

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Wisconsin</b>	
COUNTY: <b>LaCrosse</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Hamlin Garland House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**357 West Garland Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**West Salem**

STATE <b>Wisconsin</b>	CODE	COUNTY: <b>LaCrosse</b>	CODE
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Mr. Alfred Wehrs**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**367 West Garland Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**West Salem**

STATE:  
**Wisconsin**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**County Clerks's Office**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**LaCrosse County Courthouse**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**LaCrosse**

STATE:  
**Wisconsin**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A rambling, nondescript structure painted a deep green, the Hamlin Garland house occupies approximately half an acre of its original four-acre lot, which extended to the corner of Garland and Oak Streets. The earliest portion of the house has been obscured by later encrustations. It was built in 1859-60 by William Hull, a stonemason and carpenter of the village, and appears to have been a rectangular, gabled, two-story frame dwelling with a one story wing. The second owner, Mrs. Rublee Hayes, lived in the house from about 1865 to 1893 and added a single-story eastern extension and a small kitchen wing to the rear.

The house assumed approximately its present configuration after the Garland family purchased it in 1893. Untill899, it remained unchanged but in that year the bedrooms and dining room were enlarged, screened porches built to the front and rear, and bathrooms installed. At the same time, a second story was added to both the east and west wings and the present two-story square bay to the original front. Three small chambers in the center and west wing of the house were made into one large living room with a beamed ceiling, the kitchen was moved further to the rear (south), and a dining room with a semi-octagonal bay inserted between the living room and the kitchen. A year later, in 1900, the Garlands installed a fireplace at the west end of the living room, the exterior chimney for which has been removed. Because houses in the area were customarily heated with stoves, it was only after much difficulty that a mason skilled in chimney construction was secured for the task.

A fire in the autumn of 1912, while the Garlands were at their winter home in Chicago, almost destroyed the west wing of the house as well as the author's study on the second floor of the east wing. The structure was repaired, but the Garlands seldom returned to West Salem after 1916, when they moved to New York. The house was subsequently rented, and in 1939, several years after Garland had settled in California, it was sold to Mr. John Meyer. The present owner acquired it from Meyer's widow, Mrs. Emma Meyer, in 1959.

During the last twelve years, the house has remained in a good state of repair although substantial modifications have occurred. The major exterior changes have taken place on the south or rear elevation and include the addition of a low, frame rectangular garage behind the kitchen, and the enclosure of the porch at the southeast corner of the house. A poured concrete floor and steps have also replaced the original wooden ones on the porch flanking the eastern side of the kitchen wing.

Inside, the living room retains the beamed ceiling, brick mantelpiece, and original exterior doorway. Most of the other rooms have been altered to a greater or lesser degree by subdivision and the installation of closets, and the stairway enclosed to create a private entrance for the upstairs apartment via an exterior door leading from the east side of the screened front porch.

The great oaks which dotted the lot during the Garland period have recently been removed, and west of the house, parallel to Oak Street, the current

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1893 - ca. 1916

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although Hamlin Garland's fiction has been hailed as "the finest regional work American literature has produced,"<sup>1</sup> equally if not more important was his contribution to the development in this country of literary naturalism. Hampered by "a traditional optimism reinforced by prudery,"<sup>2</sup> American literature has still failed to interpret the human experience with the depth of Tolstoy, Zola, and Hardy in Europe until the advent of the work of Garland, as well as of Crane, Norris, and London, at the turn of the century. Thus Garland became one of the pivotal figures in shaping the technique and philosophy of serious modern American fiction.<sup>3</sup>

The West Salem house which Garland as a thirty-three year old bachelor purchased for his parents in 1893, lay near his birthplace in the rolling Coulee region of southwestern Wisconsin. He lived and worked in Chicago and elsewhere, but a significant portion of his writing was done on his regular visits to West Salem, particularly after his marriage in 1899. During the early 1900's, Garland returned for four or five months each year to the "plain spacious old house," as he recalled it, on the edge of the village.<sup>4</sup> While his liberal turn of mind amidst a population of German Lutherans may have been one of the factors which caused him to frequent West Salem less and less after the death of the elder Garlands and his move to New York, he always considered the village his home, and the region's life was that described in most of his fiction, particularly the Middle Border series. The initial draft for much of the series, although revised and published several years later, was composed during Garland's summer stays at the West Salem house prior to 1916. At the writer's death, his ashes were returned to Neshonoc Cemetery near West Salem.

<sup>1</sup> Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycroft, eds., Twentieth Century American Authors (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1942), p. 516.

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Spiller et. al, eds., Literary History of the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 1016.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1017.

<sup>4</sup> Hamlin Garland in My Friendly Contemporaries, quoted in C. E. Shorer, "Hamlin Garland of Wisconsin," Wisconsin Magazine of History, XXXVII (Spring, 1954), p. 148.

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**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Garland, Hamlin. Main-Travelled Roads. New York: Harper and Row, 1891  
 Hart, James D. The Oxford Companion to American Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. p. 306.  
 Holloway, Jean. Hamlin Garland: A Biography. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960.  
 Kunitz, Stanley J. and Haycroft, Howard, eds. Twentieth Century American Authors. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1942, p. 516.  
 Shorer, C. E. "Hamlin Garland of Wisconsin." Wisconsin Magazine of History, Vol. XXXVII (Spring, 1954), pp. 147-50, 182-85.  
 Spiller, Robert E. et al., eds. Literary History of the United States. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960, pp. 1017-20.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "	°	'	"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "	43	53	56	
SE	° ' "	° ' "	91	04	51	
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Robert Gamble, Historian, Christopher Redman, Assistant

ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service DATE July 30, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:  
801 - 19th Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____  <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____  <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
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Hamlin Garland  
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(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

7. Description

Continued

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owner has constructed a small bungalow, 367 West Garland, where Garland installed a tennis court after the turn of the century.

8. Significance

Biography

Hamlin Garland was born on September 14, 1860, in a log cabin near West Salem, Wisconsin. When he was nine, his family moved to Iowa where he spent twelve hard, poverty-stricken years on a Middle Border farm. Garland was graduated from the Cedar Valley Seminary in Osage, Iowa in 1881, then helped his father move west once again, this time to Ordway, South Dakota. He himself worked a claim for a time in North Dakota, but in 1884 he left the frontier and headed for Boston with the intention of becoming a writer and orator. He remained in Boston for nine years, where he fell greatly under the influence of William Dean Howells' advocacy of realism in fiction. It was here also that he was first exposed to the ideas of Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and Henry George.

In 1891, Main-Travelled Roads, a collection of short stories appeared. Howells commended them as stories "full of the bitter and burning dust, the foul and trampled slush, of the common avenues of life, the life of the men who hopelessly and cheerlessly make the wealth that enriches the alien and the idler and impoverishes the producer."<sup>5</sup> Garland exploded the romantic myths of the West, exposing the hard lot of the pioneers and frontiersmen. A Spoil for Office, his first novel, was published in this period as well.

Garland returned to the Middle West in 1893 and brought his parents back from the Dakotas to West Salem in order, he said, to rescue his mother from an early grave.<sup>6</sup> In 1899, he married Zulime Taft, whom he had met through her brother, sculptor Lorado Taft, in Chicago.

During the 1890's, Garland was a leading spokesman for many radical young thinkers of Chicago and New York, who could not accept the new industrial conditions that had been developing since the Civil War. He became an exponent of Henry George's single tax and supported populist causes.

<sup>5</sup>W. D. Howells in Introduction to Main-Travelled Roads (New York: Harper and Row, 1891), p.3.

<sup>6</sup>Kunitz and Haycroft, p. 516.

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8. Significance

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He developed his own theory, which he called "veritism," in an attempt to combine social realism with moral social purpose. Crumbling Idols (1894) and Jason Edwards: An Average Man (1892) are examples of this period.

By 1900 his outrage had been expressed and he turned to more romantic novels celebrating the strength of the individual rather than the oppressive environment. He moved to New York City in 1916 and there began to write his massive autobiography. His most famous work in this series is A Son of the Middle Border (1917), dealing with the Iowa and Dakota migrations, and the homestead in West Salem. By now his memories had mellowed and he wrote honestly but sympathetically of his early life in a monumental regional study which eventually included Trail Makers of the Middle Border (1926), the Pulitzer Prize-winning A Daughter of the Middle Border (1922), Back Trailers from the Middle Border (1928), and other works of lesser popularity.

In 1930 Garland moved to Los Angeles where he conducted psychic research and continued writing, though passed his literary prime, until his death on March 4, 1940.