THEME: LITERATURE, DRAMA, MUSIC

(July 1997) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE California NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM COUTY. (Type all entries - complete applicable sections) ENTRY NUMBER Date E NAME COUNTY. Los Angeles POR INS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER Date COMMON: Upton Sinclair House Androw AND/OR HISTORIC Add N. Myrtle Avenue County. California Cook Cook Monrovia Thate Cook Check Ono OWERSHIP Status Check Ono OWERSHIP Status Object Besh Detrice Park Besidence Workership Status Commenter Check Ono OWERSHIP Status Cook Object Public Public Acquisition Perk Persevation work Check Ono Owership Transpartation Commenter Owership Residence Transpartation Commenter Detrict Besh Briver Residence Commenter Owershiter Hande Agriculturat Adventer	Form 10-300	UNITED STATE	S DEPARTMENT OF	ENT OF THE INTERIOR STATE:						
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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 accomodate Mrs. Sinclair's wheelchair. Floors throughout the dwelling are made of plastone.

Living austerely 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 arrangements: "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."¹ 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.

E₂ INSTRUCTIONS

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PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
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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 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."¹ 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.

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Form 10-300o (July 1969)

STATE

Los Angeles

ENTRY NUMBER

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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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 To this familial instability has been attributed, in part, fluctuations. 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 The influence of Wilshire's Magazine, and his contact with Sinclair. 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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California

COUNTY

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE California

Los Angeles

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (2) Upton Sinclair House

COUNTY

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 The book contained in undeveloped form many of the themes character. 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."2

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 Between 1920 and 1930, he was a Socialist candidate for Congress society. 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 nondoctrinaire, 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 idealogy, 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.

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE California COUNTY LOS Angeles FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER DATE

(Continuation Sheet)

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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.