

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Miller Farmstead, Webster Parish, LA

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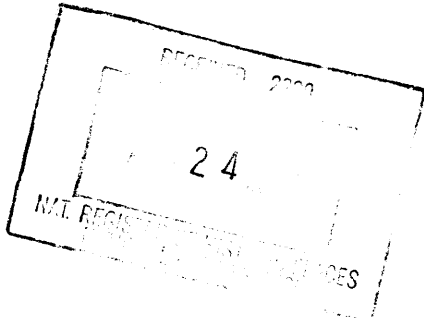
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Miller Farmstead

Other Name/Site Number:



2. LOCATION

Street & Number 224 Highway 518

Not for publication: NA

City/Town Minden

Vicinity: X

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Webster Code: 119

Zip Code: 71055

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

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

Nationally: ___ Statewide: ___ Locally: X

[Signature]
Signature of Certifying Official/Title Jonathan Fricker
Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

August 23, 2004
Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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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 Keeper

Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

6

Non contributing

1 buildings

sites

structures

objects

1 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: domestic Sub: single dwelling
 agriculture Sub: agricultural outbuilding

Current: domestic Sub: single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: no style; other: dogtrot

Materials:

Foundation: concrete piers (house); wood and ironstone (dependencies)

Walls: weatherboard (house); log and wood (dependencies)

Roof: metal

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The focus of the Miller Farmstead nomination is a c.1840 milled lumber house with an open dogtrot corridor and three roughly contemporaneous log dependencies. There are also two late nineteenth century wood frame dependencies on the property being counted as contributing elements. The farmstead is set on a hillock overlooking the hilly countryside northeast of Minden. The house is sited due south, presumably to take advantage of the prevailing breezes. Thanks to recent restoration work, the dogtrot has been re-opened and the porch restored. The three log dependencies are in good to fair shape. Despite a few remaining alterations to the house, the property easily conveys its identity as an Upland South farmstead and hence its National Register eligibility.

As is typical of Upland South settlement, the layout of the Miller Farmstead is the opposite of formal. The dependencies, located to the rear and side, are disposed about in no particular pattern. (See attached sketch map.)

THE HOUSE

Besides the open dogtrot, the Miller house's character-defining exterior feature is an unusually steep pitch to the gable end roof. While a log dogtrot of a similar age in the region would have had a front porch under its own separate shed roof, the candidate has an integral gallery (or an inset gallery) with an entablature and boxed columns. Perhaps the original owner was attempting the look of a more high-style Greek Revival galleried cottage. When the present owner, Larry Jernigan, acquired the house in 1999, the porch floor and posts were gone. He found four of the six original posts in storage on the property, carefully reused them, and replicated the two missing posts (one on each corner). Formed of planks held together by square head nails, the posts taper ever so slightly. In re-using the original posts, Mr. Jernigan found the bases and simple capitals to be badly rotted; so he copied them.

At some point in the mid-twentieth century an asphalt product manufactured in long sheets was applied to the exterior. The dogtrot may have been enclosed at this time, or the enclosure could have been earlier. The present owner is in the process of removing the siding. Underneath are large weathered boards installed flush with each other and held in place with round nails. From surviving sections at the very top and other clues (such as square nail holes in the boards), it is clear that the original clapboards were taken off and re-used when the siding was installed. They were installed flush to provide a smooth surface for the siding. Mr. Jernigan plans to correct this alteration once he has removed all the siding.

Windows are six over six, of pegged construction, and with the upper sash fixed in place. Other than the siding remnants, the most notable alteration is the window pattern on the façade. Original windows were re-used and grouped in two sets of paired windows (typical of the 1910s and '20s and out of place on a c.1840 house). The door on the western side elevation that opens to nothing marks the location of a one room twentieth century addition removed by Mr. Jernigan.

The plan consists of an identical two room range on each side of the dogtrot, with the front room being fairly large and the rear room rather small. The fairly wide dogtrot corridor is covered in unpainted flush boards. (It appears that the house was never painted.) On the west side (corresponding to the room with the fireplace), the tiny gaps between the boards are covered by battens. The latter are held in place with small round head nails, indicating that this was a later (but clearly historic) treatment. The two

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front rooms and one rear room are covered in the same fairly wide flush boards – walls and ceilings. In the two rooms on the west side, the walls and ceilings are unpainted. In the east front room, the walls and ceiling have been covered with paper. (The paper looks as if it has been there for decades.) The boards covering the walls and ceiling of the east rear room are not as wide as those found elsewhere. Door and window frames throughout the house are of plain boards.

The house's one mantelpiece, located in the west front room, has thin pilasters feature chamfering near the top and bottom. The tall entablature is presently painted white, while the remainder of the mantel has been stripped. The chimney was almost completely gone when Mr. Jernigan acquired the house; there was a huge hole where much of it had been. He removed the mantel for safekeeping (in three parts) and re-installed it.

Alterations not already mentioned include a narrow porch at the center of the rear elevation and retrofitting a corner of the rear east room for a bathroom (although no walls were added). The present concrete block piers were put in place recently when the house was leveled.

LOG DEPENDENCIES

The original use of the three log outbuildings are not known. For purposes of identification in this nomination, they will be numbered.

Log Building #1

Located behind the house is a ten-by-twelve foot log structure with half round logs joined at the corners with what might be called a half-saddle notch. Vertically placed planks form its two gables. The original peeled pole roof structure has a generous front overhang. The purlins are widely and irregularly placed. The shed roofed area along one elevation is old but not original. The building is well preserved, except for the rear, which is severely deteriorated.

Log Building # 2

This fourteen-by-sixteen foot structure is the largest and best preserved of the log dependencies. Its height can be seen in the attached picture where the owner is included for scale purposes. It rests on its original stones (a type of ironstone found in the area). A few bark fragments remain on its large half round logs, which join at the corners in what might be called a half-saddle notch. The roof structure is original, featuring peeled pole rafters and irregularly spaced purlins. The L-shaped shed roof overhang is early but perhaps not original. Its rafters are of circular sawn timbers (rather than the peeled poles of the main roof). At some point three peeled poles spanning the interior were removed and placed in a higher position. The original locations appear as holes in the side wall logs. The logs on the exposed short end wall have been largely covered by lumber (placed vertically).

Log Building #3

This small largely open building rests upon a vertical log at each corner set in the ground and secured by angle braces that are mortised into the structure. The gable end roof is formed of peeled pole rafters and

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widely, irregularly spaced purlins. The current roof covering is corrugated metal. Wide haphazardly cut planks cover the gables. At some point this building was used by a blacksmith. Some of the equipment survives.

Additional contributing dependencies:

There are two wood frame dependencies on the property – one in the side yard and one at the extreme rear (see attached sketch map). While not contemporaneous with the house and log buildings, they appear to be around a hundred years old or so. (They are being dated to circa 1890 for the purposes of this nomination.) The one in the side yard is a board and batten good-size shed with an overhang along one side. At the extreme rear of the property is a small deteriorated barn sheathed in wide planks.

These two buildings are being counted as contributing because they contribute to the candidate's identity as a farmstead.

Non-contributing building:

At the rear of the property is a mid-twentieth century tractor shed with creosote pole supports and metal sides.

INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL PHOTOS

Photographer: Donna Fricker

Date Taken: May 2004

Location of negatives: LA SHPO

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A__ B__ C X D__

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__

Areas of Significance: architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c.1840; c.1890

Significant Dates: same

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: unknown

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Miller Farmstead is of local architectural significance within the context of northern Louisiana as an extremely rare surviving Upland South farm complex. It exemplifies the folk architectural tradition and settlement patterns of the Scots-Irish farmers from the Upland South who were by far the region's principal pioneer settlers. While the circa 1840 house and contemporaneous log dependencies are the most significant buildings, the two c.1890 frame dependencies are being classified as contributing because they contribute to the property's identity as a farmstead.

Farmers from the Upland South began settling northern Louisiana in earnest in the 1830s. John Miller received a patent for his land in 1838. Uplanders (as they are sometimes called) are known for log construction, widely disbursed farmsteads and settlements, and irregular farms and fields. Cultural geographer Milton Newton referred to the landscape they created as "uncouth." In contrast to the neat and tightly packed villages and towns of the East Coast tidewater, the Uplander landscape was not nearly so consciously organized. Wagon roads developed in response to local needs, often crossing established farmsteads. The road frequently widened to form a "stomp" with a house, barns, gardens and dependencies around it. The dogtrot, an Upland South icon, was typically of log construction; however, wood frame examples are far from unknown.

On the eve of the Civil War, after three or four decades of Uplander settlement, there would have been hundreds of farmsteads like John Miller's across northern Louisiana. But today there is very little left to convey this important history. There are a handful of early (antebellum) log houses remaining in the region, but they exist almost entirely in isolation. The one known exception is the Shadow House (NR), with two log barns. There are also isolated early log dependencies scattered about the region, but only a tiny fraction of what existed historically. Based upon decades of fieldwork in the region, the staff of the SHPO knows of nothing like the Miller Farmstead. Although not complete, it easily has enough buildings to convey the look of a vanished landscape – the Upland South farm complex.

Historical Note:

Born in South Carolina, John Miller came to North Louisiana from Missouri. His wife, the former Sarah Wilson, hailed from Kentucky. As noted earlier, he received a patent that included the property in question in 1838. An adjacent cemetery, but under separate ownership, contains a grave for John and Sarah's five year old daughter, Catherine, who died December 29, 1844. The 1850 census shows the Millers with 10 children ranging in age from 1 to 23. Miller owned 14 slaves, with apparently 6 of them at the candidate. He died in 1858, and his widow lived on the property until her death in 1881.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Headstones, various Miller family members, Mt. Zion Cemetery, Webster Parish.

United States Census, 1850.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwest Louisiana, Southern Publishing Co., 1890.

Fricker, Jonathan. "The Folk Architecture of the Appalachian Uplanders." In *Louisiana Buildings, 1720-1940*. Edited by Jessie Poesch and Barbara SoRelle Bacot. LSU Press, 1997.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- 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):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreege of Property: approx 2.1 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	15	479200	3612020

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary is shown as a broken line on the attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries were chosen to encompass the complex of farm buildings and the immediate setting, while excluding extensive rural acreage.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register staff

Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

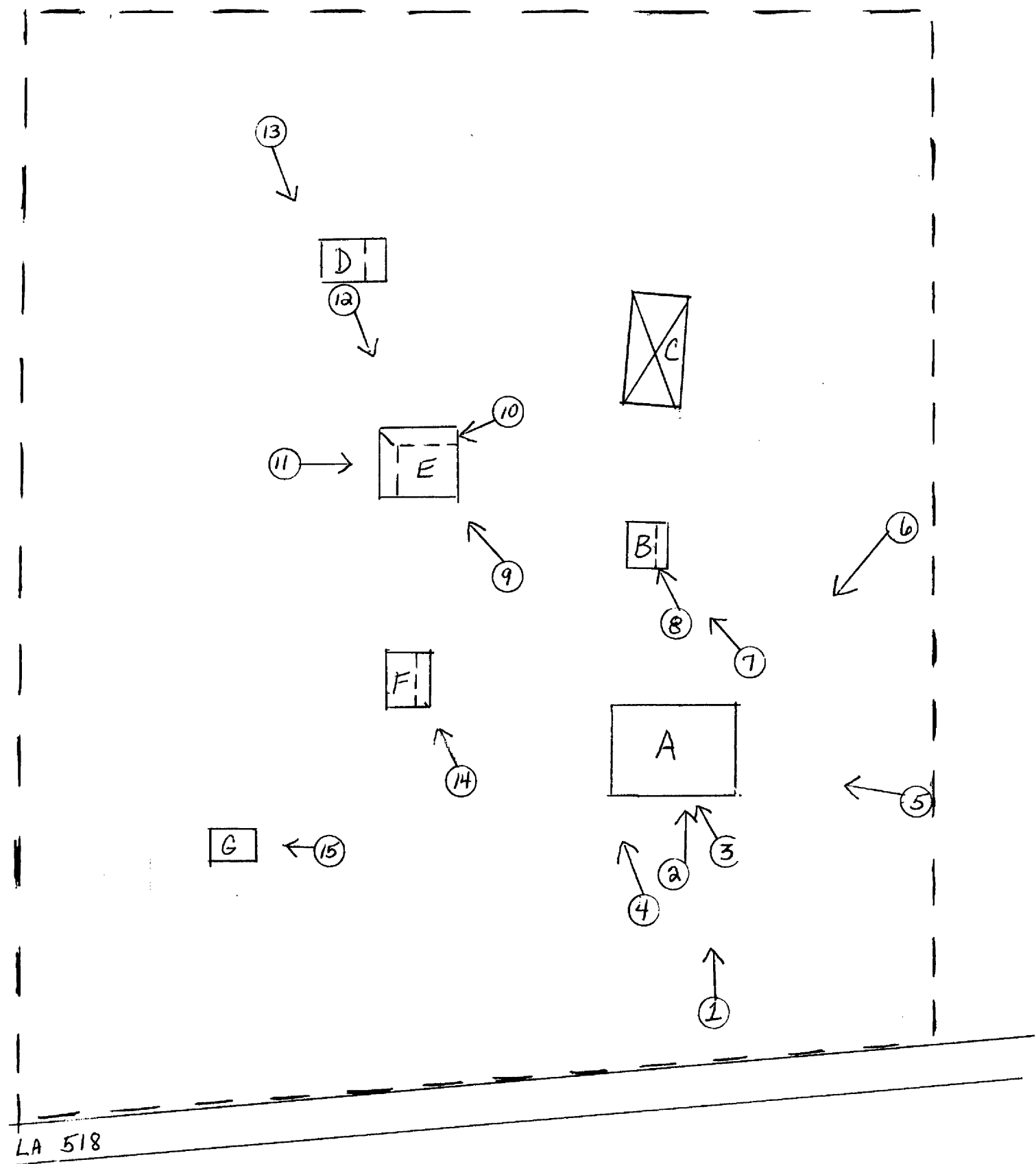
Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: June 2004

PROPERTY OWNERS

Larry E. and Marilyn H. Jernigan
224 Highway 518
Minden, LA 71055

Miller Farmstead
Webster Parish, LA



- A = house
- B = log bldg #1
- C = non-contributing tractor shed
- D = late 19th century barn
- E = log bldg #2
- F = late 19th century shed
- G = log bldg #3

↑
N
Scale: 1" = 40'
--- BOUNDARY