

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR LISTED

MAY 28 1999

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

AHPP

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Miller House

Other Name/Site Number: PU9829

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2. Location

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Street & Number: 1853 South Ringo Street

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Little Rock

Vicinity: N/A

State: AR County: Pulaski Code: 119 Zip Code: 72206

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Miller House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Historically Black Properties in Little Rock's Dunbar School Neighborhood

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Miller House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. ___ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
 ___ See continuation sheet.
- ___ determined eligible for the
 National Register
 ___ See continuation sheet.
- ___ determined not eligible for the
 National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

Miller House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

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6. Function or Use

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Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling
TRANSPORTATION/Road-related Sub: TRANSPORTATION/Road-related

Current : DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling
TRANSPORTATION/Road-related Sub: TRANSPORTATION/Road-related

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Bungalow/Craftsman

HOUSE

Materials: foundation Brick roof Other/Composition Shingles
walls Brick other Gables: Stucco

GARAGE

Materials: foundation Brick roof Other/Composition Shingles
walls Brick other Gable: Wood/Vertical Board

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY

Situated on a corner lot that is diagonally across the street from Dunbar Junior High School, the Miller House underwent a major remodeling about 1924 that converted it from a one-story frame cottage into a two-story Craftsman-style house. Some twenty years later, additional work enlarged it again and added brick veneer. Since that time, its appearance has remained largely unchanged.

ELABORATION

Built originally about 1906 as a one-story, frame cottage, today's Miller House is the product of two remodelings, one around 1924 that added a second story and Craftsman-style features and another in the mid-1940s, when brick veneer was added and the rear of the house was expanded

slightly.

The existing house is a two-story, brick-veneered, Craftsman-style house that is rectangular in plan. The main block of the house is topped by a low-pitched, gabled roof with exposed rafter ends. The peak of its front-facing gable is "clipped," and a half-round vent is centered in the gable end, which is stuccoed and has decorative knee braces. At the rear (east) of the house is a two-story section, enclosing the kitchen downstairs and two rooms upstairs, that has a hipped roof.

The one-story, full-width front porch has a low-pitched, gabled roof, also with exposed rafter ends, stuccoed gable end, and decorative knee braces. The porch roof is supported at each outside corner by "battered" wooden columns resting on brick piers. The concrete steps leading to the porch are flanked by low brick walls with concrete caps. Brick piers mark the entrance to the porch, which is encircled by a low brick wall capped with concrete.

The front door is off-center in the main (west) facade and is flanked by windows of unequal sizes. Two pairs of second-story windows in the main facade above the porch also are not positioned symmetrically. All of the windows in the house have double-hung sashes, most with a four-over-one configuration and many of them grouped in sets of two or three. One grouping of three windows on the second floor of the house's rear section has two-over-two, double-hung sashes which may have been "recycled" from the original one-story cottage.

Aluminum awnings, a mid-20th century addition, shade the front porch, the second-story windows above the porch, and a grouping of five second-story windows on the south side of the house.

At the northeast corner of the Miller House property is a brick-veneered, two-car garage with a gabled roof that has exposed rafter ends. Similar in materials and design to the remodeled house, the garage was built sometime before 1939 (it appears on that year's Sanborn Insurance Map of Little Rock) and probably was veneered at the same time as the house.

A fieldstone wall about three feet in height encloses the yard on the north side of the Miller House property, between the house and the garage.

The remodelings it has undergone are evident inside the Miller House. Downstairs, door and window trim with corner and plinth blocks clearly dates from the turn-of-century, while simple, clean-lined woodwork in the Craftsman vein is found upstairs. With square newel posts and balusters, the main staircase in the entry hall also reflects the Craftsman influence. Besides making the house more stylish, the remodelings more than doubled its size, creating a residence that includes four large public spaces (entry hall, parlor, sitting room, dining room) on the first floor and four

Miller House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

spacious bedrooms upstairs.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: _____.

Applicable National Register Criteria: B and C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage/Black
Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1924-1977

Significant Dates: 1924

Significant Person(s): Arthur T. Miller

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

SUMMARY

About 1924, Arthur T. Miller, a clerk for the railway mail system, remodeled and expanded an older house at 1853 Ringo Street, creating a two-story, Craftsman-style residence. Some two decades later, he further enhanced the house by veneering it with brick. Mr. Miller's remodeling projects illustrate a practice that was common in the neighborhood around

Dunbar during the era when segregation prevented African Americans from moving wherever they could afford to move. The house is significant because it demonstrates the effects of segregation on the Dunbar neighborhood's development and because of its association with Arthur Miller, who is a compelling example of the manner in which African Americans bettered their circumstances during segregation. In addition, the house has architectural merit as a good example of the Craftsman style that was built for African Americans.

ELABORATION

Originally built about 1906 as a one-story, frame cottage, the house at 1853 Ringo Street initially was occupied by a black laborer named William Holman but by 1910 had become the residence of various members of the Miller family: Ellen, a laundress and domestic worker; William, a laborer for Brandon & Turner Stove Company; Loney, who sold fuel; and Louis, a laborer. Arthur T. Miller first is listed by city directories at the address in 1917, when he is identified as a chauffeur for Pfeifer Brothers Department Store.

By about 1920, Arthur Miller was the sole occupant of the house, and he had secured a job that was considered by members of the black community (as well as by many white people) to be a "plum": he was a clerk for the railway mail system. Along with working for a railroad or becoming a letter carrier, a position with the railway mail system was coveted because of the security it represented. Such positions often were occupied by black men who were over-educated for the duties of the job—which, in the case of the railway mail system, consisted of sorting mail as it traveled from city to city by train. But the pay was good, comparatively speaking, and there were benefits, including a pension at retirement. In becoming a railway mail system clerk, Arthur Miller clearly had bettered his circumstances in life and probably had achieved significantly more than other members of his family who previously lived at 1853 Ringo Street.

Mr. Miller's success allowed him to undertake the remodeling projects that more than doubled the size of the house at 1853 Ringo Street and updated its design in the popular Craftsman style. At the time the first remodeling was done in the 1920s, Mr. Miller and his wife, Willie, would have been prohibited from buying a new house in the suburban neighborhoods developing at the outskirts of Little Rock. The Millers' remodeling project was one of many similar projects undertaken in the Dunbar neighborhood during the early 20th century, illustrating both the growing prosperity of some residents and the limits within which they had to operate because of segregation.

Arthur Miller remained at 1853 Ringo Street for the rest of his life. His widow sold the house in 1977 to its present owner, who notes that the Millers had no children and speculates that they must have created such a

large house simply because they could afford to do so.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Bush, Alice Saville. Little Rock, Arkansas. Interview, 3 June 1998.

Creggett, Velma L. Little Rock, Arkansas. Interview, 20 June 1998.

Insurance Maps of Little Rock, Arkansas. Vol. I. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1939.

Insurance Maps of Little Rock, including Argenta and Pulaski Heights, Arkansas. Vol. I. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1913.

Little Rock City Directories: 1906-1965.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of Property: Less than one acre

Miller House
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A — — — B
C — — — D

Verbal Boundary Description:

West 92 feet of lot 1 and west 92 feet of the north 5 feet of lot 2, Block 25, Wright's Addition to the City of Little Rock

Boundary Justification:

The legal description of the Miller House property has remained unchanged since the house was built, making these boundaries appropriate for use in this nomination.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Cheryl Griffith Nichols/Consultant

Organization: N/A Date: August 25, 1998

Street & Number: 1721 S. Gaines St. Telephone: 501-375-2686

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72206