Darling Nikki” on the Purple Rain Soundtrack and the song “Sugar Walls” that he wrote for Sheena Easton.
Figure 34. The psychedelic album artwork for *Around The World In A Day*, 1985

(Illustrated by Doug Henders, 1985)
Figure 35. Album cover and movie poster for *Sign ‘O’ The Times*, 1987

(Chesterton 2017)
### Table 1. Known Properties associated with Prince

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Dates with Prince</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Existing/ Demolished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Mt. Sinai Hospital</td>
<td>Chicago Avenue between 22nd and 24th Streets, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Existing; extensively remodeled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Apartment</td>
<td>2201 5th Avenue South #203, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Residence - infancy</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 First childhood residence</td>
<td>915 Logan Avenue North, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1959-1965</td>
<td>Residence - infancy - 6 years old</td>
<td>Demolished in 1995; new home built on lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Second childhood residence</td>
<td>2620 8th Avenue North, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1965-c.1973</td>
<td>Residence - 6-12 years old; mastered the piano, began song writing, and likely began guitar playing</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Seventh Day Adventist Church</td>
<td>1138 Glenwood Avenue, Minneapolis</td>
<td>late 1960s-early 1970s</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Charles Smith's house</td>
<td>927 Sheridan Avenue North, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1960s-1970s</td>
<td>Cousin Charles (Chazz) Smith's house; band rehearsals</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Kenwood Elementary School</td>
<td>2013 Penn Avenue South, Minneapolis</td>
<td>Either fall 1967-spring 1968; or just first half of 1968 school year</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Aunt Mary Hill's house</td>
<td>1209 Penn Avenue North, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1960s-1970s</td>
<td>Aunt Mary (Prince's grandmother’s sister) often cared for and looked after Prince, Charles and other kids in the family. Had an organ that Prince played constantly when visiting.</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>School, including school music programs; attends with André Cymone</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Spirit of the Lord Church</td>
<td>1001 Penn Avenue North, Minneapolis</td>
<td>Early 1970s</td>
<td>Grand Central band practice location</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Bryant Junior High School</td>
<td>310 East 38th Street, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1970-1972</td>
<td>School, including school music programs; attends with James &quot;Jimmy Jam&quot;</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Dates with Prince</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Existing/Demolished</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 John Nelson's apartment</td>
<td>1707 Glenwood Avenue North, #105, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1970-1972</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Aunt Olivia (Nelson) Lewis house</td>
<td>3837 South 4th Avenue, Minneapolis</td>
<td>ca. 1973 and again 1974 or 1975</td>
<td>Residence 12-16 years old</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Terry Jackson's house</td>
<td>1248 Russell Avenue North, Minneapolis</td>
<td>ca. 1972-1976</td>
<td>Friend and band mate Terry Jackson's house; rehearsals; song writing</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 André Cymone's house</td>
<td>1244 Russell Avenue North, Minneapolis</td>
<td>ca. 1972-1976</td>
<td>Band rehearsals beginning circa 1972; Residence 1975-1976</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 The Way Community Center</td>
<td>1900 Block of Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1960s and 1970s</td>
<td>Performance location and community music program</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Minnesota Dance Theater</td>
<td>Corner of 4th Street Southeast and 13th Avenue in Dinkytown until approximately 1971 in Oliver Baptist Church (destroyed by fire); then Horst Building at corner of 4th Street and Central Avenue (extant)</td>
<td>Dates of Prince's association with program unknown – likely late 1960s or early 1970s</td>
<td>Dance classes through the Urban Arts Program</td>
<td>Dinkytown location destroyed; Horst building extant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Central High School</td>
<td>3416 4th Avenue South, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1972-1976</td>
<td>School, including school music programs</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Cookhouse Studio</td>
<td>2541 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis</td>
<td>December 1975-January 1976</td>
<td>First professional recording age 17, playing guitar and synthesizer with the band 94 East</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 A.S.I. Studio</td>
<td>711 West Broadway Avenue, Minneapolis</td>
<td>early 1976</td>
<td>Demo tapes with Grand Central Corporation (Prince, André Cymone and Morris Day); David Rivkin engineer</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Dates with Prince</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Existing/Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Moon Sound Studio</td>
<td>4937 South 28th Avenue, Minneapolis</td>
<td>First half 1976</td>
<td>Records with Champagne (with André and Morris) early 1976; Learned producing and sound engineering; continued song writing and performing all instruments</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Owen Husney’s residence</td>
<td>4248 Linden Hills Boulevard (first floor of duplex), Minneapolis</td>
<td>September 1976</td>
<td>Chris Moon brings Prince to meet with Owen about possible management</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Moon Sound Studio</td>
<td>2828 Dupont Avenue South, Minneapolis</td>
<td>Fall 1976</td>
<td>Continued working with Moon at his new studio location.</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 American Artists Studio/Owen Husney’s studio</td>
<td>430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1976-1979</td>
<td>Owen Husney’s office; meets Bobby Z at office; recordings with André Cymone and Bobby Z.</td>
<td>Building existing; office gutted and remodeled into apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Apartment</td>
<td>2012 Aldrich Avenue South, Minneapolis</td>
<td>Late 1976-summer 1978</td>
<td>Rented by Husney for Prince while he recorded at Sound 80; did recordings using cassette recorder</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Sound 80</td>
<td>2709 East 25th Street, Minneapolis</td>
<td>December 1976 through fall 1977</td>
<td>Recorded demo tapes, which lead to the Warner Bros. record deal and portions of debut album, <em>For You</em>. Recorded ‘Got To Be Something Here’ with The Lewis Connection in late 1976; and “10.15” and “Fortune Teller” with 94 East in 1977.</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 U-Warehouse</td>
<td>400 East Lake Street, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Rehearsal space</td>
<td>Extant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Del's Tire Mart</td>
<td>1409 2nd Street South, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Rehearsal space and audition location for members of the Revolution, including Dez Dickerson</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Pepe Willie’s house</td>
<td>3809 South Upton Avenue, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1978-1979</td>
<td>Prince played on Willie’s track ‘Dance to the Music of The World’ in 1978 recorded here; Prince and</td>
<td>Existing; interior and exterior extensively remodeled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Property Name | Address | Dates with Prince | Event | Existing/Demolished
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
32 Capri Theater | 2027 W Broadway Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55411 | January 5 and 6, 1979 | Band rehearsed for 12 hours/day preparing to go on Prince’s first tour in 1979 | Existing; interior and exterior extensively remodeled
33 Residence and studio | 5215 France Avenue South, Minneapolis | Summer 1978-1979 | First home studio; no known significant recordings | Existing; extensively remodeled
34 Orpheum Theater | 910 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis | 1980; 1983 | Concert for the *Prince* tour (February 8, 1980); Backstage set for film *Purple Rain* in 1983 | Existing
35 Residence and studio | 680 North Arm Drive, Orono | Late 1979 - very early 1981 | Conception, writing and recording of *Dirty Mind* | Demolished after fire in 1982; new home rebuilt on original foundation
36 Residence and Studio | 9401 Kiowa Trail, Chanhassen | Jan 1981 - Jan 1985 | *Controversy* and 1999, and portions of *Sign O’ The Times, Crystal Ball, Dream Factory*, and *Roadhouse Garden*, and side projects such as The Time, Vanity 6, and Apollonia 6. | Demolished
37 Soundstage | Location unknown | October, 1981 | Filming of videos for 'Controversy' and 'Sexuality' | Unknown
38 Minneapolis Armory | 500 South 6th Street, Minneapolis | November, 1981 | Filming of videos for '1999', 'Let's Pretend We're Married', and 'Automatic' | Existing
39 Sam's/First Avenue | 701 North 1st Avenue, Minneapolis | 1980s (various concerts); *Purple Rain* recording and filming 1983; concert in 2006 | Live performances as one of the first local African American performers to headline at this major downtown venue; concert location October 5, 1981; March 9, 1981 for *Dirty Mind* tour; March 2, 1982; May 16, 1983; August 3, 1983; June 7, 1984; August 14, 1984; March 3, | Existing
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Met Center</td>
<td>7901 Cedar Avenue South, Bloomington</td>
<td>March 15, 1983</td>
<td>First major arena show in Twin Cities in support of 1999 tour.</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prom Center</td>
<td>1190 University Avenue, St. Paul</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Live performance at the Black Music Awards June 29, 1983</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Dance Theater</td>
<td>528 Hennepin Avenue, Hennepin Center for the Arts, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Dance rehearsals for Prince and the Revolution in preparation for Purple Rain and live performances</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Warehouse</td>
<td>6651 Highway 7, St. Louis Park</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Rehearsal space</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Rain house</td>
<td>3420 Snelling Avenue, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Exterior filming for the movie Purple Rain</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Cloud Drive Warehouse</td>
<td>9025 Flying Cloud Drive, Eden Prairie</td>
<td>Purple Rain 1983-1984; 1985-1987</td>
<td>Film set for interiors of Purple Rain house; rehearsal space; recording studio for portions of Around The World in a Day</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul Civic Center</td>
<td>Corner of Kellogg Boulevard and West 7th Street, St. Paul</td>
<td>December 23, 24, 26, 27, and 28, 1984</td>
<td>Played 5 sold-out arena shows for the Purple Rain tour.</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Prince, 1958-1987

**Name of multiple listing**

## United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Dates with Prince</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Existing/ Demolished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48 Washington Avenue Warehouse</td>
<td>6953 Washington Avenue South, Eden Prairie</td>
<td>July 1985-March 1987</td>
<td>Rehearsal and studio space; portions of Parade, Dream Factory, Crystal Ball and Roadhouse Garden recorded here</td>
<td>Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 Residence and Studio</td>
<td>7141 Galpin Boulevard, Chanhassen</td>
<td>1985-2005</td>
<td>The Black Album, The Hits - B-Sides, Camille, and portions of Sign O’ the Times, Crystal Ball, Dream Factory, and Roadhouse Garden, and side project for Sheila E., Jill Jones, and Madhouse.</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 Fine Line Music Cafe</td>
<td>318 North 1st Avenue, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Live performance on December 5, 1987</td>
<td>Existing; interior gutted after fire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Known Prince properties that post-date the context Prince, 1958-1987**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Paisley Park</td>
<td>7801 Audubon Road, Chanhassen</td>
<td>1987-2016</td>
<td>Residence, live performances (first one on December 31, 1987), studio for albums from Lovesexy (1988) through Art Official Age (2014) (29 total, including some portions of albums)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Glam Slam</td>
<td>110 North 5th Street, Minneapolis</td>
<td>1989-1997</td>
<td>Night club Prince owned, and where he performed 19 times. The alley behind the building (between 1st and 2nd Avenues North) was the filming location for the “My Name is Prince” video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Bunkers Club</td>
<td>761 Washington Ave N, Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>1989-2010</td>
<td>Night club where Prince performed 10 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Dates with Prince</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 New Power Generation Store</td>
<td>1408 W Lake St, Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>early 1990s</td>
<td>Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Park Avenue United Methodist Church</td>
<td>3400 Park Ave, Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>February 14, 1996</td>
<td>Marries first wife Mayte Garcia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Dakota Jazz Club</td>
<td>1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Night club where Prince performed 7 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 1: Known Prince Locations
Map 2: Known Prince Locations, North Minneapolis

**PRINCE PROPERTIES ELIGIBILITY**
- MEETS MPDF CRITERIA
- DOES NOT MEET MPDF CRITERIA
- NOT EVALUATED UNDER MPDF
- DEMOLISHED

See Map 3
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Map 3: Known Prince Locations, North Minneapolis

PRINCE PROPERTIES ELIGIBILITY
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Prince, 1958-1987
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Map 4: Known Prince Locations, Other Minneapolis

PRINCE PROPERTIES ELIGIBILITY
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Map 5: Known Prince Locations, Suburban and Saint Paul

PRINCE PROPERTIES ELIGIBILITY
- Red: MEETS MPDF CRITERIA
- Green: DOES NOT MEET MPDF CRITERIA
- Blue: NOT EVALUATED UNDER MPDF
- Yellow: DEMOLISHED