

Armydis Sordon Park (formerly Beech Street Park) is a designated Green Acres Park located at the corner of Beech St. and Mill St. It contains a swing set, playground unit with slides, two picnic tables, and one bench. This park is dedicated to Armydis Sordon, Private, U.S. Army, 541st Engineer Regiment whose home was located where this park now stands and who died while serving in World War 1.

Early Life

After the death of his grandfather, Edward Sordon, in 1890, the Sordon family moved to Moorestown from Mt. Laurel in or around 1896. Armydis Sordon was born in April 1895 and grew up at 18 Beech Street with his widowed grandmother, Sarah Sordon, Mother, Lydia Sordon, and other aunts, uncles, and siblings.

1910 United States Federal Census for Arnydis O Sorden
New Jersey > Burlington > Chester > District 0057

Street	House No.	Visited	Family No.	Name	Relation	Sex	Race	Age	Marital St.	Years M.	Children	Birthplace	Father's Birthplace	Mother's Birthplace	Immigrat.	Speaks English	Occupation	Industry	Employment	Out of Wk.	Weeks w/ Can Read	Can Write	Attend School	Own or R. Mortgage	Farm or H. Farm Sch.	Veteran	Blind	Deaf and
18	369		793	Sorden, Sarah	Head	F	A	47	Wid	18	2	New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey		English	Home		W	40	40	10						
				Lydia B.	Son	F	A	16	Wid			New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey		English	Housework	Moorestown	W	40	40	10						
				Edwin S.	Son	M	A	24	Wid			New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey		English	Laborer	Moorestown	W	40	40	10						
				John B. C.	Son	M	A	26	Wid			New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey		English	Servant	Moorestown	W	40	40	10						
				Arnydis O.	Son	M	A	15	Wid			New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey		English	Assistant	Huckster	W	40	40	10						
				Elizabeth C.	Son	F	A	12	Wid			New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey		English	Home		W	40	40	10						
				Charles H.	Son	M	A	6	Wid			New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey		English	Home		W	40	40	10						
				Edward	Son	M	A	3	Wid			New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey		English	Home		W	40	40	10						

Figure 1 The 1910 shows 12 people in their 3-generation family.

According to the 1910 census, 15-year-old Armydis worked as an “assistant huckster”. At the time, a huckster was widely known as someone who sold fruits and vegetables and other small items from a cart.

Military Service

According to his WWI military service registration, Sordon was working as a laborer for Moorestown farmer, William Oldershaw, when he was drafted in 1917 at age 22.

Form 1 REGISTRATION CARD No. 78

1 Name in full: Arnydis Sordon Age, in yrs. 22

2 Home address: 18 Beech St. Moorestown N.J.

3 Date of birth: April 1895

4 Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? Natural Born

5 Where was you born? Moorestown N.J. U.S.A.

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? Citizen

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? Laborer

8 By whom employed? William Oldershaw

9 Where employed? Moorestown N.J.

10 Married or single (which)? Single Race (specify which)? Negro

11 What military service have you had? None

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

and Records Administration

REGISTRAR'S REPORT 29-3-5-A

1 Tall, medium, or short (specify which)? Short Slender, medium, or stout (which)? Slender

2 Color of eyes? Black Color of hair? Black Build? Mr

3 Has person lost arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)? No

I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

Harry B. Bunn
(Signature of Registrar)

Township of Chester 3rd
Precinct
City or County Burlington
State New Jersey Date of registration June 5 1917

Figure 2 WWI Registration Document

Like all [African Americans of this time](#), Armydis Sordon faced segregation and discrimination when it came time to serve his country. African Americans, who had served in every military conflict since the American Revolution, were not allowed to serve alongside white soldiers on the battlefield. Most were assigned to labor and engineer support service battalions and companies whose main purpose was to support and supply materials to other companies along the front.

Only a few military bases would even accept African American recruits for training, one of them being [Camp Upton](#) in Yaphank, New York on Long Island.

Sordon was inducted into the Army on August 15, 1918, in Beverly, NJ. He was initially assigned to a “colored replacement battalion” at the 152nd Depot Brigade at Camp Upton in NY in August 1918, where he bunked and trained in a segregated unit.

He shipped out at the beginning of the deadly influenza epidemic that was sweeping through Camp Upton and Sordon arrived in France on September 20 as part of the 541st Engineer Regiment.

By October 4, only two weeks after his arrival, Sordon succumbed to “broncho pneumonia,” joining the over 63,000 other military servicemen who lost their lives to disease. By the war’s end on November 11, more than [380,000 African Americans](#) had served. Private Sordon is buried in the [Oise-Aisne American Cemetery](#) in Seringes-et-Nesles, France alongside 6012 other Americans, most of whom served near the area in WWI.



Figure 3 Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, France