

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California	
COUNTY: Los Angeles	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Upton Sinclair House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
464 N. Myrtle Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Monrovia

STATE California	CODE 06	COUNTY: Los Angeles	CODE 037
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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
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. and Mrs. Glen W. Edwards, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
464 N. Myrtle Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Monrovia	STATE: California	CODE 06
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Registrar of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Los Angeles	STATE California	CODE 06
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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
None

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

 Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

 Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

 Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Dating from 1923, the Upton Sinclair house is a tall, square structure of reinforced concrete, neo-Mediterranean in style, built against the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. The facade is distinguished by an ornate arched doorway, fashioned of travertine and surmounted by a small second-story balcony resting upon heavily-carved consoles. Casement windows flank the doorway, while on the north side of the facade, midway between the first and second floors, a grilled window lights the interior stairway.

The simply-arranged first floor plan consists of a living room and dining room of lofty proportions, the stair hall, the kitchen, and a large pantry. The front door opens directly into the buff-colored living room, from which an arched opening with paneled sliding doors leads into the dining room. Floor-length windows along the south side of the room open onto a side veranda. The lower floor largely retains its original color scheme, although the present occupants have repainted the upstairs bedrooms. A chair elevator installed for Sinclair's invalid second wife still remains, as does the concrete ramp built from the veranda into the garden to accommodate Mrs. Sinclair's wheelchair. Floors throughout the dwelling are made of plastone.

Living austere amid Spartan surroundings, Sinclair made no structural changes to the house. The double garage which Sinclair converted into a study stands to the rear of the house, next to the shelf-lined concrete block vault that he built for his papers. Wrote Sinclair of this arrangement: "I lived and worked in that Monrovia office over a period of some fifteen years, and I managed to fill all the storerooms with boxes of papers . . . . I had over eight hundred foreign translations of my books, . . . over a quarter of a million letters, . . . [and] practically all the original manuscripts of my eighty books, and also of the pamphlets and circulars . . . stored in grocery cartons."<sup>1</sup> Some years before Sinclair's death, this collection was sold to the University of Indiana. But a few miscellaneous papers still remained at the time of this visit, together with some of the filing cabinets, tables, and bookcases which constituted the furnishings of the author's work area.

Other superficial changes made by Sinclair reflected his obsession with privacy. He built a chain-link fence around the property, densely planted two hundred eugenia bushes to form a hedge, and--at one point--disconnected the doorbell. Upon the death of his second wife and his remarriage in 1961 to the third Mrs. Sinclair, who objected to the closed atmosphere, the interior of the house assumed more of its present character.

On February 17, 1967, Sinclair sold the house to the present occupants. Within the last five years, the fence has been removed, the lawn replanted, and minor interior changes made; otherwise, the residence is unaltered.

1. Upton Sinclair, *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1962), pp. 304-06.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6. 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) 1942-1967

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

Upton Sinclair was a leading member of the group of early twentieth century reformist writers and social critics which included such men as Thorsten Veblen and Max Eastman. His goal was not great literature so much as the advancement of certain ideas propounded creatively and powerfully in his novels, the best-known of which is perhaps *The Jungle*. Ultimately, he became one of the most influential American novelists in the area of social justice.

Seeking a more secluded home away from both the growing congestion of Pasadena, where he had lived since 1915, and a disturbance of unwelcome guests which followed his California gubernatorial candidacy, Upton Sinclair purchased a home at nearby Monrovia in 1942. From that time until 1966, this was Sinclair's principal residence, although at intervals he and his wife fled to still more remote hideaways in the California mountains. In the spring of 1954, the Sinclairs moved to Buckeye, Arizona, but Mrs. Sinclair's worsening health forced their return to Monrovia the following year. Living as recluses, the Sinclairs stayed aloof from townspeople and from society at large. When a former friend, the Socialist Mrs. Kate Crane Gartz, brought the Very Reverend Hewlett Johnson, the famous "Red Dean" of Canterbury Cathedral, to visit them, the fanatically anti-Communist Mrs. Sinclair locked the big wooden gates at the end of the driveway and refused the visitors admittance.

Of Monrovia, the last home of his active life, Sinclair observed that he found there "perfect peace to write in, ... a garden path to walk up and down on while I planned the next paragraph, and a good public library from which I could get what history books I needed."<sup>1</sup> Virtually all of Sinclair's later works were written here, including most of the "Lanny Budd" series, the third volume of which, *The Dragon's Teeth*, received the Pulitzer Prize in 1942. Other works produced at Monrovia include *Another Pamela* (1950) and the temperance novel, *The Cup of Fury* (1956). His most famous works date, however, from a considerably earlier period.

--continued on Form 10-300a--

1. Upton Sinclair, *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1962), p. 291.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Kunitz, Stanley J. and Haycroft, Howard. *Twentieth Century Authors*. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1942, pp. 1293-94, and *Supplement* (1955)p.917.

Sinclair, Mary Craig Kimbrough. *Southern Belle*. Phoenix, Arizona: Sinclair Press, 1962, pp. 383-406 passim.

Sinclair, Upton. *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1962, pp. 300-317 passim.

Spiller, Robert E. et al. *Literary History of the United States*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1960. pp. 995-99.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	34	°	9	'	44	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	118	°	00	'	00	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 3/4

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 S. Gamble, Historian

ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service DATE July 20, 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**

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:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (1)

Upton Sinclair House

Biography

Upton Sinclair was born on September 28, 1878, in Baltimore, Maryland, the scion of aristocratic forebears, although his immediate family was in straitened circumstances. His father, a liquor salesman, was an alcoholic, and consequently the family fortunes were subject to violent fluctuations. To this familial instability has been attributed, in part, Sinclair's later proletarian sympathies. In 1888, the Sinclairs moved to New York, where Upton finished grammar school in two years and began attending the City College of New York at the age of fourteen. With characteristic energy and intensity, Sinclair wrote hack stories for pulp magazines as a student, and after the age of fifteen was able to support himself in this manner. He later worked his way through Columbia University.

By 1900, Sinclair had sickened of the cheap sensationalism that kept him solvent, and he moved to the countryside near Princeton to do some serious writing. He married Meta Fuller the same year. The next six years were spent in grinding poverty, and the struggle to survive in an indifferent world while maintaining his literary integrity radicalized Sinclair. The influence of *Wilshire's Magazine*, and his contact with the Socialist clergyman, George Herron, made of Sinclair an apostle of Socialism, which as one critic has observed, he embraced with religious fervor. *Manassas*, Sinclair's first major novel, was a treatment of the Civil War from that perspective.

In 1906, two years after *Manassas* was published, Sinclair received an assignment from a Socialist magazine, *Appeal to Reason*, to study and develop a report on the Chicago stockyards. From this experience came Sinclair's most famous work, *The Jungle*, the story of a Lithuanian immigrant family destroyed by the exploitation of the economic system. It chronicled in lurid detail the practices of the meatpacking industry and was an immediate popular success, although the public showed more concern with corrupted meat than with the plight of the worker. Nonetheless, the novel enriched Sinclair, brought him national fame, and led to the first Food and Drug Act.

The royalties from *The Jungle* were invested in Helicon Hall, a single-tax Socialist colony. Shortly after it was established however, fire destroyed the colony and Sinclair's investment. While he had a good income for the rest of his life, he usually spent his earnings on causes similar to the Helicon Hall experiment and was never financially secure.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (2)

Upton Sinclair House

He participated in several other Socialist colonies after the destruction of Helicon Hall, but this was a very difficult period of his life, one in which Sinclair suffered from the strain of divorce and nervous tension. However, one strong work emerged from these years. Entitled *Love's Pilgrimage*, it appeared in 1911 and was autobiographical in character. The book contained in undeveloped form many of the themes which were to dominate his later work.

A series of ideologically-oriented exposés of American life began in 1918 with *The Profits of Religion*. These were propaganda works aimed at describing the effects of the economic system on various aspects of American society. *The Brass Check* (1919) dealt with the press, *The Goose-Step* (1923) and *The Goslings* (1924) treated education, while *Mammonart* (1925) and *Money Writes* (1927) concentrated on the arts. Though not of great intrinsic merit, the series remains, as Walter F. Taylor has said, "the most noteworthy essay yet made in this country toward a complete Marxian interpretation of culture...their very partisanship contributes to their power to stimulate and awaken."<sup>2</sup>

Sinclair's next well-known work, *Oil!* (1927), is a kaleidoscopic portrayal of the milieu and values of the Harding Era and is considered one of his most well-written works in terms of character development and plot complexity.

By other avenues also, Sinclair pursued his idealistic aims for society. Between 1920 and 1930, he was a Socialist candidate for Congress and for Governor of California. Under the Democratic banner, he ran for governor again in 1936 on the famous EPIC platform--"End Poverty In California." Although his socialism had always been genteel and non-doctrinaire, Sinclair was subjected to an intensive smear campaign which branded him unjustly and eventually caused his defeat.

His last major literary effort, the "Lanny Budd" series, was begun in 1939 with *World's End*, a socialist interpretation of history between the World Wars. The strong anti-Nazi flavor of several of the books made them extremely popular.

Innumerable causes involved Sinclair throughout his lifetime, including vegetarianism, prohibition, psychic experimentation, and civil liberties. He did not often succeed in fusing art with ideology, and much of his writing is fine propaganda and social criticism but simplistically-

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2. Quoted in Robert E. Spiller et al., *Literary History of the United States*, (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1960), pp. 997-98.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (3)

Upton Sinclair House

partisan literature. Yet his propaganda never wholly absorbed Sinclair the inquirer, the searcher for values, and he occupies a prominent place among modern American literary crusaders.

On November 25, 1968, he passed away at a nursing home in Bound Brook, New Jersey.