

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Miller, Mittie Clark, House; Miller, Alexander McVeigh, House

AND/OR COMMON

"The Cedars"

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Hemlock Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Alderson

VICINITY OF

Second

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

West Virginia

054

Greenbrier

025

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. McCormack

STREET & NUMBER

Hemlock Avenue

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Alderson

VICINITY OF

West Virginia 24910

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Greenbrier County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

200 North Court Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Lewisburg

West Virginia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Sitting atop a knoll at the northern edge of Alderson, this large, T-shaped frame house faces toward the town and its backdrop of Monroe County mountains. On land which he received from his father, W.G. Miller, Alexander McVeigh Miller began the building of this house in 1881.

The floor plan is traditional and common, having a center hall on both floors with rooms on each side and an ell containing dining room and kitchen at the rear. It is commonly believed that the house was built over a period of four or five years because of the lack of funds. Four large chimneys were constructed, three inside-end chimneys and one central chimney, and they served fireplaces on both floors. The house was built when the finest hardwood lumber in the world was available to builders in the Greenbrier River region, and such select wood was used in this house. It can be seen in trim and casings in the older parts of the "The Cedars".

The facade includes three-bay verandas and a full-height, pedimented, two-columned portico with four bays to the west side and three bays to the east. The consistent weatherboarding around this very large house provides a symmetry it would not otherwise have because of its odd-shaped bulk. The low gable roof has box cornices. All the columns and posts are square and adequate. Original windows were average size 2/2 glass, but large "picture windows" of a single multi-transom casement have been in the family room and library since about 1930.

The front entrance, which is to the right of the portico, has heavy double doors with an elliptical fanlight. Stairs in the entrance hall are a very handsome and very heavy feature of the home, consisting of two flights with landing. The six-inch square newel is of hand-carved cherry, the rail is rounded and of one piece below the landing, and balusters and open string are plain. On the lower level the doors, casings, and wainscot have mouldings.

To the east of the center hall is the living room which is paneled with four and ten inch choice pine and has a beamed ceiling. It is very probable that in the original house two rooms occupied the space of this one room until about 1940. On the west side of the hall, behind the portico, is a library with matched paneling, a stone fireplace and walls of bookshelves. Back of the library is the dining room which has good paneled wainscoting and a chair rail. To the west of these two rooms is a bedroom with bath and beyond it is a three-car garage. These latter two sections are additions of the late 1940s.

The ell extension includes part of the dining room and a large, well-equipped kitchen that was remodeled in 1961. Beyond the kitchen is a utility room. The depth of the house through the ell and the width

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MILLER, MITTIE CLARK, HOUSE; ALDERSON, GREENBRIER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

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of the front are each about even. In the angle of the ell and the living room are porches at both levels and a single-flight open stairway. There is a veranda across the east end and a quarter-round terrace east of the ell.

On the second floor are four bedrooms, two with fireplaces and bath-dressing rooms. Above the garage is a great forty-five by thirty foot recreation room with a fireplace. The attic is unfinished; the basement is adequate.

Beautifully landscaped grounds contain about six acres. Close behind the dwelling is a log cabin which has had several uses. For some time it was used as a three-room guest house, but now it is for storage. To the north of this is an eight-stall horse barn. Both buildings were constructed in 1939.

Landscaping is very extensive and well planned to complement the large white dwelling. The plan features a half-acre pond with waterfall and a sandy beach at the east half of the front lawn. The wide lawns are dotted at random with large pecan, sycamore, oak, cedar and pine trees, as well as one of the largest cypress trees in West Virginia. English boxwoods are used to border the barbecue patio, two terraces, a veranda, front entrance walk and the long curving driveway. (These plants were raised and put in place by Mrs. A. W. McThenia in the 1940s and 1950s.) In addition there are flowerbeds of annuals and perennials, roses, grape arbors, and massed clumps of rhododendron. All this is usually described as a beautiful country estate.

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Women
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1881

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"The Cedars" was built in 1881 by Alexander McVeigh Miller on about 10 acres of land which was a gift from his father, William G. Miller. The house which is now called "The Cedars" was originally the home of Mittie Clark Miller who is credited with the authorship of eighty novels. Most of these were written in this house between 1881 and 1930 and earned her great wealth under the name of Mrs. Alex McV. Miller. In 1939 it became the home of Mrs. Ruth Bryan Owen Rhode, the daughter of William Jennings Bryan. This talented woman was widely known and greatly respected as a writer, lecturer, university teacher, Congresswoman and diplomat. Mrs. Andrew McThenia, whose home this was for about thirty years beginning in 1945, gave time and energy to a well planned landscaping project, which involved the growing and use of hundreds of English boxwoods throughout the almost 16 acres.

"The Cedars" had its beginning in 1881 when Alexander McVeigh Miller brought his wife, Mittie Point Miller, to his home in Alderson. His father, W.G. Miller, gave him ten acres of his holdings on the edge of North Alderson in Greenbrier County.

Alex tried his hand at many kinds of businesses but without much success in any endeavor. His position of old-time politician, however, put him in the State Senate for many years, and this was his life's most useful role.

Mittie Frances Clark Point was born at Hanover Junction, Virginia, in 1850, the daughter of Charles J. and Mary G. Point. The Points moved to Richmond, and Mittie was graduated from the Richmond Female Institute in 1860. Her first writing was for a Richmond paper, The Old Dominion. In this period she was married to Thomas Jefferson Davis who died two years later. Her first novel, Rosamond, was written in Richmond and published by Street and Smith. A bit later in Washington, D.C., she wrote a book titled Clendinin's Bride (later re-titled The Senator's Bride) which was sold in great numbers and was the real beginning of her fame as the author of "popular love stories".

In 1878 Mittie Point Davis married Alexander McVeigh Miller, and in 1881 they came to Alderson, West Virginia. At once they built a small unit of the house which was to become, when finances would permit, the large dwelling in which Mrs. Miller lived for almost half a century. She perfected a format for novel writing that led, in 1890, to a contract with George Munro, publisher of the Family Story Papers, which earned

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Mittie Point Miller more than \$100,000 before 1910. Her last years she lived with her daughter, Irene Miller Cheney, in Boston and St. Petersburg. In 1937 she died and was buried in Alderson.

Ruth Bryan Owen Rhode and her husband became owners and occupants of "The Cedars" in 1939 and remained for five years. Ruth Bryan, daughter of William Jennings Bryan, was born in Illinois in 1885 and was destined to have outstanding prominence among women of this nation between 1917 and 1947. In World War I she served as a nurse; after the war she began a very successful career as college teacher and lecturer. In 1933 she was elected to the United States Congress from Florida and was soon appointed Minister to Denmark by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Miss Bryan was married twice: first to Major Reginald Owen of the British Army and, after his death, to Captain Borge Rhode of Denmark. Mrs. Rhode died in Denmark in 1954.

The Rhodes bought "The Cedars" in 1939 and at once began to make repairs to the property which had been unoccupied for many years. This work included a few small changes in room partitions and fireplaces and some large additions such as moving two old buildings on to the site to be used as guest house and horse barn. Also added were the large garage-recreation room wing to the west side of the house and verandas at the front. The two-story porches in the angle of the ell were broadened at this time.

The landscaping, which is the outstanding feature of the estate, was done during several years of supervision of Mary McThenia. Her planning and work produced an extensive informal setting for the large white transitional house. The half-acre pond at the east boundary and the English boxwoods are particularly noteworthy in the landscape.

Since 1973 this property has been owned and occupied by the Robert McCormack family. Their furnishings, which have been collected in many countries, are set with pleasing taste to enhance the home's lovely interior.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cole, J. R. History of Greenbrier County. Lewisburg, W.Va. 1916

Dixon, Thomas W., Jr. Story of Alderson, W. Va. Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Company, 1967.

Greenbrier Historical Society. The Journal. Vol. 1, No. 2. 1964

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Alderson, W.Va.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 532200 4175880  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

"The Cedars" site is bounded on the south by Hemlock Avenue, on the east and north by Alderson Corporation limits and on the west by an unnamed alley.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

C. E. Turley, Field Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION

Historic Preservation Unit

DATE

W.Va. Department of Culture and History July 11, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Science and Culture Center

TELEPHONE

Capitol Complex

(304) 348-0244

CITY OR TOWN

Charleston

STATE

West Virginia

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Clarence Morris*

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

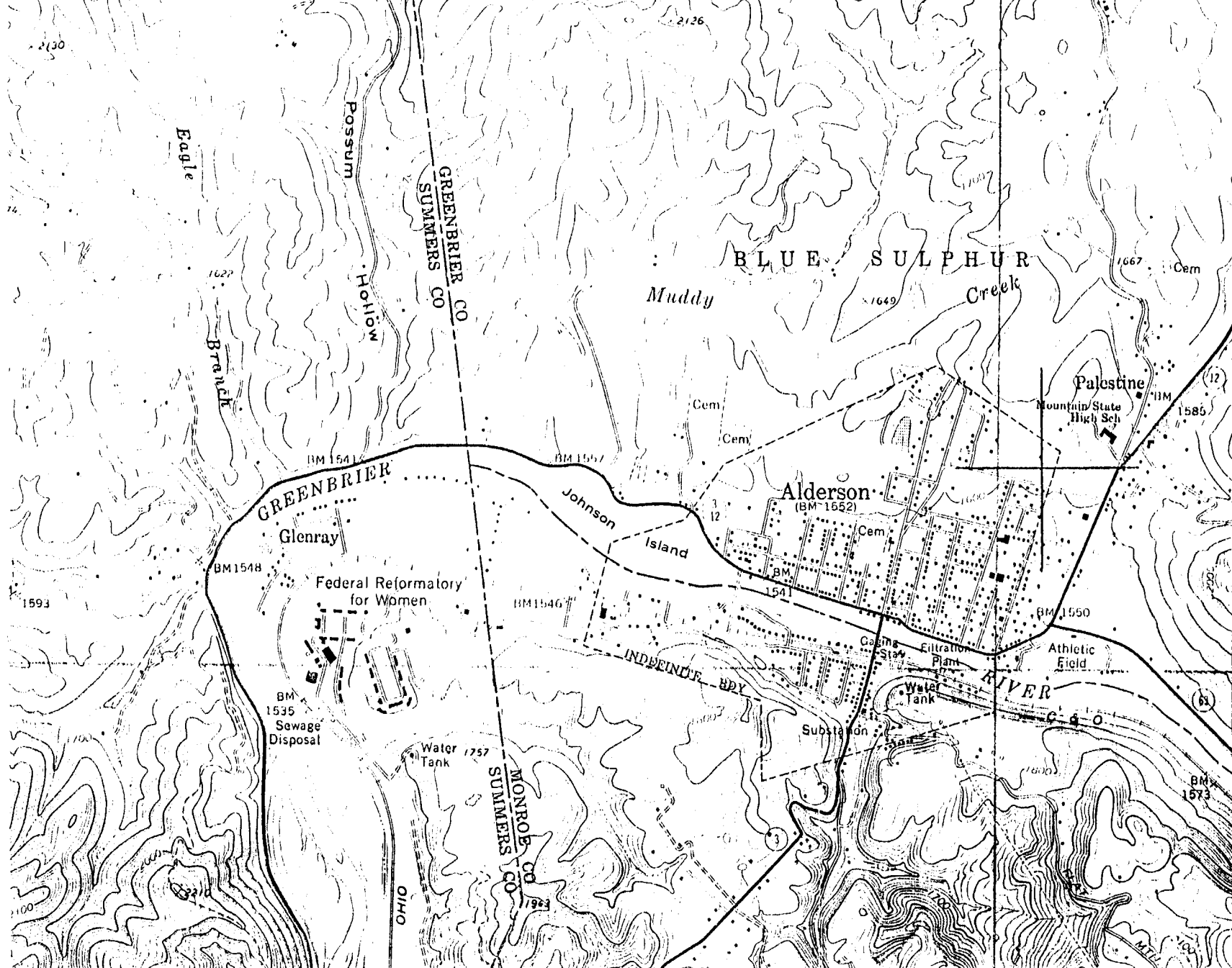
EAST VIRGINIA  
ED BY THE  
A GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
ATE AGENCIES

ALDERSON QUADRANGLE  
WEST VIRGINIA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW/4 ALDERSON 15' QUADRANGLE

4859 1 SE  
(ASBURY)

SW 28 29 40 30 31 32 80°37'30" 37°45'



270 000  
FEET

"THE CEDARS"  
ALDERSON, GREENBRIER  
COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA  
17/532200/4175880

ASBURY 6 MI.  
9 MI. TO INT. 6.

4176

RONCEVERTE 12 MI.

4174

