

The period of the 50s as a young teen in living in Trenton New Jersey, I earned my first ham radio license and in spare time listened frequently to radio shows and the ever popular NBC's Monitor, a weekend news service broadcast. I recall one broadcast where Louis Armstrong was interviewed. "Louis Satchmo" explained how he enjoyed high end audio equipment and took along his Trans-Oceanic and recording equipment crossing the country. He would record at his lodgings from the radio and his own needs at night for entertainment and had a good sound system, I recall to this day



Satchmo said his speakers were the well made Acoustic Research models.

Not long ago the memories of those NBC Monitor broadcasts were being reviewed in my mind and I was curious to learn more about Louis and his recording hobby.

Mr. Armstrong expired in 1971 and in 1977 his home was made a "National Historic Place" This is a must see stop on any ones visiting list. The Louis Armstrong House and Archives in Queens is the place I'm referring to. Louis shared the house with wife Lucille, from 1943 until his death almost 30 years later. The home was not changed after Lucille died in 1983.

Years later, the City of NY, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Save America's treasures program spent more than one million dollars on the home in restoration. Louis could have lived anywhere he desired yet he chose a simple home in a common area of Queens. Visitors appear every day to see where the famous jazz musician and recording star lived.

For most of his life, Louis was performing about three hundred days of the year. But when he was home, he spent most of his time in a room where he produced most of his work. Today, the room looks as if Louis "Pops" might still be there. He often recorded people talking, music and sounds of the daily life. More than 650 of his recordings were discovered in his home. He had recorded those gems for future generations to enjoy. He entertained in places I only dream of. Armstrong traveled with special luggage, a trunk full of electronic goodies. It is not pictured here because of copyrights. The well planned trunk contained one or two reel-to-reel tape decks and a turntable with AR Speakers (Acoustic Research) In its day, AR were considered high end speakers. Satchmo could listen to his music or record in his dressing room or hotel lodgings. More than 200 of his tapes contain dubs of commercial recordings and are of interest because they document what the master musician listened to for pleasure in his leisure.

The whole treasury of tapes are being preserved and cataloged for future generations. Louis collected many things from his travels and from the folks he met. He loved to type letters to friends and fans and he wrote about everyday things that took place in his life. Thousands of pages of his personal writings, pictures, trumpets and other items can be found at the Louis Armstrong Archives at Queens College in New York. He was known as a very generous man and today in his name, there are airports, schools, boulevards named after him. I read November 2007 plans for a new visitors center in Corona, Queens to have a performance area, class room and archives. The area of the new center would be across the street from the present Louis Armstrong Home and Museum. May it be so.