

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1203

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Skilern House

Other names/site number: WA1020

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

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

2. Location

Street & number: 3470 E. Skilern Rd

City or town: Fayetteville State: Arkansas County: Washington

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A ___ B X C ___ D

<u>Marshall Miller</u>	<u>12/3/14</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	_____
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

1-27-2015

Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE Victorian: Queen Anne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone, Brick, Weatherboard

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The John Audley Skilern House was built in 1904-1905 as the residential center of an 800-acre farm in Washington County on the northeast corner of Fayetteville, Arkansas. The home is approximately 3,400 square feet and in the Folk Victorian Style with Queen Anne detailing. This wonderful example of a Folk Victorian home was built by John Audley Skilern, who was a noteworthy farmer and landowner in rural Washington County.

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Narrative Description

The Skillern Family originally settled on the land in the 1850s. Though most of the acreage was sold over the years, the John Audley Skillern House and remaining five acres was still owned by the family when they were sold to Albert and Jeanie Baltz in 1990.

The Baltz family has undertaken to restore the house exterior and to rehabilitate the interior with modern mechanical and electrical systems to produce a 3,400 square foot home containing ten rooms plus three bathrooms. There are five large rooms downstairs and five large rooms upstairs. The rooms include a kitchen with an adjoining pantry, four bedrooms, a living room, a dining room, and several additional sitting rooms.

The house is a two-story balloon frame structure. The exterior cladding is six inch beveled yellow pine siding with wood corner boards and wood trim around openings. The foundation of the porch is comprised of running-bond red-brick piers beneath each column with rough-cut field stone infill between the piers. The main portion of the house has an all rough-cut field stone foundation with irregular coursing. The gables on the south and west elevations have shingle detailing consistent with the Folk Victorian style. Across a row, the shingles alternate between square and fish scale in a regular pattern. The subsequent rows are slightly offset from the row below, increasing the variety of the texture. The upper most portion of the gable has vertical bead board and each gable contains an attic vent.

The roof of the house features a main gable running east and west and cross gables on both the north and south elevations. The two-story wrap-around porch at the front (south elevation) of the house features a hipped roof. The porches on east and north elevations of the house as well as several additions in the rear of the house also feature hipped roofs. All portions of the roof are green asphalt shingle.

The main portion of the house is a front-facing "L" shape that takes on the gable front and wing form typical of Folk Victorian architecture. The main portion of the house runs east and west and the secondary wing faces south creating a cross gabled roof with a dominant front-facing gable that is typical of Folk Victorian/Queen Anne architecture. The wing projecting towards the front of the house has cut away bays on the corners, a detail reminiscent of the Eastlake Style. There are two wings in the back, both running perpendicular to the main portion of the house. The prominent gables of all four elevations are off center giving each facade an asymmetrical appearance, another feature typically found in Queen Anne houses.

The house has five (5) porches. There is one large two-tiered wrap-around porch at the south elevation of the house. There is a two-tiered porch on the west elevation of the house, two porches on the north elevation, and one single-tiered porch on the east elevation of the house.

The house has a total of thirty-two (32) windows. There are ten (10) on the south elevation, seven (7) on the west elevation (with one covered at the kitchen area), thirteen (13) on the north

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elevation, and two (2) along the east elevation. All windows are double-hung windows with no intermittent mullions or muntins, though the window surrounds are fairly simple. All windows are vertical in orientation, but vary in size.

The house has eight (8) exterior doors. There are three (3) doors on the south elevation, two (2) doors on the west elevation, three (3) doors on the north elevation, and one (1) door on the east elevation. All of the exterior doors are half glass, solid, red oak paneled doors. The two (2) doors on the south elevation have glass transoms located above the entranceway.

The house has four (4) chimneys. All four are made of red brick that matches the foundation piers. The chimney visible on the west elevation of the house is larger than the other three chimneys. The two chimneys visible from the north elevation and the one visible from the east elevation are narrower with brick corbeling, a section of brick that steps upward and outward from the vertical face of the chimney.

As an example of Folk Victorian, the house has less decoration than is typically found in a Queen Anne home. The decorative elements that are present include: Queen Anne-type turned spindle porch supports, flat jigsaw cut trim brackets on each side of the porch supports, decorative wood shingles in the prominent gables, corner boards, and bargeboards with a slight curve at the end. On the south elevation, the area between the first floor porch ceiling and the second level porch floor is clad in bead board and is accented with half-round molding in rectangular configurations and serves as the geometric banded frieze typical of Eastlake style architecture.

South Elevation – Front

The front façade of the Skillern House is asymmetrical because of the gable front and wing, but it is comprised of three (3) even bays delineated by the gable front which projects from the rest of the house. The western bay is recessed compared to the projecting middle bay which features the gable front. Working left to right across the south elevation, the area farthest to the west is simply a porch bay with no windows. To the right of this area is a single, double-hung, one-over-one window. This bay also has rough-cut field stone stairs that extend the entire width of the bay and provide access from the drive to the porch. To the right of the windows and in a corner created by the projecting middle bay is pair of doors, one on either side of the corner allowing access into the house from the front porch. The central bay also contains one of the cut away bay windows of the projecting wing, one on each story, with a single window in each of the three sides of the bay window. The third bay, to the right of the projecting gable and set back, contains two more windows in this bay, one on each story on the recessed portion of the house. The second story of the house is identical to the first floor in the arrangement of window and door locations. However, there is one exception in that the second entrance on the second floor is absent from the inside corner of the projecting gable. The front porch is surrounded by a wonderful porch railing with turned posts and wonderful scrollwork on the brackets of the posts. The porch railing moves around the exterior of the porch.

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West Elevation – Side

The west elevation is asymmetrical and broken into three (3) uneven bays, based on the recesses and protrusions within the facade. Working left to right across the elevation, the northernmost bay is the most recessed. It has a single-tier hip roof porch and two windows evenly spaced on the first floor, one of which has been covered. The central bay protrudes slightly in front of the first. It has a two-tier porch similar to the south elevation. On the first floor, there is a small unornamented spaced before coming to a wooden panel door, with an upper glass panel. To the right of the doorway, is another one-over-one, single-hung window and another small unornamented section of the bay, before the bay is terminated by the projection of the last bay that makes up this elevation. These first two bays are accented by the first-floor porch which is surrounded by a porch railing that is a duplicate of the one found on the south elevation, described above. The final bay is the most prominent with its gable with a single one-over-one, double-hung window that is centrally located in this bay.

The second story of the home is very similar to the first. In the first bay on the far left side, there is no ornamentation, because of the partial hipped roof which covers most of the space in this area. The gable roof covering this section of the house is lower than the other intersecting gables on the rest of the house. There is a small chimney with an elaborate set of corbeling near the top of the chimney, located near the outer edge of the gabled roof. The chimney is covered by a mushroom-shaped, metal chimney cap. The middle bay on the second story is identical in ornamentation and location of openings and railings, with the exception of the doorway which is not found on the second-story porch. The second-story portion of the more pronounced gabled bay, is also identical to the first floor with only a single, centrally-located one-over-one, double-hung window. Located above the window in the gable-end, there is a centrally-located louvered attic vent with fish-scale singles cladding the area within the gable ends. The large rectilinear chimney is visible on this side at the juncture of the second and third bays. The chimney is covered by a flat metal chimney cap. Finally, the end of the front porch is visible on this elevation.

North Elevation - Back

The back of the house is asymmetrical and broken into three (3) uneven bays based on the two (2) back wings of the house. The easternmost bay is two stories with a front gable. There are two centered, vertically aligned windows, one on each floor of this bay. The central bay is recessed and narrow due to the additions. The first floor has one small window located to the right of a narrow exterior staircase which leads to a small porch with shed roof on the second story. The ornamentation of the porch railing is identical to that found on the other porches. There is also a small shed roof located over the small windows, between the window and the second floor porch railing. The last bay is the largest and has a double gable with two hipped-roof rooms to the left. The first gable, closest to the main portion of the house, runs perpendicular to the body of the house and has a small hipped roof room located between the gable portion of the house and the central bay with the steps. The small room has three windows on the second level, one facing north and two facing east, and creates a covered porch on the first floor. The covered porch has

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one exterior door and one window as well as an exterior storage closet. The second half of the double-gable is also facing north but is set slightly lower in profile the first gable. Located on this second gabled portion of this bay, there are two on the first floor, and two on the second floor, however, they do not align vertically. Rather the upper windows are inset slightly from the lower windows. Located above the second-story windows, there are two, small, attic vents in the upper portion of the gable. This bay also has a one-story smaller room located along the inside of the gable. This small one-story room has one small one-over-one, double-hung window along the inside of this bay facing the central bay and the staircase, which creates the third wall for the covered porch to the south. A small gable-roof crawlspace entrance is found below the easternmost window on the first floor. The small gable is retractable to allow access into the crawlspace below the house. This gable was an added addition to allow for air circulation into the crawlspace. Two of the narrow brick chimneys are prominently visible on this elevation, one centered on the east bay and one centered on the west bay (See description for west elevation for details on the chimney design).

East Elevation – Side

The east side of the house is asymmetrical and is divided into three uneven bays. The southernmost bay consists of the wrap-around porch described in the description of the south elevation. It is subdivided into three bays by the porch columns. There are no windows in the first bay, but the cut away bay window from the south elevation is visible on this side. The central bay is the narrowest, but most prominent with its front-facing gable. It is the mate of the third bay on the west side with its two, vertically-aligned windows. Located above the aligned windows is a rectangular, louvered vent. Above the louvered vent is a decorative gable treatment. The northern bay has little ornamentation and consists of only a wooden panel door similar to the other doors on the house. The entranceway consists of a single-tier hip-roofed porch with porch posts and railing identical to those found on the other porch of the house. Two of the narrow chimneys are visible on this side, one at the junction of the first and second bay and one at the northern most end of the north-bay. These chimneys are also discussed in the west and north elevations and consists of the same detailed design.

Retaining wall- Contributing

On the southwest corner of the house, is a small segment of a vertical, rounded-top slab of stone which is used as a retaining wall on the property.

Cistern- Contributing

A large round concrete cistern is located to the southeast corner of the main house. Located on top of the concrete cistern is a large metal ridge ventilator, normally found on top of dairy barns in the Midwest. However the cistern is covered by a large flat concrete cap, so the ridge ventilator is slightly altered to fit the shape of the cap.

Well slab- Non-Contributing

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The slab of concrete located to the north of the house is still intact; however the pump for the well has been removed from the original slab of concrete. Though the parts of the well below grade may still remain intact, the fact that the pump is missing take away from the character-defining features of a well.

Garden Shed- Contributing

The garden shed is located on the northeast corner of the property and is consistent with a long, shed-roof garden shed with a lean-to added to the south elevation of the building. A corrugated metal roof covers both the original shed-roof and the roof on the lean-to. The western elevation allows for access into both the enclosed portion of the shed through a centrally located door and the open air lean-to. The western elevation is clad in vertical siding which is consistent with all of the other elevations on the enclosed portion of the shed. The northern elevation contains no ornamentation along this side except for the vertical wooden siding. The east elevation is identical to the west elevation, but it was designed without the entranceway. The southern elevation consists of the open air lean-to and the wooden siding of the enclosed portion of the shed. The open air lean-to has six 4x4 posts supporting the lean-to roof. The enclosed portion of the south elevation is obscure at this time; therefore, no description can be made of this portion of the elevation.

Stone Garage- Contributing

The stone garage located to the northwest of the Skillern House is a native stone garage with stone construction on three of the four elevations. There is little to no ornamentation on those three elevations beside the stone work. However, the front façade or south elevation is open on the bottom half of the elevation with the upper half covered in wooden vertical planks, which are attached near the center of the opening to a large wooden hand-hewn beam which is set into the stone walls. At the bottom of the elevation and along each of the two sides, the west and east elevations, there is a small section of flared-out stone work with a stone cap. The structure of the roof is attached to the stone walls through the use of long hand-hewn logs that sit on top of the stone work. The rest of the roof structure and metal roofing, attaches to the hand-hewn logs. However, the hand-hewn logs and roof structures extend past the front of the garage, and create what looks like a typical hay hood, normally found on a barn. Though the underside of the hay hood is open revealing only the structure of the hood, the front of the hay hood is also clad in wooden vertical plank boards.

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1904

Significant Dates

1904

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Skilern House exemplifies the Folk Victorian tradition within Washington County. It is not the only house in the area to have Queen Anne detailing, but it is a fine example of a vernacular interpretation of the Queen Anne style, particularly the Spindlework subset. Folk Victorian is defined as "the presence of Victorian detailing on a simple folk house form". The Skilern House has a relatively simple two-story form with decorative details inspired by the Queen Anne style. Therefore, the Skilern House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criteria C** for its Folk Victorian architecture.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Skilern House is located on the eastern edge of Fayetteville, Arkansas. While the property that makes up the Skilern House farmstead was outside city limits in 1904, today only part of the original farmstead is part of the City of Fayetteville while the home is still located within the Washington County jurisdiction.¹ Fayetteville was founded in 1828 along with its surrounding Washington County, which became the seventeenth Arkansas County when it was official formed on October 17, 1828.² For years the industry of Fayetteville was mixed. The diverse economy included produce packing, lumbering and wagon production.³

As the Skilern family began to grow, John Audley Skilern was the youngest of twelve children when he was born November 8, 1869.⁴ Martha, Audley Anderson Skilern (John Audley Skilern's father) ninth child was the last of the Skilern children born in their home state of Tennessee. Just like the Skilern Family, Washington County, Arkansas, began to grow following the end of the American Civil War. One of the reasons for its increase in population was the creation of the Arkansas Industrial University, now the University of Arkansas in 1871.⁵ The school would come to be an important part of the local economy in Fayetteville and the surrounding area.

As the industry of Fayetteville and the University continued to expand and grow, farming, especially fruit, remained an integral part of the lives of the residents of Washington County and Fayetteville, Arkansas. As the county population increased steadily between 1870 and 1900, so did farm production in Washington County. As the population of Washington County nearly doubled between 1870 and 1900 from 17,266 to 34,000 residents, farm production and improved

¹ "Annexation Order is Appealed to Circuit Court," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, 8 February 1967.

² Shiloh Museum, *The History of Washington County Arkansas* (Springdale, Arkansas: Shiloh Museum, 1989), 86-87.

³ William S. Campbell, *One Hundred Years of Fayetteville: 1828-1928* (Jefferson City: Journal of Marian Tebbetts Baner 1928; reprint Fayetteville: Washington County Historical Society, 1977), 37-43 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁴ Shiloh Museum, 1360. (The article states that John Audley Skilern was born November 8, 1969 and died February 2, 1939. It is more than likely that he was really born in 1869.)

⁵ John H. Reynolds and David Y. Thomas, *History of the University of Arkansas* (University of Arkansas: Fayetteville, 1910), 48.

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farmland on the other hand, nearly tripled in the same time period from 73,145 acres in 1870 to 238,000 farmable acres in 1900.⁶ Following the end of the American Civil War, the Skillern family had become prosperous enough to buy an additional 800 acres of property. It is during this time that the Skillern family farm met both great hardships and great gains, following the death of their father in 1880.⁷ With the loss of their father the family bound together to keep the farm running smoothly as production was increasing steadily. John Audley would eventually take over the family farm permanently about the time that the current Skillern House was built. With the growth in farmable acreage and crop production, it lead to Mr. John Audley Skillern becoming a highly respected farmer in the Fayetteville area.

As the Skillern Family began to reap the harvest of the crops during the early 1900s, they were able to build a wonderful example of a Folk Victorian style home on their original farmstead.⁸ It was stated that John Audley decided that the family needed a new bigger house to replace a small worn out log cabin on the site. It is stated that John Audley hauled green oak lumber from Goshen up Slaughter Mountain with the help of sturdy wagons and strong mules. When it was built, half the house was built for John Audley's mother, and Aunts Sally, Nanny, and Ide, while the other half would be for John Audley. Though the house was built during the last years of the Victorian era, the Folk Victorian styling and detail is a great example of the presence of this detail that was less elaborate then those found on the Queen Anne style that it was trying to mimic.

The Folk Victorian style of architecture was specifically used between c.1870-1910. It is a style based on the "presence of Victorian decorative detailing on a simple folk house form, which are generally much less elaborate than the Victorian styles that they attempt to mimic."⁹ Many of these details have been applied to the porch or along the cornice line as shown on the Skillern House. "Like that of the National Folk forms on which they are based, the spread of the Folk Victorian house was made possible by the railroads."¹⁰ Homeowners such as the Skillerns, who were able to build late into this period may have been able take examples of these details and apply it to the Victorian wrap-around porches. "After about 1910 these symmetrical Victorian houses, as they are sometimes called, were replaced by the Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and other fashionable eclectic styles."¹¹ Today, the area around the house is beginning to develop with post-1980 housing leaving the house an excellent example of the county lifestyle that Skillern Family had lived in the early part of the 1900s.

⁶ Shiloh Museum, 227.

⁷ *Ibid*, 1360.

⁸ When the Skillern Family received their land grant there was a mix up in the land grant paperwork between the Skillern family and the Oxford family. "When the Skillerns and the Oxfords discovered the mix-up in grants, they exchanged places." However, one of the Skillern family members passed away in the winter of 1846, and was buried on what would become the actual land granted to the Oxford family. The Oxford family dedicated the area around the grave as the Skillern cemetery. It is unknown when the properties were switched back to each other following the identification of the mix-up. (Shiloh Museum, 1360.)

⁹ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2005), 309.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 310.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 310.

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Following the completion of the home c.1904, the John Audley Skillern family was beginning to grow. In 1906 John Audley Skillern married Lena Florene Hudelson, daughter of William and Alice Hudelson, who lived on the farm adjoining the Skillern Family farm. Following the wedding, a second kitchen a bathroom, sewing room and small crawlspace/basement were added to John's half of the home. The large kitchen was built by Lena's father who was a carpenter. It was also at this time that a staircase to the crawlspace/basement was enclosed after a snake slithered up from the basement. The stairs were replaced by a cupboard for storage below, and shelves above the former staircase.¹² Between 1909 and 1920, the Skillerns had four children: John Audley Skillern Jr., William (Bill), Alice Virginia, and James Riley. It is no wonder why the Skillerns needed such a large home on the farmstead with continual additions to the family.

The Skillern House would be a large central gathering place for the Skillern family. It would be the home of bumps and bruises, laughs and cries for the family. Certain instances that took place in and around the wonderfully beautiful home include the time John Audley Skillern Jr. was thrown from this horse while riding down the road after a second boy he was riding with dropped a satchel and spooked John Audley's horse.¹³ Other gatherings at the Skillern home include the funeral services of Miss Eliza Skillern, J.A. Skillern's aunt, which was held June 17, 1930.¹⁴ Still the house and the people living within its walls continued to grow and expand once John Audley Skillern Jr. began going to college at the University of Arkansas. At the age of 22, John Audley Skillern Jr. married Elizabeth Jordan of Marianna, Arkansas.¹⁵ Following the ceremony in Marianna at Elizabeth's parent's home, the couple moved into the Skillern home in Fayetteville, while John Audley Jr. finished his post-graduate degree program.¹⁶

Following the marriage of John Audley Jr., William Vernon Skillern married Margaret Ellen Fletcher in Bentonville on April 5, 1935. They too also moved to the Skillern House on the Skillern Family farm.¹⁷ It is unknown at this time if John Audley and Elizabeth were also still living in the house as well.¹⁸

Still with all of the joyous occasions including multiple weddings, a beautiful folk Victorian home and, successful farming enterprise, happening in John Audley Skillern Sr.'s life leading up to 1939, he had become deathly ill. As his health continued to decline, Mr. John Audley Skillern Sr. was becoming ever more despondent about his situation, and on February 2, 1939, John Audley Skillern Sr. took his own life under an oak tree which until recently still stood at the

¹² Jean Baltz, "Skillern Farm House: Determination of Eligibility," Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, National Register and Survey Files, John Audley Skillern House File.

¹³ "Boy Injured When Thrown by Horse," *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, 1 April 1923, 1.

¹⁴ "Miss Eliza Skillern Is Buried Today," *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, 17 June 1930, 8.

¹⁵ "Weds in Marianna," *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, 31 March 1932, 8.

¹⁶ No title, *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, 5 April 1932, 5.

¹⁷ "Fletcher-Skillern Wedding Announced," *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, 23 April 23 1935.

¹⁸ It is known that by 1939, John Audley and Elizabeth had moved to Washington D.C. ("John Skillern Is Found Dead," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, 2 February 1939, 1.)

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entrance of a barn lot gate. Mr. Skillern died on the same farmland he was born on in November 1869.¹⁹ The coroner reported that the ill health and despondency were to blame for the death.²⁰

Following the death of John Audley Skillern Sr., Lena Skillern, Mr. Skillern's wife, remained living the house in the house until the late 1940s or early 1950s. By the early 1950s Mrs. Skillern had moved in to the Millsap Convalescent Home in Fayetteville. She passed January 25, 1952, at the age of 71.²¹ With Mrs. Skillern's relocation to the Millsap Home, John William, Virginia, and James Riley held the quitclaim on the Skillern home and farm. Eventually John William and Virginia went their own way and gave James Riley quitclaim to the property. Though James Riley Skillern had little interest in farming, he leased out the vineyards and the grazing lands for a couple of years. He and his family moved in to Fayetteville following the burning of a large barn on the west side of the property. Following the fire and the move into town, James Reilly began selling off small tracts of land, though he began to rent out the farmhouse.²² Though he maintained the property, it steadily began to deteriorate over time due to a lack of proper maintenance. He still owned the property at least through February 1967, because at that time the City of Fayetteville was in the process of annexing more than 10,000 acres into the city limits. James Riley Skillern was one of three property owners to oppose the annexation, which would include the annexation of the property encompassing the Skillern House and farmstead.²³

However, the Baltzes purchased the Skillern House and remaining property in 1990 with the condition that they restore the house to original condition rather than tear it down, as was the plan of many other prospective buyers.

This restoration has benefited from the meticulous and thorough study by the owners of original floor plans, historic alterations, and structural and finish materials. From the beginning of this rehabilitation, the Baltzes adopted the Secretary of the Interior Standard of "repairing and reusing original material whenever possible", rather than replacing by using new material. This applied particularly to foundation, floor and roof structures, beveled siding, flooring, interior and exterior trim, and rehabilitation of the double-hung wooden window sashes.

At the time of its acquisition by the Baltzes, the Skillern House had suffered 40 years of neglect with little or no maintenance performed. Aside from some termite damage in the north portion, the house's frame, constructed of old growth red oak sawed from timbers on the farm, was in excellent condition and its structural soundness was instrumental in the Baltzes' decision to purchase and restore the house.

Due to rot and termite damage, the entire house was not level, resulting in sloping floors and sagging ceilings. This was remedied by jacking up the house and removing the native stone foundation on the north portion of the house, replacing the old footings with concrete and steel

¹⁹ "The shot apparently happened around 4:30 a.m., since a neighbor heard a shot at that hour. Mr. Skillern's body was found at 6:30 a.m. ... by his son William Vernon." (*Ibid.*)

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ "Obituary: Mrs. Lena Hudelson Skillern," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, 26 January 1952.

²² Baltz.

²³ "Annexation Order is Appealed to Circuit Court," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, 8 February 1967.

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and then replacing the foundation stones in their original positions. In addition, long laminated beams running the full length of the house were placed beneath the house and in the attic at the center of the joist spans. These stiff backs straighten and support the floors and ceilings of the large rooms.

This accomplished, the Baltzes turned their attention to the exterior siding and trim all comprised of old growth pine. Approximately 85 percent of the old siding was removed and replaced with D grade clear yellow pine in six inch by five-eighths inch beveled clapboard siding to duplicate the original. This was achieved by procuring the yellow pine in Fort Smith, Arkansas, in one inch by six inch dimension and taking it to a mill in Atkins, Arkansas which had a vintage band saw allowing the 1x6 boards to be sawn diagonally to replicate the original siding. The original siding and trim in condition to be retained were chemically stripped, scraped, and sanded. The original siding and the new siding were primed with oil based paint and covered with two coats of latex paint.

Moving then to the porches, the original brick supports beneath the porch columns were removed to the footing, resurfaced, cleaned, and replaced. The original turned old growth pine columns were, where feasible, stripped, repaired, and refinished. Where required, replacement columns of necessary length and dimension were procured from a fabricating mill near Houston, Texas. All columns were mounted on metal stirrups to minimize moisture rot. The original column brackets of old growth pine all required replacing so new ones were handmade by the Baltzes of poplar wood using band and scroll saws to exactly duplicate the originals. Poplar was used since modern fast growth pine that will not warp over time was unavailable. The porch railings were all replaced and were constructed of treated yellow pine to exactly replicate the originals. This necessitated having custom made planer knives fabricated by the Bell Saw Company of Kansas City, Missouri, to enable Albert to cut and groove the material to exactly duplicate the original pattern.

The wood flooring on the upper level porches was completely replaced and refinished. The lower level floor, consisting of a concrete slab installed in the late 1930s, was surface ground, cracks filled, sanded and painted with two coats of porch and deck oil paint as was the upper level wood floor. The ceilings of both porches, retaining the original beaded ceiling, have all been finished in a sky blue color matching the original paint.

An additional egress for the upper story was added with a small back porch. On the risers, Albert has carved a sun with its rays in various positions so that the sun appears to rise in the east and set in the west as one climbs the stairs.

Wrapping up the exterior restoration, the imbricated cedar shingles adorning the gable surfaces were made by hand by Albert from sawn shingles to exactly replicate the originals which were deteriorated beyond repair. The trim consisting of beaded ceiling board and half-round trim which lies between the upper level porch floor and the ceiling of the lower porch was also all replaced and exactly duplicate the original. The original gutters were rotted out and were replaced by new "old house gutters" which is a particular style available from modern suppliers, and is identical in size and shape to those originally installed.

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Returning to the roof, the exterior chimneys were found to be so badly deteriorated that the removal of all the brick to the roof line was required. The bricks were then resurfaced, cleaned, and re-laid. Chimney caps were then fabricated by Albert from 16 gauge steel. While no original chimney caps existed, the style reflects that of the period.

During the process of jacking up the house and leveling the floors, the plaster on the interior walls was cracked and deemed unusable. The plaster and the lath were removed throughout the house. This exposed the condition of the old oak wall studs that were originally put up without having been dried. Many of the old two by fours had twisted and bowed. In order to plumb all the interior walls, the studs that had convex surfaces were shaved off and the ones with concave surfaces were built up with slivers of wood required to make them vertically straight.

A back to back double fireplace on the lower floor was rebuilt and new hearths laid. Chimneys for them had to be rebuilt and resurfaced. On the upper floor old wallpaper was removed from the outer walls on two interior chimneys and the bricks were sanded smooth and tuck pointed.

The original floors of tongue and groove yellow pine remain in place and have been sanded, the joints between the boards cleaned from years of accumulated dirt, and resealed. Three coats of polyurethane finish the wooden floors and ceramic tile completes the kitchen and bathroom floors.

The intricately fashioned interior staircase to the upper level has been stripped, filled, sanded, and has three finishes of polyurethane. All the double-hung sash windows on both levels were removed, stripped to bare wood, re-glazed, primed, painted, and reinstalled.

Custom millwork trim was added throughout the interior. Six sets of molding and planer knives had to be made and purchased to attain the same original pattern of window and door trim, deep baseboards, and picture moldings. Three transoms were rebuilt and refinished. Twenty-nine new interior doors were built to match one of the original doors that had not been destroyed. In order to replicate the originals, the doors were sprayed with a dye instead of a stain and finished with two coats of lacquer. After they had been refurbished, the door knobs and locks were powder coated to emulate their original brass color.

A University of Arkansas instructor in the Home Economics department was employed to assist in choosing paint colors for interior walls and trim to match what would have been used during the period of original construction. Three coats of oil-based paint cover all the trim and a primer and two coats of finish latex paint covers the walls. Wainscoting was added to the central interior room on the upper floor.

Closets were added to all the bedrooms as only one existed in the original house and additional ones were added in halls on both floors. Cedar lumber was milled from trees Albert cut from the property and used to line the closets.

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Antique stores in the local area were searched to find period lighting fixtures. These period fixtures plus four original, colorful fixtures now hang from the ceilings and walls throughout the house.

Throughout the restoration, commensurate with the installation of the necessities of modern life, every effort has been taken to minimize the intrusion of the new upon the old. This is exemplified by the placement of the two forced air heat and air units for the upper level out of sight in the attic, and those for the lower level in the crawl space. The outside air conditioner condensers were placed on a pad of native stone set in mortar in an unobtrusive area and surrounded by a low picket fence. Also, all the vents for plumbing, heating, and baths were located in the original chimneys, protected from moisture by the new chimney caps, preventing any protrusion of vent pipes which would otherwise be visible on the roof. Therefore, the Skillern House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **criterion C** with **local significance** for an excellent example of a large Folk Victorian home built c.1904 in rural Washington County outside of the City of Fayetteville.

Skillern House
Name of Property

Washington County, Arkansas
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography:

- Baltz, Jean. "Skillern Farm House: Determination of Eligibility" Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, National Register and Survey Files, John Audley Skillern House File.
- Campbell, William S. *One Hundred Years of Fayetteville: 1828-1928*. Jefferson City: Journal of Marian Tebbetts Banes 1928. Reprint, Fayetteville: Washington County Historical Society, 1977.
- Fayetteville Daily Democrat
- McAlester, Virginia, and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2005.
- Northwest Arkansas Times.
- Reynolds, John H., and David Y. Thomas. *History of the University of Arkansas*. University of Arkansas: Fayetteville, 1910.
- Shiloh Museum. *The History of Washington County Arkansas*. Springdale, Arkansas: Shiloh Museum, 1989.
- Washington County Office of Archives, Arkansas Plat Book, 1908.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Skillern House
Name of Property

Washington County, Arkansas
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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): WA1020

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 5.32

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 394138 | Northing: 3991623 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Parcel Number 001 -15635-001 (Previous Parcel Number 001-15635-000)

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the farmhouse and outbuildings that have historically been part of the Skilern Farm.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Travis Ratermann (Survey Historian)
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 323 Center St Suite 1500
city or town: Little Rock state: Arkansas zip code: 72201
e-mail travis@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: 501-324-9874
date: 12/4/2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Skilern House

City or Vicinity: Fayetteville

County: Washington County

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Travis Ratermann

Date Photographed: May 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo#1 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0001)

Perspective of the Southeast corner of the Skilern House. Camera facing northwest.

Photo#2 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0002)

Photograph of the South elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo#3 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0003)

Photograph of one of the Victorian porch details. Camera facing north.

Photo#4 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0004)

Photograph of the details located in the gable end of the roof. Camera facing north.

Photo#5 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0005)

Perspective of the Southwest corner of the Skilern House. Camera facing northeast.

Photo#6 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0006)

Perspective of the Northwest corner of the Skilern House. Camera facing southeast.

Photo#7 (AR_ Washington County_Skillen House _0007)

Photograph of the North elevation of Skilern House. Camera facing south.

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Photo#8 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0008)

Photograph of the inside portion of the "L" on the North elevation. Camera facing southwest.

Photo#9 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0009)

Photograph of the inside portion of the "L" on the North elevation. Camera facing west.

Photo#10 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0010)

Photograph of the inside portion of the "L" on the North elevation. This is detail photograph of the only alteration to the building, which was the addition of the staircase. Camera facing south.

Photo#11 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0011)

Perspective of the Northeast corner of the Skillern House. Camera facing southwest

Photo#12 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0012)

Photograph of Cistern located on the property of the Skillern House. Camera facing west.

Photo#13 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0013)

Photograph of front stone retaining wall. Camera facing northwest.

Photo#14 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0014)

Photograph of the large cut stone garage on the Skillern House property. Camera facing northwest.

Photo#15 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0015)

Photograph of one of the wells located on the Skillern House property. Camera facing west.

Photo#16 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0016)

Photograph of the other well located on the Skillern House property. Camera facing west.

Photo#17 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0017)

Photograph of the Southwest elevation of a small shed located on the Skillern House property. Camera facing northeast.

Photo#18 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0018)

Interior photograph of one of the fireplaces located within the Skillern House. Camera facing south.

Photo#19 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0019)

Interior photograph of one of the staircases located within the Skillern House. Camera facing northwest.

Photo#20 (AR_ Washington County_Skillern House_0020)

Interior photograph of one of the second story bedrooms on the north side of the house, within the Skillern House. Camera facing north.

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Photo#21 (AR_ Washington County_Skilern House_0021)

Interior photograph of another one of the second story bedrooms on the south side of the house, within the Skilern House. Camera facing west.

Photo#22 (AR_ Washington County_Skilern House_0022)

Interior photograph of the second story staircase within the Skilern House. Camera facing northwest.

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Skillery House- Fayetteville, Washington County, Arkansas



Google earth

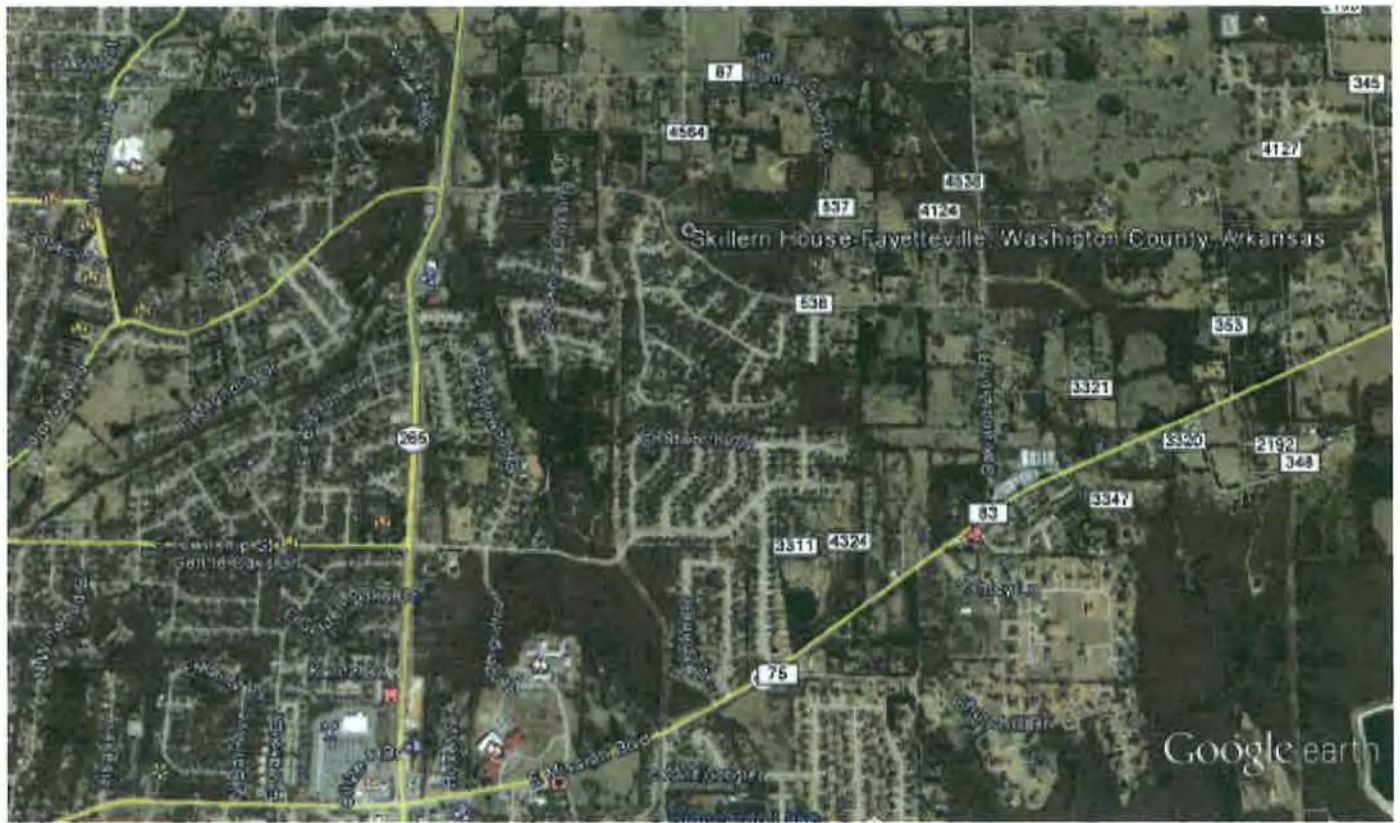


UTM

NAD83

Zone: 15 Easting: 394138 Northing: 3991623

Skillern House- Fayetteville, Washington County, Arkansas



Google earth



UTM

NAD83

Zone: 15 Easting: 394138 Northing: 3991623













































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Skillern House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Washington

DATE RECEIVED: 12/12/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/27/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001203

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1-27-2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Lots of Replaced-in-kind material

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER J. Gilbert DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/ see attached SLR Y/

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

December 3, 2014



Mike Beebe
Governor

Martha Miller
Director

Ms. Carol Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
8th Floor
1201 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

-
- Arkansas Arts Council
 -
 - Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission
 -
 - Delta Cultural Center
 -
 - Historic Arkansas Museum
 -
 - Mosaic Templars Cultural Center
 -
 - Old State House Museum
-

RE: Skillern House – Fayetteville, Washington County, Arkansas

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Travis Ratermann of my staff at (501) 324-9874. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Martha Miller
State Historic Preservation Officer

MM:tar

Enclosure


Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program



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