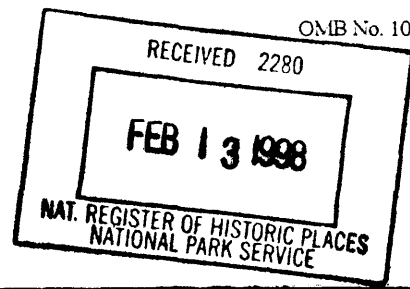


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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name Miller, Warren P.. House

NOV 07 1997

other names/site number Aaron, Mary, Museum

2. Location

street & number 704 D Street

n/a

city or town Marysville

n/a

state California

code CA

county Yuba

code

48/15

zip code 95901

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] February 2, 1998
Signature of certifying official Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

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] 3-12-98
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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Classification

Ownership of Property Category of Property Number of Resources within Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

n/a

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Current Functions

Category	Sub-Category
Domestic	Dwelling
Commerce/Trade	Professional

Category	Sub-Category
Recreation & Culture	Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Materials

Mid-19th Century, Gothic Revival

foundation: Brick

roof: Comp. Shingles obscured by wood parapet

walls: Brick

other

Narrative Description

(See continuation sheets, Section 7)

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3. Statement of Significance

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

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

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Architecture
Invention

Period of Significance
1856-1863

Significant Dates
1856

Significant Person
Miller, Warren P.

Cultural Affiliation
n/a

Architect/Builder
Miller, Warren P.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See continuation sheets, Section 8.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheets, Section 9.)

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

1	10	621960	4333360	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is identified as Assessor Parcel Number 010-115-008, City of Marysville, Yuba County, less the westernmost 21 feet of the parcel.

Boundary Justification

(See continuation sheet, Section 10)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Don Cox, Paula Boghosian

organization Historic Environment Consultants date 2/1/97

street & number 5420 Home Court telephone (916) 488-1680

city or town Carmichael state CA zip code 95608

Property Owner

City of Marysville
c/o Stan Eisner, AICP
Director of City Services
P.O. Box 150

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7. Narrative Description

The Warren P. Miller House (Mary Aaron Museum) was constructed in Marysville in 1856 as a private residence by its architect-owner, Warren Phinney Miller. The two story brick building is an unusual interpretation of Castellated Gothic Revival design which was more often used in public and ecclesiastical buildings of this era, rather than in dwellings. In spirit and scale, it suggests the east coast designs of New York architectural leaders Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing. Their designs were prominent for their architectural introduction of small scale rural *cottages* and *villas* that were often derived from Gothic architectural themes (termed "*Picturesque*".) Tall crocketed pinnacles, or turrets, connected by a continuous crenelated parapet, contribute to the medieval castle image of the building. There is a brick-paved courtyard that has been added to the property and improved over the latter half of the twentieth century. The courtyard is partially covered by a wooden trellis and in the center is an iron fountain that was contemporary with the house and originally stood in nearby Cortez Square from the late 1850s until the early 1960s. A brick fence, approximately 3 1/2 feet in height, and with a decorative ironwork gate has been added to the east end of the small courtyard that lies to the north of the building. The house still looks essentially as it did during the period of significance, especially when viewed from the east elevation (front), southeast or south. Most changes have occurred on the north and west (rear) elevations.

The parapet follows the outer edge of the roof line, including the gabled east wing, and the tops of the battlements are angled to match the angle of the roof gable beneath, in keeping with the gracefulness of the parapet trim. The projecting curved drip molds of brick above the elliptical arched windows and delicate pierced and scalloped wood molding in the window frames are also characteristic of the style. The delicacy of the molding forms a counterpoint to the solidity of the brick. The smooth wood-paneled battlements also contrast with the texture of the brick of the exterior walls. Multi-paned, double-hung, wood sash windows reflect the forms of the crenellations and accent the plain exterior wall surfaces. The pinnacles rise from slender vertical brick buttresses placed at an angle at each corner wherever the wall surfaces change planes. The oldest known photograph of the building dated ca. 1875, indicates that the order of the projecting battlements or crenelations between pinnacles was different than during the early twentieth century, being tall, short, tall, short, tall. The crenelations in a 1920s photograph shows the successive order of battlements as short, tall, short, tall, short, and the crenelations atop the east-facing gable were gabled at the top. The present order of battlements is like the original; tall, short, tall, short, tall, and the crenelations in the east gable are flat at the top. This indicates that the battlements apparently needed replacement or repair prior to the 1920s photo, and have since been put back essentially as they were originally.

The pent-roofed porch canopy is supported by simple posts, and the bays between are fitted with angled strips of wood that form a shallow peak at the center of the bay, sof-

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tening the openings and creating the impression of a flattened arch between the posts. The porch roof has probably been replaced during the last 141 years, and the scalloped decoration at the roof's edge has been removed. The porch floor is of wood on an original brick base. A decorative metal balustrade has been added to the stairs, between the porch supports, and in front of the niche (ca late 1960s). The principal openings on the ground floor are elliptically arched french doors with six lights (original), that can be screened with louvered sliding pocket doors that slip into the exterior wall on either side of the doors, a highly unusual detail. Balustraded balconies with tall, double hung, six light over six windows, and supported by curved brackets project from the second floor on the east and south elevations. The balconied second story windows are also fitted with sliding wooden louvered screens. The window opening to the balcony on the east elevation contains a small fixed section of arched louvered screen at the top, perhaps a vestige of the sliding screens. The balconies were original to the house, but as wood was replaced over time, the balcony balustrade design changed from one where the balusters created an "X" separated by verticals, to one containing a series of simple vertical balusters. The balconies were originally enframed by arched wood trellises for climbing plants. Both trellises, and the ivy that covered them and the walls, were removed after the city took possession of the property. A small rectangular window was cut into the exterior wall above the porch canopy to light the interior stair well at that location after the closure of the skylight above it (ca 1920-30). The original windows apparently had arched exterior shutters, while the original french doors were fitted with louvered sliding pocket doors. The front door screen (added late 1950s) is a decorative composition of spools and spindles in half and quarter circles.

A two story wood bay with a brick base projects from the northern elevation of the house, and contains five six-paned fixed windows arranged in vertical bays on the first floor. This addition dates to the 1890s and appears for the first time on the 1895 Sanborn map. It contained an enclosed first floor, topped with a partially enclosed screened porch. The two sections on the first floor of the western end of the projecting bay are solid panels and house a storage area. The second story above has been enclosed atop the projecting bay and contains two double hung windows. This second story portion of the bay was originally a screened porch that opened off a bedroom. This was later enclosed in 1966 to create a small office for the museum. An exterior brick chimney stack on the north elevation projects above the roof. Double hung windows, three with one light over one, and one with six lights over six, penetrate the brick north wall of the building. There is an exterior door on the northwest corner of the first floor (rear), that leads to a small kitchen, and a window with a decorative curved muntin pattern.

The south elevation of the building is angled in three sections, with french doors set behind scalloped wood ornament at the arch in the center section, and surmounted by three-centered or elliptical arched drip moldings of projecting brick. The balcony projects above the french doors, flanked by two of the angled and pinnacled buttresses. The walls on either side of the central section are blank.

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There are two original shallow arched niches in the exterior brick walls: one to the right of the front entry in the short angled wall between the entry and the dining room, and one at the right of the rear entry. These may have originally contained statuary or decorative urns, but recessed and empty blind arches are not uncommon in Gothic design.

By 1890, Sanborn maps indicate that two small successive porch additions, totaling a depth of about 12', had been made to the rear (west elevation) of the house. A 1963 addition replaced these porch additions. A portion of a two story addition with a pointed window still projects above the newer one story addition whose footprint echoes that of the south wing of the original house. The addition is wood framed and surfaced with the same textured cladding applied to the building during the 1960s. Two tall, slender, multi-paned windows penetrate each of the angled side walls, and the entry door with its fan light window is around the corner in the west elevation. The larger addition is one and one-half stories in height and houses what is currently a small collection of gifts and books for sale to benefit the museum, and the second stairway to the second floor. A shallow cornice molding wraps around the top of the structure at the roof line. A decorative metal balustrade painted white, like that of the front porch and entry, flanks a short stairway to the rear entry and walkway. (This balustrade, while taken from a late 19th century building, is not original to the house.)

Landscaping is modest and includes bushes and flowering plants around the base of the house, and lawn to the sidewalk. A small brick-paved courtyard, separated from the street by a wall of used brick and decorative metal gate, provides a sheltered patio on the north of the building. Taller plantings shade this garden. A fountain, once located in Cortez Square in the 19th century, stands in the middle of the patio. The current configuration of the courtyard was primarily constructed in the mid 1960s and early 1970s.

The front entry opens to the interior hallway which contains a graceful curved stairway with turned wood balusters in the balustrade to the second floor, and a view of the elegant parlor with its carved marble fireplace. The glass-paneled front door is surmounted with a transom window behind scallop patterned wood insets. The walls are plastered and original wood molding surrounds doors and windows on the main floor. They generally contain crossets at the upper outside corners. Window and door moldings on the second floor are simple flat moldings.

The master bedroom contains a small marble corner wash basin, and the original picture moldings appear to have been affixed higher up on the wall than at present. Some built-in cupboards and cabinets have been installed in bedrooms or small side rooms. In public areas, downstairs floors are covered with dark hardwood, but were probably plain pine boards originally like those upstairs.

Some alterations, other than those already mentioned, have occurred since the City received ownership of the property and opened the building to the public. The second stairway to the second floor was added to meet fire safety requirements. Minor interior work included widening the entryway into the parlor took place in 1966. The

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building was reroofed in 1980 and 1997, and a handicap-access bathroom was installed on the main floor in 1993. An access ramp has been added to reach the rear door. Decorative metal balustrades were added to the ramp, porch and front and rear stairs. At one point (1920s), ivy and other plants had grown up the face of the building. When the plants were removed, the brick may have either been damaged or difficult to clean, so the City apparently had the original brick surface sandblasted and covered with a synthetic material coating resembling plaster. This coating was applied sometime after the City acquired the building in 1954, and covers the historic house. The covering is now separating from the surface of the building in some areas, and rehabilitation plans include its removal. The sandblasting makes it impossible to determine the original color of the building, but historic photos indicate that it was painted in a light color. The vigorous composition and historic image of the building remain very strong despite alterations, and convey a distinct sense of a former time and place.

The original lot upon which the building was placed was purchased by Miller in October of 1855 and measured 80' (north/south) by 165' (east/west). Language of the Deeds of that time used imprecise words to describe lots as "165 feet or thereabout" indicating that the dimensions were not exact. About a month later, on December 5 of that year Miller sold the western-most 80 feet of the lot, leaving the remainder at approximately 80' X 85'. When Miller sold his house in 1863, the Deed describes it more precisely as 80' X 83'-10". After the city received the property in the mid-1950s, 12' of the northern side of the property was sold to the owner of the lot adjacent to the north. In the late 1960s, the city constructed a building to serve as a "country store" Museum to the west of the house, that extended approximately 21' to the western edge of the property. The boundaries designated in this nomination exclude the latter building, as it is not original to the property or important to the era of significance.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance:

The Miller House possesses local significance under criterion B, due to its association with Warren P. Miller and his accomplishments as an architect and inventor, and criterion C, as a fine representative of its style and type of building, and the work of a master architect.

Completed in 1856, the Miller House is an outstanding example of Gothic Revival style, designed by a master architect of the era and region. It was also the home of the accomplished architect and inventor, Warren P. Miller of Marysville, California. During the period that he lived in this house, Miller was acclaimed in publications of this era, as an outstanding architectural designer, and a creative inventive genius. The house is significant both as a fine architectural work of a master architect, and the home and workplace of an outstanding inventor of the last half of the twentieth century.

Miller designed and built the house to serve as his private dwelling and principal place of business. Miller and his family lived in the house from its completion in 1856 until they moved to San Francisco in 1863. The era in which Miller lived in the house (1856-1863) was about the mid-point of the California Gold Rush, at a time when Marysville was one of the largest cities in the state and a key access point to the northern gold fields. During these years, Miller was the city's principal architect, designing a number of important local and state structures such as the Yuba County Courthouse and the 1858 California State Fair Agricultural Pavilion (both located in Marysville). His buildings were highly praised in a number of publications throughout the region, and within the community. Miller's New York background and exposure to Gothic Revival design, as a young man, occurred just as the style was evolving. This may be a factor in the comparatively high concentration of buildings of the style in Marysville. Outside of Marysville, there are relatively few remaining representatives of the mode in the region, but Marysville contains an unusual concentration of examples of an otherwise rather rare architectural style for this region. While Miller was active in community affairs and held political office, his creative accomplishments in both architecture and invention earned him state-wide notability. During the period he lived in the house, Miller received four United States patents for his unique inventions which included the first practical working model of a tractor/crawler to be built and demonstrated in the United States. While the immediate notariety that Miller received for the tractor/crawler was limited to the Northern California region, the impact of his contribution was eventually felt nation-wide and world-wide through subsequent development by later inventors. Historical writers have acknowledged his contributions that lead to development of the Caterpillar tractor and all other antecedent tracked vehicles. During his lifetime, Miller received some twenty-nine patents for his inventions including several for industrial saws that helped revolutionize the entire saw-making industry. His contributions both as inventor and architect were significant.

The Miller House is an unusual and handsome representative of Gothic Revival design, created by an architect whose work was acclaimed in the region. A quotation from the

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San Francisco *California Farmer* on August 10, 1858, in regard to the "Temple of Industry" (Miller's newly completed State Fair Pavilion) states "we say that in truth this Hall is the finest in the state, as an exhibit hall or ballroom." An unusual feature was the suspension of an octagonal box under the glazed dome to house the orchestra whose music "floated" above the ballroom floor. *The Daily California Express* reported on completion of Miller's Marysville Odd Fellows Hall in March of 1861, "The new building at the corner of D and Third is one of the finest in the State... The taste displayed in the finish of the whole building shows that no pains or expense has been spared to complete it..." The Marysville City Directory of 1861 states in reference to the Glazier's Block, "Just finished, at the corner of D and Second streets, is one of the finest blocks in the city, being built of brick in a substantial manner...the whole is finished in tasteful and beautiful style." The City Directory in 1858 commented that the City School House at B and 7th streets, another Miller design, "...is pronounced by competent judges, to be the most elegant structure of the kind in the State." This same Directory also described Miller's Yuba County Court House as "one of the most magnificent structures in the county, and one of the finest in the State." While one may trace Gothic architectural influences mixed with others in any of the buildings noted above, the castellated brick Court House and Miller's own home with its crocketed turrets and crenelated parapet most strongly reflect Gothic Revival origins.

The Miller House is a remarkable and handsome example of Gothic Revival design. It resembles a small medieval castle - with some liberties taken - but the great attention to special and atypical detailing betrays its creation by the hand of a skillful and sensitive designer. Its composition is dynamic and its image unique. It is a significant and rare remnant of its style and era, and was the creation of one of early Marysville's most notable designers.

Architect Miller was apparently a principal local proponent of the Gothic Revival mode in general and the castellated sub-type in particular (also called the "picturesque" style). These were the same styles that were so popular during Miller's formative years in his original home state of New York. Marysville still retains examples of the style, while still others have been lost. The three examples that remain are the Ramirez House at 222 5th Street, the Fall-Cheim House at 7th and G Streets, and the Miller House. Sacramento, by contrast, a larger city and just a little older, had relatively few such examples of mid 19th century Gothic Revival. Only one, the Hubbard-Upson House, remains to the present.

Gothic architecture was a principal medieval design mode in Western Europe during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The style emerged from Romanesque and Byzantine forms in France during the later 12th century and its principal use and greatest works were cathedrals of the era. Gothic design was characterized by pointed arches, rib vaults, exterior flying buttresses (to structurally counterbalance the walls, corridors, and vaults of lofty interior spaces), the creation of interior wall systems to reduce their weight with richly designed fenestration, window tracery,

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stained glass *rose* windows, spires and columns. The style was succeeded by the revival and modification of classical forms during the Renaissance that began in the fifteenth century.

The Gothic Revival movement began in England during the middle of the 18th century, apparently precipitated by Sir Horace Walpole's then remodel of his country house in the *Medieval* style with battlements and multiple pointed-arch windows. This Gothic version of medieval design was charming, picturesque, and suited to rural settings. The mode soon became common in England, adapted to a variety of country residences and retaining the appellation of "*Picturesque*." The concept of the design was more than its visual attributes. It was a philosophical doctrine derived from the relationship of man to nature. Employed in England, the landscape, long-exposed to the influence of man, required some manipulation in order to appear "natural," while in America, the wild abundance of the natural landscape was largely uncontrived and virgin, and particularly appropriate to the picturesque qualities of these designs. The adoption of the mode by American architect Alexander Jackson Davis resulted in the publication of his 1837 book, *Rural Residences*, the first house plan book published in America, and the first to show three-dimensional views with floor plans. Architectural critic Andrew Jackson Downing, Davis' friend, expanded Davis' ideas in pattern books published in 1842 (*Cottage Residences*) and 1850 (*The Architecture of Country Houses*), and popularized the style broadly in lectures, public speaking engagements, publications and personal activity.

The popularity of these designs, generated in New York by the associated activities of Davis, Downing and others, was strong in the 1840s. Warren Miller, the individual who so prominently implemented these themes in his work in early Marysville in the 1850s and 1860s, was a young man, living in New York during the 1830s and 1840s. It is possible that exposure to the works of Davis and Downing nearby in New York influenced his interest in and use of Gothic Revival themes when he began his architectural design work in Marysville in the 1850s. His name as architect has been verified for several buildings in Marysville that utilized Gothic Revival design similar to the work of Davis and Downing. Historic photographs and illustrations of major civic and commercial buildings in early Marysville illustrate that the Gothic Revival style, including the castellated subtype, was a strong design influence during the 1850s. The higher concentration of Gothic Revival buildings in Marysville compared with Sacramento and other regional settlements is notable, and might be attributed to the influence of Miller, his timely New York origins, and relatively rapid prominence in the field of architecture after his arrival in Marysville.

Like many who went to California during the early years of the Gold Rush, Warren Miller at the age of 30, left his young wife (Mehitable L., aka "Hettie") with a farming family in Brookhaven, Long Island¹, while he went off to seek new opportunities in California. It doesn't appear that it was gold that Warren Miller was after.² In March 1850, one of his first recorded activities in California was the purchase of a par-

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cel of land in Marysville that had been seized by the Sheriff to satisfy an unpaid debt. Over the next two years, Miller invested in some two dozen other pieces of property. Miller's real estate speculation paid off. After selling most of his properties between 1852-54, he made more than \$9,000. Hettie must have joined Warren sometime during 1852-53, and about 1854 they had a son, Frank W. P. Miller.

As the miners continued to rush in, gold flowed back from mining camps. Marysville was the main supply center to the northern gold fields and millions in gold passed through every year. The new city boomed. Most of the buildings were either board and tent structures or were wood. Who the carpenters, builders, or "architects" were was seldom recorded, but Miller was among them and it was probably the profits from his carpentry work that he used as capital for his real estate speculation. However, Miller's enterprise was not limited to carpentry and real estate. Beginning in March 1851, he also built and operated a public hay scales.

It wasn't until Yuba County selected Miller to design its County Courthouse (1854) that Miller's name first appears in local newspapers and city directories as an architect. Miller must have had some experience in designing and building before he left New York, and in Marysville as well, because the courthouse was a finely crafted example of Gothic Revival architecture that was acclaimed both within Yuba County and the adjacent region. Over the next several years, only a handful of individuals are identified as architects in the local Marysville newspapers and city directories. However, Miller's name is repeatedly associated with the design and construction of Marysville civic and commercial structures.

Chronologically they are: County Courthouse (1854), Miller House (1856), Fire Engine House (1856), 'B' Street Elementary School (1857), State Fair Agricultural Pavilion (1858), City Market (1860), Glazier's Block (1860), Mrs. L. A. Baker residence (1861), Odd Fellows Hall (1861), and State Reform School (1861). Miller also designed the spire addition to St. Joseph's Catholic Cathedral (1862). Admiration for Miller's designs appeared in both local and regional press.

Warren Miller was also a civic leader in early Marysville. He was elected alderman to the City Council for two terms (1855³, 1858⁴). Considered to be one of the literate men of the community, he was invited in 1855 to be one of the Founding Directors of the Marysville Library Association.⁵ This group established the first circulation library, with reading room, in Marysville, and acquired some 2,000 volumes over the next three years. In 1858, the association deeded their library to the City of Marysville, thus creating the first public library in Yuba County.

The coming of the 1858 California State Fair to Marysville meant more to Warren Miller than the opportunity to display his architectural skills through construction of the State Fair Pavilion. Lacking the sophisticated communication media of today, it was through fairs and expositions that inventors, artisans and manufacturers gained exposure and access to markets.

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Miller not only had the Pavilion ready for the fair, he also presented his first two inventions. His Self Regulating Windmill won a First Prize Silver Medal and a cash prize of \$50.⁶ However, Miller's blockbuster idea was his steam tractor crawler, which he demonstrated in the streets of Marysville before, during and after the State Fair. The tractor was classified as a crawler because it was driven by a track, like a modern military tank, rather than by wheels.

Whenever Miller's tractor appeared, it drew large crowds. A reporter who saw a demonstration of the tractor wrote that it drew itself through soft sandy soil just as easily as on a hard road, but a gang of mules required twice the pulling power to move a wheeled wagon through the soft soil as it did on a hard road.⁷

Miller's tractor won not only a First Prize Silver Medal and \$50 prize, but was also acclaimed by the judges for a Special Merit award cash prize of \$400.⁸ It attracted considerable press coverage with numerous articles appearing in local and regional publications, including: *California Farmer*, *Daily Alta Californian*, *Sacramento Union*, *San Joaquin Republican*, as well as Marysville's *Herald*, *Express*, and *Daily Democrat*.⁹ Almost a hundred years later Hal Higgins would publish a follow-up story in the *California Farmer* declaring:

*Warren P. Miller's "Traction Locomotive Steam Car"...is the biggest missing link in California's 92-year history of tractors...[It] set up several historical firsts: First tractor built in California; first tractor shown at a California State Fair; first crawler tractor built and demonstrated in the U.S.; first crawler tractor awarded a prize by a U.S. State Fair, etc.*¹⁰

The importance of Miller's tractor in the lineage of the steam driven tractor was also recognized by McGowan in his *History of the Sacramento Valley*:

*A second significant development in the use of steam occurred at Marysville on August 26, 1858, when W. P. Miller demonstrated his steam driven traction engine, using the endless chain principle instead of wheels, an improvement on a similar type made in England in 1846 but which had not been developed... Other inventors worked on the idea so that less than twenty years later huge road locomotives appeared in the valley to haul strings of wagons to the river landing or railroad and later were even used to haul gang plows.*¹¹

Miller intended his first tractor to prove that the principle of steam traction could work. He only outfitted it with a 1 1/2 horse power engine.¹² In addition to the tractor, Miller also designed and patented an Excavator and Grader which was to be pulled by the tractor.

Miller's idea for a steam driven tractor was some fourteen years ahead of its time, and his idea for a crawler tractor was a half century early. Steam driven tractors did not take off commercially until two developments took place. First, California State laws that favored stockmen over farmers were repealed in 1872 making large scale agriculture feasible, and second, the invention of barbed wire in 1874 made it affordable. Farming within specific boundaries protected by barbed wire fences, as opposed to the former dominance of free ranging cattle ranching, grew in response and created a demand for machines to aid in the cultivation of ever larger tracts of land. The develop-

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ment of a machine that could haul heavy loads and maneuver over rough farm land was highly desirable. In addition to Hal Higgins, authors Walter Payne, *Benjamin Holt: The Story of the Caterpillar Tractor*,¹³ and R.B. Gray, *The Agricultural Tractor*,¹⁴ place Miller's

tractor as the first working model in a lineage that lead directly to Holt's development of the Caterpillar tractor in 1908. Since that date, Caterpillar has gained a world-wide reputation that has become synonamous with track driven vehicles of all types used in farming, construction, earth moving and the military.¹⁵

On March 9, 1862 a Civil War battle took place that was a classic conflict, capturing the attention of the whole world: Hampton Roads—where the Monitor and Merrimac dueled to a fiery draw in the world's first clash of iron-clad warships. For months following this great conflict, Warren P. Miller put his inventive mind to work on improving the iron-clad warship. The result was U.S. Patent #38,118 *Improvement In Operating Ordnance On War-Vessels*.

What Miller developed was a gun carriage that would replace the turret. The problem with the Monitor class warship was that the turret made them top-heavy and unstable in open seas. They also had a problem with smoke inside the turret after firing the guns. Miller solved these problems by placing the ship's guns on metal platforms that, after being fired, they could be lowered by steam powered elevators to a deck below for reloading. This not only solved the smoke problem, but the stability problem as well. When navigating on the open seas, the guns could be lowered, thus not only eliminating the top-heaviness, but adding extra centerline ballast as well.¹⁶

On January 29, 1863, Miller received an enthusiastic endorsement for his gun carriage in an article appearing in the San Francisco *Alta Californian*:

*Mr. Warren P. Miller, a well known California mechanical genius, has lately completed an invention upon which he has been for many months engaged, which seems to obviate the principal difficulties in the construction of iron-clads and rams...it has been cordially indorsed [sic] by the U.S. Naval Constructor at Mare Island, Paul Torquet of the Vulcan Iron Works, and by the most ingenious and intelligent men who have examined the working model [emphasis mine].*¹⁷

The citizens of San Francisco were very motivated to seek gunboat construction in their city. However, it was not just profit or patriotism that motivated them—it was fear as well. With the war in the East, the Union withdrew troops and warships from California, leaving it under-defended. The Commander of the Division of the Pacific examined San Francisco's port defenses and concluded that, without warships, he did not think it could be defended from a naval attack. At the same time, both England and France became menacing because of the Union's interference in their trade with the South.¹⁸

While Miller was working on his gun turret concept in Marysville, someone in San Francisco was operating in his behalf to put together the California Gunboat Company. The company was incorporated with the right to sell some 2,200 shares worth \$500 each, for a total potential capitalization of \$1.1 million. The board of directors in-

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cluded: Paul Tourquet (manager of the powerful Vulcan Iron Works); R. GuyMcClellan (mining stock speculator and prominent civil war union activist); S. D. Jones (a naval officer employed in the U.S. Custom's House); as well as some former Marysville residents, including, Dr. J.B. Warfield (physician and former Yuba County Coroner); L.W. Ransom (former owner of the Marysville Herald); and O.B. Bagley (a wealthy realtor with offices in San Francisco and New York).¹⁹

This exciting new invention however, spelled the end of an era for Miller in Marysville. Warren Miller sold his elegant home on January 19, 1863 and moved to San Francisco.²⁰ From there he left almost immediately for Washington D.C. to sell his invention to the War Department. There is no historical record that tells us what became of Miller's trip to the War Department, but it was probably not successful. While Miller's idea for the Steam Tractor Crawler was many years ahead of its time, the Gun Turret was too late. By the time Miller would have arrived in Washington, in the Spring of 1863, the government had already ordered virtually all of the iron-clad warships that it would need for the civil war. In fact, several of those already ordered would never be completed before the end of the war.²¹

While using the house as a residence and an office, Miller achieved the following:

1. Warren P. Miller developed designs and plans for a number of significant local buildings and substantially influenced the use of Gothic Revival design in early Marysville;
2. Miller was an active civic leader, helping to build Gold Rush Marysville into one of California's largest and most important cities in the 1850s;
3. The developmental work on five inventions, four of which received U.S. Patents, was carried out during his residence in the house;
4. After the height of the Gold Rush, California began to develop its agricultural base. At that time, Miller developed the first operational tractor/crawler in California and the United States; and
5. Miller also developed a sophisticated improvement on gun turrets for iron-clad warships during the American Civil War and became associated with San Francisco business leaders who promoted his turret and construction of iron-clad warships in San Francisco.

During the years that Miller built and lived in the house, (1856-1863) he was involved in a leadership capacity in several broad historical movements: the California Gold Rush; designing and building the architectural face of a burgeoning young city; the transition from Gold Rush to permanent settlements and large-scale agriculture, and the American Civil War.

After his residency in Marysville, Miller continued to distinguish himself as an inventive genius. Among his twenty-nine U.S. patents were several for saw blades with detachable teeth that were highly successful. These devices were ac-

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quired by one of American's most eminent manufacturers, R. Hoe & Company, and were considered to be among Hoe & Company's most prized and profitable business acquisitions.

Following Miller's tenancy the house continued to be owned and occupied by residents who were very involved in their community and contributed significantly to the governance of the community and its business life.

Miller sold the house in 1863 to carpenter Edgar Woodrow. Within a month Woodrow sold it to Wm. B. Latham, but continued to live in the house until the early 1870s. In 1875, Latham, a former Marysville resident and San Francisco attorney sold it to Francis Aaron and his wife Mary.²² The Aaron family was prominent in Marysville in politics, banking, finance and insurance.²³ Mary Aaron was well known for hosting afternoon tea parties as benefits for charitable causes.²⁴ The Aarons had only one child, Charles Francis Aaron, who never had any children. At his death he donated the house to the City of Marysville in memory of his mother and to provide a place for the remembrance of Marysville's interesting history.²⁵

The Miller House stands today as the unique and fanciful design of one of Marysville's most creative architects and inventive pioneers - a reminder of the former importance of this city and its role in the development of the state.

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Miller's Inventions

Year	Description	Patent#	Residence
1859	Locomotive Machine for Propelling Plows, etc.	23,858	Marysville
1859	Excavating & Grading Machine	22,885	Marysville
1863	Improvement on Operating Ordnance on War-Vessels	38,118	Marysville
1863	Bed Spring	38,834	Marysville
1866	Attaching Burners to Lamps	56,775	San Francisco
1866	Bottle Valves	57,948	San Francisco
1866	Saws	58,664	San Francisco
1867	Fireplace	62,053	San Francisco
1867	Grindstone	64,893	NY, NY
1867	Fan Blower	70,736	San Francisco
1868	Attaching saws to their handles	76,228	NY, NY
1868	Saw Teeth	81,811	NY, NY
1868	Saw Blade	81,812	NY, NY
1868	Saw-set for rounding circular saws	83,524	NY, NY
1872	Saw Gauge	124,906	NY, NY
1872	Saw Tooth Swage	127,182	NY, NY
1873	Machine for Grinding Hay	139,911	NY, NY
1873	Insertable Teeth for Saws	142,258	NY, NY
1874	Saw with Adjustable Teeth	151,043	NY, NY
1874	Saws	168,338	NY, NY
1877	Saw	190,062	NY, NY
1878	Re-issue #8,323 Insertable Saw Tooth, assigned to R. Hoe & Co.	58,664	Brooklyn, NY
1878	Saw Teeth, assigned to R. Hoe & Co.	211,035	Brooklyn, NY
1879	Re-issue #8,534 Saw, assigned to R. Hoe & Co.	168,338	NY, NY
1879	Circular Saw, John A. Miller, Oshkosh, WI, assignor to W.P. Miller, Brooklyn	212,813	Brooklyn, NY
1879	Circular Saw	213,439	Brooklyn, NY
1879	Stove or Furnace	221,179	Brooklyn, NY
1881	Chair Seat	248,336	Brooklyn, NY
1882	Bedstead	252,123	Brooklyn, NY
1883	Chair Seat Spring	270,093	Brooklyn, NY
1883	Sewing Machine Guide	271,728	Brooklyn, NY
1883	Carpet Cleaner	288,720	Brooklyn, NY

¹ U.S. Census, New York, 1850² Miller listed himself as a carpenter or architect consistently in the U.S. Census of 1850, Marysville City Directories 1853, 1855, 1856, 1858, 1861.³ Marysville City Directory, Nov. 1, 1855⁴ Marysville City Directory, June 1, 1858⁵ Thompson & West, p. 61-62

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- ⁶ Transaction of the California State Agricultural Society, 1858
- ⁷ Marysville National Democrat, August 31, 1858, p. 1
- ⁸ Transactions of the California State Agricultural Society, 1858
- ⁹ National Democrat, August 31, 1858, September 4, 1858; California Farmer, May, 1858, Sacramento Union, December 16, 1857, August 27, 1858; Marysville Herald, December 15, 1857; November 7, 1856, March 11, 12, and 18, 1858; Marysville California Express, August 25, 1858; February 6, 8, 1859, March 16, 29, 1859, May 5 1859, Marysville Daily News, July 11, 1858; Daily Alta Californian, September 2, 1858, San Joaquin Republic March 10, 1858.
- ¹⁰ Higgins, Hal, "Miller's Crawler Tractor of 1858", California Farmer, April 22, 1950.
- ¹¹ McGowan, Joseph A., History of the Sacramento Valley, Lewis Historical Publishing Co., NY, 1961, p. 163
- ¹² Daily Alta Californian, September 2, 1858, p. 1/3
- ¹³ Payne, Walter A., ed., Benjamin Holt: The Story of the Caterpillar Tractor, University of the Pacific, Stockton, 1982. p 36
- ¹⁴ Gray, R.B., The Agricultural Tractor 1855-1950, American Society of Agricultural Engineers, St. Joseph, MO, 1954, p. 79
- ¹⁵ Payne, pp. Forward, 80, 98
- ¹⁶ Daily Alta Californian, January 29, 1863, p. 1/2
- ¹⁷ Daily Alta Californian, January 29, 1863, p. 1/2
- ¹⁸ Kinnard, Lawrence, Ph.D., History of the Greater San Francisco Bay Region, Vol. II, Lewis Historical Publications Co., NY, 1966, p. 7
- ¹⁹ Articles of Incorporation, California Gunboat Company, California State Archives
- ²⁰ Marysville Appeal, January 15, 1863, p. 3/1
- ²¹ Webber, Lt. Richard H., USNR-R, Monitors of the U.S. Navy, History Division, US Navy, US Government Printing Office, 1969
- ²² Deed records, Yuba County Records Office
- ²³ Marysville Appeal, April 29, 1897, p. 1
- ²⁴ Personal Interview with Karen Burrow, Curator Mary Aaron Museum, July 1995
- ²⁵ Marysville Appeal, September 7, 1953, p. 1

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property is identified as Assessor Parcel Number 010-115-008, City of Marysville, Yuba County, less the westernmost 21 feet of the parcel. The original property was described in the Deeds book in general terms as 80' by 165', however, Miller sold the Westernmost 80' soon after he bought it. When Miller sold the house in 1863 it was described in precise terms as being 80' by 83'-10". After the City acquired the property in 1854 twelve feet on the north boundary were sold to the adjacent lot on the north APN# 010-115-007, a.k.a. 710 D Street. Both lots were owned by the Aaron family and Charles Francis Aaron purchased the Rideout House and moved it to 710 D to provide a home for him and his wife. His mother, Mary Aaron, continued to live in the Miller House at 704 D Street. When the Miller House became the property of the City of Marysville, it was discovered that a southern addition to the Rideout House brought it to the very edge of the original Miller House property line. At this time, the city deeded twelve feet to the lot to the north to provide adequate setback. This brought the lot to its current configuration of 83.83' (east/west) by 68' (north/south).

Boundary Justification

The proposed property boundary is 62'-10" by 68'. A non-contributing building was constructed on the parcel, extending over the western 21 feet of the original 010-115-008 parcel. This new structure does not relate to the Miller House/Aaron Museum in style, materials, design, context or age. It was originally built to house a Country Store museum, but is currently used as storage space and offices for the Mary Aaron Museum. Therefore the nominated western property boundary includes only the Miller House/Aaron Museum, its attached western additions, and 3' north-south walkway at the rear between the original building and the new one.

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Photograph Labels

Name of photographer:	Paula Boghosian
Date of photographs:	February 1996, February 1997
Location of original negative:	Historic Environment Consultants 5420 Home Court Carmichael, CA 95608

- #1. Looking northwest the photo shows the eastern elevation with the front porch and main entrance to the house as well as the southern elevation. The front of the house faces 'D' Street and southern elevation is on Seventh Street.
- #2. Looking west/southwest the photo shows a closer view of the front elevation as well as a portion of the northern elevation including the bay off the dining room (ground) level and the office/library on the second floor.
- #3. Looking north the photo shows the southern elevation as well as the rear addition.
- #4. The south elevation and rear addition are seen in this north facing photograph.
- #5. This northwest looking photograph shows detail of the wooden spires, battlements and crenellations on the eastern and southern elevations.
- #6. This detail photograph shows the window treatment, drip sill and partial detail of the wooden battlements and crenellations.
- #7. This photograph of the eastern elevation shows the detail of the front door.
- #8. This photo looks almost directly east from the entryway back toward the front door. The spiral staircase is seen on the left and the parlor is on the right.
- #9. This interior photo looks into the parlor located in the southern half of the building.
- #10. This photo is taken from the center of the dining room looking northeast. the Bay addition is visible as well as a portion of the dining room.

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- #11. Also taken from the center of the dining, this westward looking photograph shows interior detail, including the distinctive molding around the doorways.
- ~~#12. A gift shop was, until recently, housed in the rear addition. This southward looking photograph shows the window treatments in the rear addition.~~
- #13. West (rear) addition and adjacent building to west of Miller House, view to the north.
- #14. North elevation, view to east.
- #15. North elevation, view to west.
- #16. Patio with fountain, north elevation, view to west.
- #17. Historic photo of southeast elevation, dated circa 1875, view to the northwest. Photographer unknown, original at Mary Aaron Museum.

PHOTOGRAPH #12 DOES NOT EXIST

Miller, Warren P., House
704 D Street
Marysville, Yuba County, CA



SCALE: 1/10 inch = 1'

