

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 97001103

Date Listed: 9/22/97

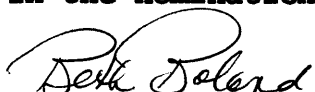
Pyle, Ernie, House
Property Name

Bernalillo
County

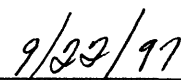
NM
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper



Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 5: Because the fence contributes, the accurate count is 2 contributing buildings and 1 contributing structure.

Section 8: Significance based on associations with an important person; all other associations stem from the associations with Ernie Pyle. Therefore, only criterion B is applicable, not criterion A.

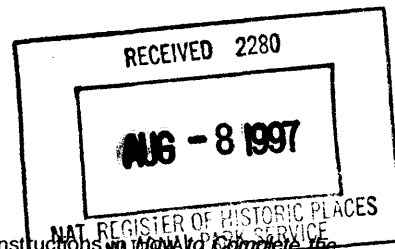
This was discussed with Mary Ann Anders of the New Mexico SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1103

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on how to complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name ERNIE PYLE HOUSE

other names/site number ERNIE PYLE LIBRARY

2. Location

street & number 900 Girard Boulevard, S. E. not for publication

city or town Albuquerque vicinity

state N.M. code NM county Bernalillo code 001 zip code 87112

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Lyn Sebastian SHPO 8-5-97
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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 official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 the Keeper

Beth Boland

Date of Action

9/22/97

ERNIE PYLE HOUSE
Name of Property

BERNALILLO COUNTY, NM
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/SINGLE DWELLING

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/LIBRARY

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/RANCH STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls FRAME

STUCCO

roof WOOD SHINGLE

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

ERNIE PYLE HOUSE
Name of Property

BERNALILLO COUNTY, NM
County and State

8. 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 characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses 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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

LITERATURE

Period of Significance

1940-1945

Significant Dates

1940

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

ERNIE PYLE

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

ARTHUR McCOLLUM

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

ERNIE PYLE HOUSE
Name of Property

BERNALILLO COUNTY, NM
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.191 ACRES

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	3	3	5	2	9	6	5	3	8	8	1	8	1	5
Zone			Easting					Northing						

2

Zone			Easting					Northing						

3

Zone			Easting					Northing						

4

Zone			Easting					Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title LISA KERSAVAGE, INTERN; EDGAR BOLES, PLANNER; MARY PISCITELLI JIMPHRES, ASSOC. PLANNER

organization CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE PLANNING DEPARTMENT date JULY 11, 1997

street & number 600 2nd ST. NW, P.O. BOX 1293 telephone (505) 924-3891

city or town ALBUQUERQUE state NM zip code 87103

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE, RIO GRANDE VALLEY LIBRARY SYSTEM

street & number 500 COPPER ST. NW, P.O. BOX 1293 telephone (505) 768-5141

city or town ALBUQUERQUE state NM zip code 87103

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Present and Original Physical Description of Property

The Ernie Pyle House is tidy, unpretentious and known to Pyle's fans as the "little white cottage." This early Ranch Style house was built in 1940, post- Great Depression and pre-World War II, when most new Albuquerque houses were simple and utilitarian. The low pitched roof, orientation of the wide side of the house to the street, the separation of the public and private rooms, and the attached garage all help make it a Ranch Style house.¹ Stylistically, this is a very common house; in fact, it could be a model for one of those "little boxes made of ticky tacky."² However, it is somewhat unusual in this Albuquerque suburb in its reserved style and Midwestern character.

The white, one-story, wood frame house is approximately 1,130 square feet. It has a low-pitched hipped roof with wood shingles. There is a small roof overhang above a simple molding. The house has wide drop siding with narrow corner boards. It sits on a concrete foundation, which due to the topography is less visible on the south side than on the north. Most windows are steel casements, however, the front facade has one picture window flanked by steel casements and one wood fixed window. The porch is incorporated under the primary roof and has plain, square, wood posts with a non-structural lumber frame spanning between them. The house has some original wrought iron work; the porch balustrade and decorative scroll work hung between two porch posts. A non-original handrail of similar design lines the sidewalk. The attached garage on the south side, which is set back under the porch roof, was converted to a guest bedroom by Pyle in 1941. The garage door was removed and replaced with steel casement windows and the same drop siding. The entire porch and one window on the front facade are lined with green cloth awnings, recent addition.

¹ This house is clearly an early variation of the Ranch Style, and can also be termed a "cottage," meaning a small, one-storey house

² Malvina Reynolds, *Little Boxes and Other Handmade Songs*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

At the rear of the lot is an outbuilding that matches the style of the house. It has a gabled roof with the same green-stained wood shingles, drop wood siding and steel casement windows. Pyle used this as a workshop for making furniture and as a storage room. Next to the outbuilding is a small gravestone marked "Cheetah," the family dog. In the far southeast corner of the lot is a memorial for Pyle, which was created in 1984 by Albuquerque artist and World War II veteran Willard Schroder. The large white sculpture is a relief of a soldier mourning the death of another, and an inscription of Pyle's most famous column, "*The Death of Captain Henry Waskow*."

On the south side of the lot there is a picket fence that Pyle built. The west and north sides of the lot are defined by a low concrete retaining wall. There are many trees in the yard. Two large Siberian Elms line the street on the southern end of the lot. Pyle planted several Elms when he moved in, however it is unclear whether the remaining mature trees are the ones he planted. The others are ornamental trees, donated to the library in memory of Pyle. When Pyle lived in the house, there was a large cemetery across the street, which allowed 60-mile views to the west. Around 1948 (according to Sanborn Maps) the former cemetery was platted and houses built, obscuring the views that Pyle loved.

The house has superb integrity, the only significant alteration is the addition of bookshelves lining the interior walls. The house was donated to the City of Albuquerque by the estate of Ernie Pyle, and the City quickly converted it into the first branch library. Today the house is full of books, with even the closets lined with book shelves. It also houses Pyle memorabilia; letters, unfinished articles, photographs, a typewriter. The former garage/guest bedroom is the children's library, entered from a Pyle-laid brick patio. The library is popular with residents, and is visited by people from all over the country who are interested in Ernie Pyle's life and writing.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance

It is exquisite irony that this journalist (Ernie Pyle) became celebrated for celebrating the non-celebrated. It is further irony that his deeply moving pieces became so disremembered at war's end." Studs Terkel³

Ernie Pyle was a Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalist, most known for his work as a World War II correspondent. He was killed by Japanese sniper fire in 1945, on the tiny island of Ie Shima. His column, according to the *New York Times*, was the "chronicler of the average soldier's daily rounds."⁴ Fondness for his column was almost universal, from Eleanor Roosevelt to the local butcher; all expressed deep admiration for the "shy, little man." Pyle had his house built on Albuquerque's East Mesa in 1940, just before leaving for England to cover the burgeoning war. He and his wife owned the house until 1945, when they both died. The house today is Ernie Pyle Library, a City of Albuquerque branch library, home of the annual August 3 "Ernie Pyle Day" celebration and a major pilgrimage site for Pyle's fans. This house is worthy of listing on the National Register because it is associated with Pyle's productive life more than any other building. Pyle's birthplace, in Dana, Indiana is an Indiana State Historic Landmark.

The house is associated with Pyle when he was producing his most famous and creative work. When Pyle had the house built in 1940 he was not yet famous as a war correspondent, but was a roving journalist and travel writer for Scripps-Howard. He reached his height of popularity, and had his most lasting influence with his coverage of World War II, from 1941-1945. Ernie Pyle's work as a war correspondent required him to be away from home for long periods of time, but the house is associated with his most important work in several ways. Pyle returned to Albuquerque many times from the front, often pretending to rest while actually writing a backlog of articles. Second, soldiers on the front have a special relationship to "Home," and Pyle put

³ David Nichols with forward by Studs Terkel. *Ernie's War. The Best Of Ernie Pyle's World War II Dispatches.* (New York : Random House, 1986)

⁴ "Ernie Pyle Killed on Ie Island. Foe Fired When All Seemed Safe", *New York Times*, April 19, 1945.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

words to that relationship. His columns often referred to his "little white cottage in Albuquerque," and how he longed to be there. Pyle wrote so often about the house that it became almost a trademark phrase. Columns written about Pyle nearly always referred to the house. Although readers appreciated references to his house, it ultimately disrupted his home life because sightseers often drove past his house, hoping for a glimpse of him. So many people stopped in that he often had to escape to local hotels to get any rest or columns written.⁵ Finally, when Pyle was able to take a break from the war and the ubiquitous deadlines, he personalized the house by his own handiwork, which is preserved in the Ernie Pyle Library and on its grounds.

A home was something the Pyles never really had in their early adult life. They had an apartment in Washington DC, but they traveled so often that it was rarely used. Before their trip to South America, Ernie Pyle wrote, "When people from all over this country ask where we are from, we say Washington DC. We carry District of Columbia tags on our car. We put down Washington on hotel registers. Yet we really have no home at all."⁶ Ernie Pyle felt that he and his wife, Jerry, needed a home, but they were unsure where to settle, Santa Fe or Albuquerque.

Pyle spent three weeks in 1938 driving around New Mexico writing stories for Scripps Howard. His articles about Albuquerque do not reveal that he would later build a home in the city, but his love of New Mexico is clear. He found the landscape beautiful and the people charming. There are several reasons he might have chosen Albuquerque as his new home. He and his wife were both sickly, and Albuquerque had a booming health care industry and was advertised all over the

⁵ John Valentino. "Ernie Pyle Speaks to a New Generation," *Wall Street Journal*, April 17, 1985.

⁶ Lee Miller. *The Story of Ernie Pyle*. p. 100.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

country as having a climate that promoted good health. Albuquerque was a transportation hub, with a major railroad station, the recently realigned and paved Route 66, and a new airport, the only one in the state. In fact, his house is only about a mile from the airport. This was probably important to Pyle, who loved aviation and was a perennial traveler. Also, Pyle most certainly wanted Jerry to have a place to call home. In a locally famous article in *New Mexico Magazine* called, *Why Albuquerque*, he explained why he and Jerry, after six years of having no home, settled in Albuquerque; "So at last we decided to acquire a base. Not for the purpose of settling down, not a permanent hearthside at all, but just some definite walls in a definite space that we could feel were ours. A sort of home plate, that we could run to on occasion, and then run away from again." They had intended the house to be a vacation home, where they would stay one month out of the year. However, after they moved in they never moved out.

On a vacation to New Mexico in 1939, Pyle and Jerry looked at properties in Santa Fe, but found the existing houses were too expensive. They did, however, buy two or three acres of land. Sometime in the beginning of 1940, Pyle visited Albuquerque and in a letter to Jerry wrote about a plot he had seen on the outskirts of Albuquerque; "The statistics were that the two lots would be \$760, and the house around \$3,000, but having heard so much about extras, I thought up every possibility of expense I could think of...And the result was that our \$3,000 home, plus lot, extras on house, various assessments, grading, shrubbery, paving, furnishing, etc., would cost us close to \$6,000 and would probably run us \$300-\$400 a year to keep up! So I guess we have exhausted New Mexico for home possibilities. However, I did get kind of house-building crazy during my studies, so to give us a chance to talk it over I deposited \$25 to hold the two lots for forty-five days...Somehow, I'm more set than ever on the necessity of us getting some place-and the fun of it too."⁷ Plans changed, however, and several months later, in a letter to his friend Cavanaugh, Pyle wrote; "Well sir, we're gonna do it. And apparently right away. In Santa Fe. We just decided all of a sudden, and sort of simultaneously. I really think it is the thing to do...When we started this boat trip, she (Jerry) said that when she went out to see that spot in

⁷ Miller. p. 127.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Santa Fe the last time, she felt that if she could just be there with her books and piano and cigarettes and cold coffee, she would never want to leave it again. I am terribly afraid of our future as we're going now; if the business in New Mexico can offer her a minute of contentment,

I'll jump at it."⁸ However, their plans quickly changed again. Pyle flew to New Mexico alone, Jerry stayed behind in a hotel room in Cincinnati. Pyle made plans to build a house, to be designed by Arthur McCollum, but in Albuquerque, not Santa Fe. He wired to Jerry, "Have just ordered built magnificent baronial castle on Crackerbox Row to be ready December 1st...I am leaving at three o'clock before changing my mind."⁹

Pyle was typically cynical about the house in private correspondence. In public, he wrote glowingly about his new home. In "*Why Albuquerque*," he wrote: "Here are the things we like about Albuquerque: We like it because we have a country mailbox instead of a slot in the door. We like it because our front yard stretches as far as you can see, and because old Mt. Taylor, 65 miles away, is like a framed picture in our front window. We like it because when we look to the westward we look clear over and above the city of Albuquerque and on beyond, it seems, halfway to the Pacific Ocean.... Yes, there are lots of nice places in the world. I could live with considerable pleasure in the Pacific Northwest or in New England, or on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, or in Key West or California or Honolulu. But there is only one of me, and I can't live in all those places. So if we can only have one house-and that's all we want-then it has to be in New Mexico, and preferably right at the edge of Albuquerque where it is now."

The simplicity and austerity of the house can be probably be attributed to Pyle's uneasiness with spending money. While his income records for 1940 were unavailable, in 1943 he made

* Miller, p. 132

⁹ Miller, p. 133.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

\$69,000-\$29,000 of which he paid in taxes.¹⁰ He obviously did not wish to incur any debt, and paid \$4,000 cash for the little white house. He worried about most aspects of the house construction, and wrote to his friends the Shaffers, "Have they started the house yet? I suppose there'll be six complications per day, and queer things like amortizations and debentures, and I'll bet sure as hell I wind up in jail and lose every cent we put into it...You might as also make sure that they put floors in the rooms and a roof on the house, but since they are experienced builders they will probably think of that themselves."¹¹ He later wrote to the Shaffers, "Please tell the contractors I would appreciate very much if they would put hinges on the doors, so we could open them in case we wanted to go through."¹²

For all of his trepidation, Pyle was also excited to have a house to call his own. He wrote, "I just itch to be out there and putter around with it, and wish Jerry were as eager."¹³ Jerry was unhappy with the house, but probably more unhappy with Pyle himself. He was traveling frequently, and planning to go to war, and the house probably seemed like a poor consolation for her loneliness. She wrote in a letter to a friend, "But to pretend that I give one solitary good goddamn about a shack or a palace or any other material consideration in this world would be to foist upon everybody at all interested the greatest gold-brick insult a low mind could conceive." She would eventually become very attached to the house, and after the house was built Pyle wrote to Lee Miller, "The little house is wonderful. It's no bigger than your thumb, but Jerry has certainly made a little gem out of it. She says she is never going to leave it, and I think she's a little more than half serious."

The house must have created a stir of excitement in Albuquerque. *The Albuquerque Journal* wrote an article about the house, "It's a trim little house, white with green roof and clean lines. The living room has a fireplace that looks west over the mesa to the Rio Grande. In an alcove is

¹⁰ Nichols, p. 21

¹¹ Miller, p. 133

¹² Miller, p. 136

¹³ Miller, p. 13

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

a baby grand piano...One of the nicest rooms is Ernie's studio-paneled in knotty pine. Tall built-in bookshelves reaching to the ceiling."¹⁴ However, the attention to the house created several problems, he wrote, "If this isn't irony—here we spend a lot of money building a refuge and then damned if I don't finally have to come down to a hotel and hide in order to get my work finished...That's a hell of a price to pay for a decent wage. I've practically become a goldfish. If I weren't afraid of the future, I would quit this job and raise cactus for a living."¹⁵ He claimed that it was the tourists that bothered him, not the locals; "Downtown they (locals) gather around wherever I go and shake hands and say nice things and then immediately go away as people should...they have a certain Western dignity which keeps them from badgering you."

Pyle must have longed for the home when he was on the front, but on visits home, actually seeing the plain house and Jerry's mental instability probably made it increasingly difficult to hang onto the fantasy. However, Jerry took good care of the house for Pyle, who planned to retire there. Pyle once wrote, "That Girl has been burdened by recurring illnesses, and has had to revolve between home and hospital. But she has succeeded in keeping the little white house just as it always was, which she knew is what I would want." ¹⁶

The house today has changed minimally in appearance since their deaths, yet it serves as a vibrant, living memorial as a busy branch library. After Pyle died there were various memorials planned, most of which Jerry Pyle scotched. She approved of a library in Dana, Indiana and most certainly would have approved of this library. In 1947 the Albuquerque City Council accepted the house to be maintained in perpetuity as a memorial library.¹⁷ The library houses Ernie Pyle memorabilia and archives, a small adult collection and a larger children's collection.

¹⁴ Miller, p. 140

¹⁵ Miller, p. 161

¹⁶ Nichols, p. 9.

¹⁷ "Pyle Home Accepted as City Commission Holds Hot Session." *Albuquerque Journal*: May 6, 1947.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

It is a cozy, if somewhat crowded, little library. Pyle would probably love the sheer number of books in the house, over 10,000 volumes--on all the walls, piled on desks, in closets, and even a periodicals section in the bathroom. It is extremely popular with neighborhood residents, and receives many visitors interested in Pyle's life.

Pyle was born near Dana, Indiana on August 3, 1900. Although from a family of farmers, he found rural life boring and wanted to leave school to fight in World War I. His parents, however, made him finish high school. By the time he finished, the war was over and he entered Indiana University in 1919. In 1923, one semester shy of getting his degree in journalism, Pyle left school to take a reporting job at *La Porte Herald* in La Porte, Indiana. After several months he became a reporter with a competitor of the *Washington Post*, the Scripps Howard *Washington Daily News*. He would stay with Scripps Howard the rest of his life.

In Washington he met a bright and attractive woman named Geraldine Siebolds, whom he called "Jerry," or "That Girl" in his columns. They were married by a Justice of the Peace on July 7, 1925, but they kept it secret for many years because Jerry had little respect for the institution. Both fancied themselves as bohemians, and quit their jobs in 1926 to drive around the country. However, they never really dropped out of society altogether, David Nichols, Pyle's biographer wrote, "It was one thing to live a pared-down existence, mock middle-class aspirations, drink bootleg liquor, and listen to Jerry read poetry aloud, but it was quite another to be unemployed, and Pyle feared being out of work."¹⁸ They returned to New York after driving 9,000 miles in ten months, and Pyle took a job at the *Evening World*.

Pyle returned to the *Washington Daily News* in December, 1927, to write the nation's first daily aviation column. He began his column only one year after Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic flight, when the public considered aviators great heroes. Pyle spent his days hanging around airports, and realized that although very shy, he was observant and could write interesting stories

¹⁸ Nichols, p. 29.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

about ordinary people. He had a homespun writing style that some adored and others disliked. A.J. Liebling, a *New Yorker Magazine* critic, suspected that the style was affected, but later rescinded, saying it was probably the only way Pyle could write.¹⁹

In 1932, Pyle resigned as aviation columnist, much to the chagrin of aviators across the country, to become managing editor of the *Washington Post*. In 1934, Pyle developed a lingering case of influenza and his doctor advised him to move to a warmer climate. He and Jerry drove to Los Angeles then took a freighter to Philadelphia, a six thousand mile trip. When he returned to Washington, Pyle wrote a series of stories about the trip that proved to be very popular. This led to a new six-year assignment with the *Washington Post* as a roving reporter. His job as roving reporter was to drive wherever he liked and write six columns a week about whatever interested him. He crossed the continent thirty-five times, and sent reports from South America to Alaska. He wrote about rugged individualists across the continent; about how they lived and the stories they had to share. As the article became more and more popular, Pyle traveled almost continuously, generally leaving Jerry behind. According to David Nichols, this was the beginning of Jerry's depression. She did not enjoy traveling, but did enjoy sedentary things; reading, crossword puzzles and playing the piano. She wanted to bear children, but Pyle was impotent. She became more and more depressed and turned to alcohol and drugs for solace. She sold their Washington home in 1937, and until they built their home in Albuquerque in 1940, she was nomadic, living with her mother in Minnesota or with various friends around the country.

Although very successful, Pyle was becoming tired of with writing light pieces; he wrote, "For the last two years I've been so goddamn bored writing silly dull columns about Mt. Hood and hop ranches that I think I'm going nuts."²⁰ Against the wishes of Jerry, Pyle decided to start covering the developing European war. Pyle departed with a naive and optimistic attitude about

¹⁹ "ByLine: Ernie Pyle." *National Portrait Gallery*, 1983.

²⁰ Nichols, p. 10.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

the war. He left in December 1940 for England, leaving Jerry to oversee construction of their house in Albuquerque. Shortly after Pyle arrived in England the Luftwaffe began an intense fire bomb assault on London. Pyle wrote beautifully about the attack, and the column was a success in the United States. The column is credited with changing many Americans' opinions about the war and the British. The isolationist movement in the United States was weakening, due partially to reports like Pyle's, which described the British responding bravely and heroically against the Germans and provided proof that England was worthy of direct American support.

Pyle's writing was becoming more accomplished and appreciated. He wrote about the December 30, 1940 attack on London, "...I shall always remember above all the other things in my life the monstrous loveliness of that one single view of London on a holiday night—London stabbed with great fires, shaken by explosions, its dark regions along the Thames sparkling with pinpoints of white hot bombs, all of it roofed with a ceiling of pink that held bursting shells, balloons, flares and the grinds of vicious engines... These things all went together to make the most hateful, most beautiful single scene I have ever known."²¹ His life, like his writing style, was a series of contrasts; he lived a bohemian life but wrote about the everyday, common man. He held dear to his heart, at least his public heart, a typical American life in his little white house with the white picket fence and his lovely wife. In the same breath, however, he could call his wife a "psychopathic case," and ridicule his own house as a regular little boxed-up mass production shack in a cheap new suburb.²² His choice of subject matter was fresh and appreciated. Nobel Prize winner John Steinbeck wrote, "There are really two wars and they haven't much to do with each other. There is the war of maps and logistics, of campaigns, of ballistics, armies, divisions, and regiments—that is General Marshall's war. Then there is the war of the homesick, weary, funny, violent, common men who wash their socks in their helmets, complain about the food, whistle at Arab girls, or any girls for that matter, and lug themselves through as dirty a business

²¹ Ernie Pyle, December 30, 1940 (Scripps Howard Syndicated Column).

²² Nichols. p. 14 (quoting a letter from Pyle to his friend Cavanaugh).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

as the world has ever seen and do it with a humor and dignity and courage—and that is Ernie Pyle's war. He knows it better than anyone and writes about it better than anyone."²³

When Pyle returned from England in 1941, Jerry made her first suicide attempt, closing herself in the kitchen of the new house in Albuquerque and turning on the gas jets of the range. Ernie found her and rushed her to the hospital and she was soon released. In August 1941, while Pyle was touring Canadian air bases, a neighbor found Jerry hemorrhaging at the mouth. She was drinking "Colossally," as Pyle put it, and suffered internal bleeding. He returned home to help her recover, which she did much faster than doctors had anticipated. By years end, however, she was drinking heavily again. On April 14, 1942, Pyle divorced Jerry. He had the concurrence of her doctors family, who were hoping to shock her back into sanity. Instead, she grew steadily worse, and finally Pyle had her committed to a sanitarium.

Pyle traveled to North Africa with the U.S. Army, arriving in Algeria on November 22, 1942. He would stay in Africa until June 1943. He marched with the First Infantry Division, through Algeria and Tunisia and on to the Mediterranean, meeting tough opponents in the Germans and Italians, but ultimately defeating The Axis powers. His naiveté of war was diminishing and he was both fascinated and disgusted by the suspension of morals necessary to commit the bestial acts in order to win a war. He was also becoming more and more afraid of death. One of his first articles was about how he sought shelter in a ditch with another soldier, when they were bombed by a low-flying aircraft. Pyle turned to the soldier and tapped his arm and said, "Whew, that was close, eh?" The soldier didn't answer; he was dead. Although Pyle wrote enthusiastically, he was by nature malcontent, and wrote in a letter to a friend that the column was "something I don't love anymore. I would do almost anything to abandon it forever. I have no interest in it, and I'm weary almost unto illness of thinking for a living."

²³ "Ernie Comes Back Home." *Indiana University News-letter*, November 1941.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Shortly after Pyle landed in Algeria, he asked Jerry to remarry him, but she declined. He seemed to hope she would somehow be the woman he first married, he even wrote to her; "I am all alone.

Be my old Jerry when I come back. I love you." In March, she wrote to Pyle that she had a job at Kirtland Field (Albuquerque's Kirtland Air Force Base) and had moved out of the sanitarium and back into the house. Pyle wrote back to her, "I'm going to be so torn up inside and maladjusted by the time (the war) is over that I'll take alot of 'doin' with, so your mission in life is to get well and ready and take care of me when I get back!"²⁴

After the Tunisian War was over, Pyle took only a few days off and then went with the invasion voyage to Sicily on June 29, 1943. He seemed to feel a moral obligation to stay with the troops, whether because he finally found an activity that did not bore him or whether he felt he was truly representing an unheard American voice, that of the common soldier. The campaign in Sicily exhausted him, and he returned to the U.S. for a break in September 1943. After a hectic, but brief time in Washington, which included a movie producer seducing him into making a movie about his life, Pyle traveled to Indiana to visit his father and aunt. Then he flew to Albuquerque, where Jerry met him at the airport and took him to the little house. The months he stayed in Albuquerque were frenzied. Friends from across the country flew in to visit, the Hollywood movie producer came to discuss the film in more detail, bags of mail came in daily, people drove by the house at all times, hoping to catch a glimpse of the now famous war correspondent and adventurer, and then there was Jerry. Jerry had not recovered from her mental illness, she had just learned to hide it a little more. Pyle could see the tortured look on her face, and avoided spending any time with her. Shortly before he departed again for the war, Jerry had another nervous breakdown and Pyle had to hospitalize her. Pyle left her in Albuquerque and went to Washington to finalize the plans for a film, to sign copies of his popular new book, "*Here is Your War: The Story of GI Joe*," and to have tea with Eleanor Roosevelt, one of his most famous fans.

²⁴ Nichols, p. 24.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Pyle returned to the front in Italy in the winter of 1943-1944, one the coldest and snowiest on record. Besides the miserable weather, the terrain was difficult and the German soldiers were active and much better trained than any opponents in North Africa or Sicily. He wrote his most famous story during this campaign about the death of Captain Waskow. The story describes how the Captain's body was carried down the mountain by mule, and relays each man's reaction to the corpse. In April 1944 Pyle won the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished war correspondence. It was awarded for his body of work in 1943, although people often assume it rests solely on the merit of the *Death of Captain Henry Waskow*.

On June 7, 1944, one day after the Allies invaded Normandy, Pyle landed in France to report on the new front. The war in France was brutal, and Pyle suffered many close calls. However, on August 25, 1944 Pyle entered Paris with the allies to liberate the city. He was caught up in the excitement, but also deeply exhausted. He wrote to his readers saying that he couldn't take anymore, "I've been immersed in it too long. My spirit is wobbly and my mind is confused. The hurt has finally become too great. All of a sudden it seemed to me if I heard one more shot or saw one more dead man, I would go off my nut."²⁵

Peace was not to be found stateside. He spent several days in New York, then to Indiana, and finally Albuquerque. Everyone wanted to see him. As David Nichols wrote, "*Editor and Publisher*" wanted an interview. People on the street wanted his autograph. Helen Keller wanted to run her hands over his face; John Steinbeck wanted to talk. The mayor of Albuquerque wanted to throw a welcome home dinner with five hundred guests. Wives and mothers wanted information on their husbands and sons. Lester Owan wanted to confer about his problems with his movie, *The Story of GI Joe*. Photographers wanted to take his picture. Scripps-Howard competitors wanted him to work for them." His problems in the little white house were increasing. Jerry had a private nurse living with her, but that did little to keep her sane. Pyle arrived home one day to find the nurse in hysterics; Jerry was bleeding profusely after

²⁵ Pyle, "Farewell to Europe," September 5, 1944 (Scripps Howard Syndicated Column).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

another suicide attempt. She was not mortally injured, but had to be institutionalized again. While Pyle was receiving honorary Ph.D.s from the University of New Mexico and Indiana University, Jerry was receiving electric shock treatments in an Albuquerque hospital. Pyle could not stand to be in the house any longer; he planned to go to war again. This would be his final trip, to the Pacific.

Jerry accompanied Pyle to Los Angeles in December 1944, from where he would be shipping off for the Pacific. They went dancing and seemed to be at peace with each other. Pyle, finally, was promising to return to Albuquerque for good after this trip. New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque had designated August 3rd, his birthday, as "Ernie Pyle Day," and both were excited to live together in their little white house in the City and State that appreciated him so much. They had not lived together for any extended period of time for ten years.

Pyle wasn't happy to be covering the war in the Pacific, particularly with the Navy, and planned to return to the infantry in Europe as soon as he could. He thought the Navy had it easy in the Pacific; despite complaining more and doing less than in the army. His columns reflected his attitude, which concerned Navy brass and lowered the moral of enlisted men. However, Pyle found the drama was starting to increase, particularly with the invasion of Okinawa. As Pyle and the Marines traveled from Ulithi, near Guam, to Okinawa, he felt closer and closer to death. The invasion was difficult, but Pyle survived and returned to the Marines' ship, the Panamint.

On April 16, 1945 Marines landed on Ie Shima, a small island west of Okinawa. On April 18, "Ernie Pyle died on Ie Shima, like so many of the doughboys he had written about."²⁶ He had been with the infantry looking for a command site when they were fired upon by a Japanese sniper. They took cover on the ground but Pyle made a fatal mistake, he stuck his head up to check his friends and was shot in the left temple, dying immediately. The infantry had to leave Pyle's body behind because of the snipers, a note from that day said, "Ernie Pyle has been killed

²⁶

"Ernie Pyle Killed on Ie Island, Foe Fired When All Seemed Safe", *New York Times*, April 19, 1945.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

by sniper fire. E's beside jeep about 300 yards inland on egress road from beach Red-T-4. Send first aid men to recover body when sniper fire dies down." He was buried in a crude coffin on the Island, with a grave marker that said, "At this spot, The 77th Infantry Division Lost a Buddy, Ernie Pyle, 18 April 1945." The men who recovered his body found an unfinished column, deeply moving and prophetic, in his pocket;

Last summer I wrote that I hoped the end of the war could be a gigantic relief, but not an elation. In the joyousness of high spirits it is easy for us to forget the dead. Those who are gone would not want to wish themselves to be a millstone of gloom around our necks.

But there are many of the living who would have had burned into their brains forever the unnatural sight of cold dead men scattered over the hillsides and in the ditches along the high rows of hedges throughout the world.

Dead men by mass production—in one country after another—month after month and year after year. Dead men in winter and dead men in summer.

Dead men in such promiscuity that they become monotonous.

Dead men in such monstrous infinity that you come almost to hate them.²⁷

Pyle was one of the last Americans to die in the war. At least one newspaper²⁸ reported that the day before he died he said, "I wish I was in Albuquerque."

Reaction to his death was immediate. Eleanor Roosevelt, whose husband, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, had died six days earlier wrote in her daily article, "My Day" April 19, 1945, "The Sad news has just come to us that Ernie Pyle has been killed at the front with our boys in Okinawa. To thousands of people all over the world, his column has brought understanding of the human side of our fighting men. Mr. Pyle wanted above everything else to be with them in the Pacific. I am glad he had the opportunity, but like many others, I shall miss his column, with its gracious understanding of human beings. I shall never forget how much I enjoyed meeting him here in the White House last year and how much I admired the frail and honest man who

²⁷ The handwritten column is on display at the Ernie Pyle Library

²⁸ *Southeast Heights Outlook*, 1981.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 15

could endure hardships because he loved his job and our men." Albuquerque ex-officio mayor Clyde Tingley wrote, "Ernie Pyle was Albuquerque's adopted son, all of us sorely grieve his passing. Though he never held a public office, he was one of the most widely known and universally respected men in America." President Truman, who had been in office only six days, after the death of President Roosevelt, wrote, "More than any other man, he became the spokesman of the ordinary American in arms doing so many extraordinary things. It was his genius that the mass and power of our military and naval forces never obscured the men that made them. He wrote about a people in arms as people still, but a people moving in a determination which did not need pretensions as a part of power. Nobody knows how many individuals in our forces he helped with his writings. But all Americans understand how wisely, how warm heartedly, how honestly he served his country and his profession. He deserves the gratitude of all his countrymen."

Jerry Pyle's health declined after Ernie Pyle died. She collected various medals for him, including a posthumous Medal for Merit from the Army and Navy, went to the opening of the movie about his life, "*The Story of GI Joe*," with Burgess Meredith playing Pyle, and she critiqued plans for projects to memorialize Pyle. But her health continued to fade. She lost a significant amount of weight, caught influenza and died on November 23, 1945; six months after Pyle.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

1. *Albuquerque Journal*. "Pyle Home Accepted as City Commission Holds Hot Session." May 6, 1947.
 2. Clark, Clifford Edward, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill, N.C. and London, Eng. : The University of North Carolina Press, 1986).
 3. Cochran. Al "Ernie Pyle on New Mexico's Back Roads." *New Mexico Magazine*. July, 1986.
 4. *Indiana University News-letter*. "Ernie Comes Back Home." November 1941.
 5. McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, N.Y. : A. Knopf, 1984).
 6. Melzer, Richard. *Ernie Pyle in the American Southwest* (Santa Fe, N.M. : Sunstone Press, 1996).
 7. Moore, Charles W., Kathryn Smith, and Peter Becker, editors. *Home, Sweet Home : American Vernacular Architecture* (New York, N.Y. : Rizzoli, 1983).
 8. Miller, Lee. *An Ernie Pyle Album* (New York, N.Y. : William Sloane'Assoc., Inc., 1946).
 9. Miller, Lee. *The Story of Ernie Pyle* (New York, N.Y. : Viking Press, 1950).
 10. *National Portrait Gallery*. "ByLine: Ernie Pyle." 1983.
 11. *New York Times*. "Ernie Pyle Killed on Ie Island, Foe Fired When All Seemed Safe." April 19, 1945.
 12. Pyle, Ernie. *Brave Men* (New York, N.Y. : H. Holt and Company, 1944).
 13. Pyle, Ernie. *Ernie Pyle in England* (New York, N.Y. : R.M. McBride and Company, 1941).
 14. Pyle, Ernie with introduction by David Nichols. *Ernie Pyle's America, The Best of Ernie Pyle's 1930s Travel Dispatches* (New York, N.Y. : Random House, 1989).
 15. Pyle, Ernie. *Ernie Pyle's Southwest* (Palm Desert, Calif. : Desert-Southwest, 1965).
 16. Pyle, Ernie, with biography by David Nichols. *Ernie's War, The Best of Ernie Pyle's World War II Dispatches* (New York, N.Y. : Random House, 1986).
 17. Pyle, Ernie. *Here is Your War* (New York, N.Y. : Arno Press, 1943).
-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

18. Pyle, Ernie. *Last Chapter* (New York, N.Y. : H. Holt and Company, 1947).
 19. Reynolds, Malvina. *Little Boxes and Other Handmade Songs*.
 20. Valentino, "Ernie Pyle Speaks to a New Generation." *Wall Street Journal*, April 17, 1985.
 21. Zorertich, Frank. "Library an Open Door to Pyle's World," *Albuquerque Journal*, December 14, 1991.
-

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 10, Block 22, Monterey Hills Addition

Boundary Justification

That lot (10) in Block 22 of the Monterey Hills Addition that has been associated with the Ernie Pyle house since its construction

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Ernie Pyle House

Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, New Mexico

Section number 10 Page 1

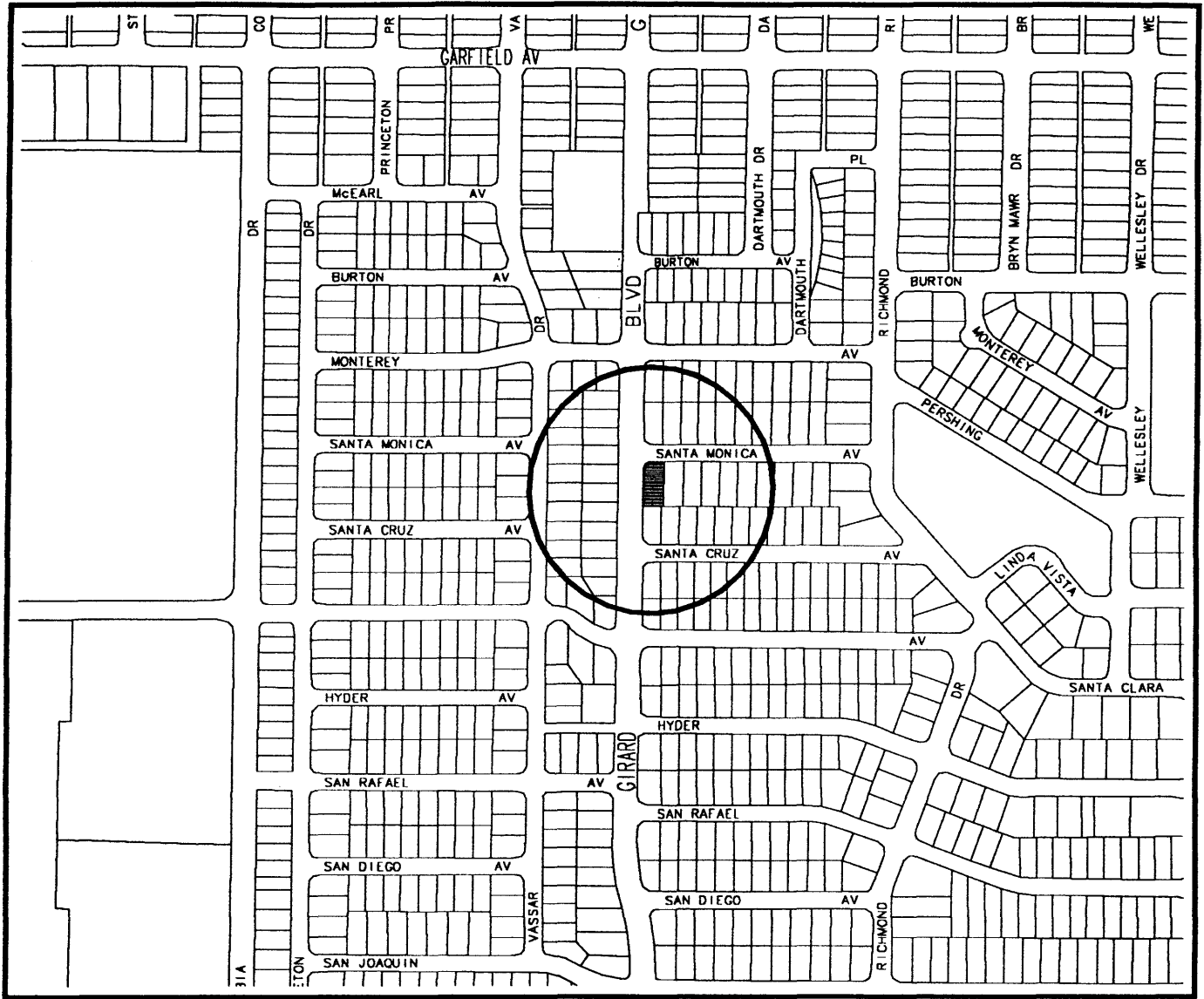
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Photograph log

Photographs by Edgar Boles, 1996

Negatives are housed at the City of Albuquerque Planning Department
600 Second Street, N.W., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

1. House and outbuilding, camera facing northeast
2. House and sideyard with fence placed by Pyle, camera facing northeast
3. House from intersection of Girard and Santa Monica, camera facing southeast
4. Front of house from west side of Girard, camera facing east
5. South side of house with brick patio by Pyle, camera facing north
6. East side of house, camera facing southwest
7. Front porch, camera facing southwest
8. Living room with front door at center and den beyond (both rooms now reading rooms of the Ernie Pyle Branch Library), camera facing northwest
9. Interior of garage converted to guest bedroom by Pyle (now the children's section of the Ernie Pyle Branch Library), camera facing west
10. Den with closet at left and living room beyond, camera facing southeast



900 GIRARD SE

