

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Dunlap's Dining Room

other name/site number: Dunlap House

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2. Location

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street & number: 4322 Fourth Avenue

not for publication: NA

city/town: Sacramento

vicinity: NA

state: CA county: Sacramento

code: 067

zip code: 95817

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
__1__	__1__	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
__1__	__1__	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: __0__

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Stade R. Craig

2/25/92

Signature of certifying official

Date

California Office of Historic Preservation State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register

entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.

Adelous Zee

4/2/92

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

for Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: Commerce/Trade: Domestic

Sub: Restaurant Single Dwelling

Current : Domestic

Sub: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Colonial Revival

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation: Brick roof: Asphalt
walls: Weatherboard other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, B

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : NA _____

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage: Black
Social History

Period(s) of Significance: 1917-1942

Significant Dates : _____

Significant Person(s): Dunlap, George T.

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
 X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	10	634630	4267530	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

_____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: _____ See continuation sheet.

Assessor's Parcel Number 014-0162-003-0000, Sacramento County.

Boundary Justification: _____ See continuation sheet.

This is the land historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Raymond J. Pitts, with SHPO assistance

Organization:

Date: November 20, 1991

Street & Number: 1136 Westlynn Way

Telephone: (916) 422-9933

City or Town: Sacramento

State: CA

ZIP: 95831

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Dunlap's Dining Room is a one-story Colonial Revival house with two-story rear addition. Constructed in 1907, it sits on a residential lot in the Oak Park section of Sacramento. Although added to over the years, the building retains a high degree of integrity since all of the additions were made during the period of significance. Various mature shrubs and trees, such as palms and redwoods, remain at the rear of the house. The nicely landscaped grounds provided a place for restaurant guests to wait in comfort before being seated in the dining room.

The building is rectangular in plan, with hipped roofs over both the main section and rear addition. Siding is weatherboard, with narrow boards covering the original portion of the house. Elsewhere there are various sections of wide and narrow boards. The main elevation features a porch, supported by classical columns, running across the entire width of the building. A hipped roof dormer and Chicago window are the other notable features of the facade. The windows on this elevation are not the originals, but were added when the house was enlarged in the 1920s. The original windows were smaller and did not admit as much light into the dining room area.

To accommodate George Dunlap's growing family and business, a major addition to the rear was made in the 1920s. This section was two stories in height, with the second story providing living space for the family after the dining room opened in 1930.

Interior features remaining include hardwood floors, decorative classical columns in the dining room area, French doors and a metal lamp with cupid motif on the balustrade.

At the rear of the property is a garage and storage building built in 1907 but altered severely in more recent years. This building is considered to be a non-contributing element.

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Dunlap's Dining Room is significant for its association with a pioneer Sacramento African-American family whose principal member, George T. Dunlap, made a distinct contribution to local and regional history as a successful entrepreneur in the food service industry. In addition, for 38 years the building was the home of a restaurant that was "the place" to eat for Sacramento area families, social clubs, business organizations, religious groups and prominent individuals seeking a place to dine and socialize in a unique atmosphere. For many older Sacramentans and Northern Californians the building stands as an icon of pleasure in their memories of delightful evenings in Sacramento. Dunlap patrons, generally middle-class whites, local and state government officials and professionals, recall vividly dining at Dunlap's with distinct pleasure.

George T. Dunlap's story is one of romance, determination and accomplishment. Born in Sacramento in February, 1884, George related often how he worked at odd jobs during "tough times to help make ends meet for the family...." By the turn of the century this young employee of the Southern Pacific Railway had worked his way up to the position of "chef" on private cars used by SP Area superintendents. On one of his many trips to Oakland he met and fell in love with Annie Louise Butler. At some point he told his mother, "I am going to build a house and bring my bride here to live." In 1906, he purchased lot #4501 of Goethe Subdivision K in Oak Park. In 1907 he built a four-room cottage; his was one of the first African-American families to build in Oak Park. George and Annie Louise were married in Oakland that same year and began life in Sacramento as a family.

The first child, Audrey, was born in 1908 and a second daughter, Doris, in 1912. Two of Annie Louise's nieces came from Oakland to live with the Dunlaps during World War I. By 1920, two daughters and two nieces lived at the house on Fourth Avenue with the Dunlap couple. Additions were made to the house to accommodate a family of growing young ladies. The evolution of the residence from the four-room one level structure to the eight-room two level structure was accomplished within twenty years after the original construction. This was home for the George Dunlap family. And, except for minor interior changes, the expanded California bungalow stands today exactly as it was in 1930, when by his decision and Annie Louise's design, it was open to the public.

As his family grew, the career of George as a food service entrepreneur developed and expanded as well. Serving as chef for Southern Pacific superintendents, he learned fast, performed well, made many contacts and, seemingly, impressed his employers. When the superintendents' cars were not running, George worked as a red cap. One superintendent and friend, Mr. J.D. Brennan, seeing his industry and competence, said to him, "George, you ought to get out of just being a chef and move out on your own. You've been in this long enough."

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By far, Dunlap's most cherished and rewarding life experience was the family-owned and family-operated jewel, Dunlap's Dining Room. The entire first floor of the pink colored residence at 4322 Fourth Avenue was the site of a well organized and smoothly operated business. More precisely, it reflected an unusual type of cultural cooperation on the part of Dunlap family members to be shared with fellow Sacramentans. Demanding conditions of the Depression thirties and changes of the WWII years gave the family a type of survival strength and a sense of pride in sharing their home while operating a family business for the public.

This survival strength and sense of pride was a common social characteristic of African-American Sacramentans during this period. Their small numbers (1,485 persons out of a county-wide population of 141,999 in 1930) made them virtually invisible as a social and economic entity in the growth and development of the city and county. This did not, however, stifle the drive among many to strike out and succeed in the business arena. Realizing that the white majority was a market of necessity for survival, many local African-American businesspeople geared their product toward the satisfaction of that community.

In businesses that relied on high customer visibility, Blacks in many cases were welcome, but only if they did not affect the number of white customers who patronized the establishment. Many Black businesspersons operated on this level due to the incredible odds against surviving in a depressed economy with an extremely small African-American population. This policy would change only after the arrival of thousands of new Black emigrants to Sacramento during the Second World War. The traditional customer base of Dunlap's Dining room would remain much the same despite these changes however.

Most diners had reservations as they walked up the six front porch steps and through the front door. They had been assured an entree from one of the three Dunlap classics: chicken, fried or smothered; baked ham; or T-bone steak. On entering they were met and seated by gracious daughter, Audrey. After being seated at one of the linen covered tables, one of the "Dunlap Girls" appeared to begin the specially learned treatment for patrons. Many diners' personal recollections recount a waitress's eye-catching way of filling the water glasses, tea served in fine China cups, the special soup -- now known as "soup of the day" -- for which there was no recipe, and the ease and grace with which these waitresses made each evening a special occasion.

Goerge Dunlap had imaginative arrangements for food on main course plates. A dinner served was admired both for its attractiveness and for its taste. The dinner finished, one of Annie Louise's creative delights took over for dessert. Bavarian creme, lemon ice-box cake and angel

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food supreme still linger long in the memory and taste buds of most Dunlap dining patrons.

And who were these patrons? George Dunlap was a native Sacramentan. Through local boyhood enterprises he earned money at many odd jobs and made business friends. Jobs with the fast growing Southern Pacific Railway broadened both his vision of entrepreneurship as well as patron contacts. Patrons from his earlier business ventures migrated to the Dining Room. First by formal invitation, then by word of mouth based on its growing popularity, and finally by selective business advertising the patron list grew. Several hundred Sacramento area residents as well as visitors to Sacramento dined with the Dunlaps during the period of a year.

Available records found in the Dunlap home comprise a unique collection of documents and memorabilia that are significant for genealogical studies, for a case study in business operations in the Sacramento area and for research in some aspects of local African-American history.

Handwritten reservation books, carefully indexed with notes, cover 38 years of Sacramento's patronage with Dunlap's. These list individuals, families and organized groups by name, date and service received with occasional business and personal notes. This is Audrey Dunlap's principal contribution to one area of Sacramento's written local history. She likes to state that, "Earl Warren and his family ate their first meal here as a family when he became Governor of California." She can name others, locally and nationally known.

Today, Audrey Dunlap Wilcox, lone direct survivor of George T. Dunlap, is the primary resource and narrator for an oral history project on the subject of Dunlap's Dining Room. This project is on-going and supplies eye-witnessed factual information as well as key informational leads for use in the broader study of the Dunlap Family and its history.

The restaurant continued to function as an important eating establishment in Sacramento into the 1960s. However, because significance has not been shown to be exceptional, the period of significance has arbitrarily been ended at 1942, fifty years ago.

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Bibliography

Arranged chronologically in terms of Dunlap's involvement
with the property which became known as
Dunlap's Dining Room.

1. Deed Book of the Sacramento County Recorder, p 363.
Sacramento, California. 1906.

Purchase of lot #4501 by George T. Dunlap..

2. Assessment Book of Property of Sacramento City (Annexed
Territory for the Year 1912), page 1075.

Property assessment for, George T. Dunlap. City of Sacramento.

3. MAP BOOK, CITY OF SACRAMENTO, 1914 - 1915, A - K,, Goethe
Subdivision, Addition K, p 3.

Lot # 4501 shown as located on Cypress Street.

4. City of Sacramento Building Permits, 1905 - 1919. page 438.

No building permits found for the homes built in Oak Park
prior to 1912 the year the area was annexed to the city.

September 18, 1917. 1-story frame shed. (Rear Structure?)

5. Map Book, City of Sacramento, 1920 - 1921, Goethe Subdivision
K, page 96.

Note: Street name change; Cypress Street changed to Fourth Ave.

6. City Records of Plumbers Certificates, 1921 - 1925. page 148.

July 9, 1924. Bath-room construction.

7. Assessment Book; City of Sacramento, 1930 - 31. page ,

Property assessment at 4322 Fourth Avenue.

8. Diary of a Dining Room. Unpublished Manuscript. Ray Pitts
1990.

Notes and documents researched include significant informa-
tion. A formal invitation announced the opening of "...an

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exclusive Dining Room" by Mrs. George Dunlap, March 29, 1930 at her home, 4322 Fourth Avenue, "...where Southern Dinners will be served ...Reservations Preferred".

- 9 Sacramento Bee, (Exact date not known.) Approximate date, February, 1931.

A note on the upcoming, "...first anniversary of the opening of his Southern Dinner establishment..." and a brief review of the career of George T. Dunlap.

10. Reservation Books and Ledgers, Dunlap's Dining Room, Audrey Wilcox Dunlap. 1931 - 1968. Volumes for 1934 - 1947 not yet located.

Entries and notes by Mrs. Audrey Dunlap Wilcox, receptionist, manager and official Dunlap's hostess for the 38 year operation of the establishment.

Lists all reservations by persons, number in party, type of party, menu served, special requests and notes by Audrey. Many personal and family notes are included..

11. Coloifornia: The California Magazine. Vol 1, (4). 1948 (?)

"Dunlap's Dining Room Serves Exclusive Cliental In Sacramento".

Description and staff photos of interior of Dunlap's with notes on the State Fair food service operations of George T. Dunlap.

12. Adventures in Good Eating. A Duncan Hines Book, Good Eating Places Along the Highways of America. (Vol. date & page being determined. Approximate date 195-.)

This references was cited by five narrators in oral interviews as praising "...ambiance, food and service as both excellent and unique.". A search is underway to locate the exact date for this reference.

13. California Death Index. July 1 1905 - 1988. p ____ .
Sacramento Bee, March 1__, 1969. p ____ .

The oft-mentioned Dunlap's Bavarian Creme, lemon ice-box cake, Angel Food Supreme and all salads were the creation of Annie Louise Butler Dunlap. When she became ill in 1968, the Dining Room closed. One year later, 1969, Mrs. Dunlap, wife, mother and creator of these well remembered delights died.

14. Sacramento Observer. "Special Edition, A Long Look.", Nov. 1973. p LL-72.

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Photo Log

All photos except historic photos taken by Ray Pitts, 1136 Westlynn Way, Sacramento, CA 95831. All negatives are in the possession of Mr. Pitts at his home address. All photos (except historic) taken in 1990-91.

Photo 1: View from north

Photo 2: View from east

Photo 3: View from north, rear storage building

Photo 4: Circa 1909, view from north

Photo 5: Circa 1945, view from north

Photo 6: Circa 1950, inside view facing east

Photo 7: Circa 1948, inside view facing west. Copy from
Colofornia: The California Magazine, vol. 1, (4), 1948.