

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Miller-Knight House
Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2 Township Road 1046 not for publication
city or town Miller vicinity
state Ohio code OH county Lawrence code 087 zip code 45623

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
- See continuation sheet.

- 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

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing and 5 rows: buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total. Values: 1, 0.

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/being restored

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid 19th Century/Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Sandstone; roof: Asphalt; walls: Frame, Weatherboard; other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

Ca. 1815-1835

Significant Dates

Ca. 1815-1835

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 15.78 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 17 386695 4266530	3 17 387020 4266280
2 17 387035 4266520	4 17 386685 4266325
Coordinate	<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title organization James T. and Clara I. Knight, with Steve Gordon, Ohio Historic Preservation Office date 3/8/02
 street & number Route 3, Box 269 telephone 304-743-4366
 city or town Milton state WV zip code 25541

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Robert H. Miller, Jr.
 street & number 8801 West Lincolnshire telephone _____
 city or town Yorktown state IN zip code 47396

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Miller-Knight House
Lawrence Co., Ohio**

Setting:

The unincorporated hamlet of Miller is located in southeastern Lawrence County, ten miles upriver from South Point, the southern most tip of Ohio. West Virginia and the village of Millersport are located on the east bank of the Ohio River. The small community of Miller, Ohio, occupies a second terrace backed by a ridge of steep wooded hills. Federal Creek marks the northern edge of the hamlet before its confluence with the Ohio. Immediately to the south lies a cluster of non-historic houses 10-15' above channel level the FEMA has targeted for demolition to reduce and eliminate risks to people and property during future flooding disasters [FEMA letter, 2001].

The Miller-Knight House rests on a generally level terrace 150' south of Federal Creek and 700' west of the west bank of the Ohio. Located 600 feet south of the house is Prospect St. (TR 1046), which is connected to the 16-acre property by a gravel drive.

A wide expanse of lawn and a mowed field border the east front of the house, providing an uninterrupted vista of the Ohio River and West Virginia hills (Photos #3 and 7). A row of trees marks the south side of the domestic property, dense woods are located to the rear and north sides of the house. There are no surviving outbuildings on the property (Photo #1). A cistern with concrete cap and cast iron pump is located at the rear northwest corner of the house (Photo #6).

Description:

The 1.5 story, mortise and tenon framed house was built for Joseph Miller, perhaps as early as ca. 1812-1815 [Walter Knight to Clara Knight]. According to the present owner, the kitchen and dining room at the rear of the house are part of the original construction. This has not been verified and will require more extensive fabric analysis.

Facing east, the front elevation measures 36' in width and exhibits a symmetrical fenestration pattern consisting of two doors and four windows (Photo #2). Seven slender porch posts, likely not original but historic fabric recently repaired, support the overhanging roof. The porch posts and sills rest on shallow stone piers. Evidence suggests the porch roof is an early or original part of the house (Photos #7-8). Windows on the front elevation feature nine over one lights and the two panel wood doors have narrow two-pane transoms (Photo #2). Similar style transoms have been observed on an 1807 house in Greene County and an 1819 house in Darke County (Hutslar, *Personal Communication*). The only visible modern additions to the exterior are the two front storm doors.

The side elevations, or gable ends, measure approximately 28' deep and are characterized by their sweeping roof gables and exposed rafter tails (Photos #1, 5). Two windows, shallower on the upper floor and deeper on the first floor, flank each side of the chimney stacks while a door and a window mark the rear entry and dining room walls, respectively. A simple pent roof porch marks the north entrance into the rear hall (Photo #5). Window lights on the side elevations are both 9/1 and 2/1. Small brick interior end chimney stacks pierce the asphalt shingle roof. All four elevations are covered in weatherboard and drop siding. Weatherboard siding on the south elevation was replaced in the 1940s by Maud Knight Null. A set of outdoor steps at the south elevation and interior steps from the pantry lead to a cellar (16' x 17') under the

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**Miller-Knight House
Lawrence Co., Ohio**

living room. Resting on stone piers, the rear elevation features three 6/6 window sashes and two small fixed window lights (Photo #6).

Interior Description:

The center passage, two room plan features a parlor and living room, both measuring 16' deep x 17' wide, flanking a narrow central staircase with the dining room, kitchen and bath at the rear. The upstairs consists of two narrow bedrooms separated by a closet and the top of the staircase. Spindled posts support simple tubular handrails (Photo # 18).

Much of the original interior wood trim and hardware remains in place. The two Federal vernacular style front doors are divided into two large vertical panels with two-pane window transoms (Photos #9; 12). Handsome Federal style doors with horizontal top panels, vertical lower panels and original spring latches offer privacy from the hallway (Photos #14, 16). The spring latches are of an 18th century pattern and have been observed on other early 19th century Ohio houses, including an 1807 house in Greene County (Hutslar, *Personal Communication*). Original and somewhat naïve Federal vernacular style wood mantels lie *in situ* in the living room and parlor (Photos #10, 13). Simple baseboards and door openings characterize most of the rooms (Photo #11). The rear dining room has exposed wood floors and a beaded board ceiling (Photo #15). The beaded boards were in most likelihood finished by a local sawmill or planing mill, both of which were widely available by 1835.

Unfinished attic spaces flank the front and rear of the two upstairs bedrooms. Rough-hewn rafters (no saw marks and not pole rafters) measure 3" x 4." The basement floor is dirt and the nine rough-hewn floor joists measure 3" x 8 ½."

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**Miller-Knight House
Lawrence Co., Ohio**

Statement of Significance

Located on a level terrace overlooking the Ohio River, the Miller-Knight House is significant under Criterion C as a remarkably well preserved example of a six bay, one and one-half story center passage mortise and tenon house type, a rapidly disappearing but important vernacular form associated with the early 19th century settlement period in Ohio. The configuration is typical of the Ohio River Valley. Similar examples include the Massie House in Adams County (1801+) and the McKnight House in Greene County (ca. 1808). According to oral sources and estimations based on historic fabric observation and settlement history, the mortise and tenon frame house was built ca. 1815-1835 by Joseph Miller, a pioneer resident of Lawrence County. Historically the house is important under Criterion A by virtue of its long association with Joseph Miller and William Knight, an Ohio river boatman, both of whom occupied the house along with their families from 1815 to 1884. The property has been continuously owned by members of the Miller-Knight family since it was built by Joseph Miller.

Miller, who served as an Indian scout and mail carrier on the Ohio River before 1798, farmed the property until his death in 1847. His granddaughter, Rachel Miller, married Captain William Knight, who served as master on several Ohio River packet boats during the 1850s and 1860s and was the owner of the *William Butler*. During much of the 19th century the Ohio River was the primary transportation and trade route for southern Ohio. The Miller-Knight House is one of the few surviving houses in Lawrence County with documented Ohio River associations.

Architectural Context and Significance

Architecturally, the Miller-Knight house embodies the distinctive characteristics of a traditional settlement form of construction and vernacular house plan, the center passage, double pen house. This form was probably better known to its builders as “two-pens-and-a-passage” or “hallway house” [Kniffen, 561]. While more commonly associated with log construction, the two-room, one or one-and-one-half story house form enjoyed popularity during Ohio's early settlement period. It was an elaboration of the simple one room, or single pen form that typified homesteader's claims and with a center passage it offered more privacy than a hall and parlor plan. Perhaps the existence of a local sawmill partially explains the use of frame construction over log walls.

The symmetrical exterior two-door fenestration pattern of the double pen may reflect a need for privacy and separation of formal and informal access to the interior spaces. Typically rooms had to serve multiple purposes, both formal (entertainment, funerals) and private (family gathering space). Residents of a dwelling such as the Miller-Knight House would segregate certain functions, dividing formal and private uses into separate rooms. Hutslar notes the double pen log form was a “standard solution to the problem of achieving the maximum space with a minimum of material and effort.” [Hutslar, p.99]. The simple one room dwelling was inadequate to satisfy growing housing needs. William Cooper Howells, recalling his boyhood days in Belmont County during the War of 1812, wrote in 1848, “The farmers lived simply. A man who had just settled was not expected to have much of a house, or other buildings. The first care was to put up what would do...” [Howells, *Recollections*, quoted in Hutslar, p. 174].

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**Miller-Knight House
Lawrence Co., Ohio**

Today the vernacular pioneer or "folk" architecture of Lawrence County is frequently associated with log buildings, of which nineteen survivors were recorded in 1986. Undoubtedly there are many more obscured by later siding and structural accretions. More scarce than log buildings are pre-1820 timber frame dwellings such as double pens and saddlebag house types. A saddlebag was essentially a double pen form with a central chimney stack separating the two rooms. Five saddlebag houses were recorded, but no double pens were identified. The Miller-Knight House apparently was not documented in conjunction with the 1986 survey. The single story, frame hall and parlor house on State Route 43 in Rome Twp. [LAW-402-11] was, when recorded in 1986, among the few pristine houses of its type in the township. The vast majority of older frame buildings in the county have been covered with aluminum and vinyl siding, making the Miller-Knight House a rare and largely unaltered example of a vernacular house type.

General Background History

Lawrence County was partitioned from Gallia County in 1815. Straddling the Ohio River along the county's southeastern border with West Virginia, Rome Township is characterized by a generally rural, upland terrain dotted with several old river communities, namely Athalia, Rome and Proctorville. Miller, originally known as Millersport, was founded ca. 1830 and by 1879 had a population of 350 [Williams, p. 247]. Today Miller is an unincorporated hamlet. Lawrence County was an early iron producer and was part of the Hanging Rock Iron District. During the period from 1818 to 1875 a total of 71 iron furnaces were "in blast" in the district, ten of them operating in Lawrence County. Vesuvius Furnace in the Ironton vicinity [1833; NROHP 1990] is among the best preserved of the early charcoal furnaces. From a population of 3,500 in 1820, Lawrence County grew to over 39,000 residents in 1880. In 1850, Rome Township had a population of 1,134, of which 237, or 21%, were natives of Virginia and only 21 were immigrants [Wilhelm]. During the period from 1880-1980 little growth occurred in rural Lawrence County, the overall population increased to just 62,300 in 1980.

While predominantly hilly, portions of the county along the Ohio River and its tributaries were well suited to farming. During the nineteenth century, principal crops included corn, tobacco, sweet potatoes and orchard products. In 1860 nearly 45% of the county's 1,117 farms were between 20 and 50 acres, while only 14% of the farms exceeded 100 acres in size. In 1935 there were 2,491 farms in the county, but by 1980 this figure had dropped to 621 [Gordon and Kane, *Survey Report*].

Prior to the Civil War the Ohio River served as the major artery for commerce and transportation. The earliest settlements such as Millersport were established along the river and served as lading points for riverboats or as ferry crossings. Given the fact many of these villages and settlements were located in the flood plain or first terrace, they were vulnerable to flooding, and as a result few historic buildings survive. Since 1832 twenty-seven significant floods have inundated the village of Miller [FEMA letter]. Indeed most of the buildings seen in a ca. 1900 photo of Miller have all but disappeared [Historic Photo].

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**Miller-Knight House
Lawrence Co., Ohio**

History of the Miller-Knight House

Joseph Miller (1760-1847) came from Wheeling, Virginia to Gallipolis, Ohio around 1790. Enumerated in the 1790 Gallia County census, Miller lived in the village stockade and was briefly employed by the federal government as an Indian agent under the command of William McMachen [*Draper Collection*]. He also served as Justice of the Peace and from 1794-1798 carried the U. S. Mail by canoe from Gallipolis to Limestone [Maysville], Kentucky. Gallipolis was one of five original post offices established in the Northwest Territory. Following marriage to Elizabeth Diggins in June 1797 and before seeing active service in the War of 1812, Miller settled on 56 acres with his wife at the mouth of Federal Creek in what in 1815 would become Lawrence County. According to one source, "In the year 1796 he [Miller] built his log cabin on the bank of the Ohio River just above the mouth of Federal Creek" [McCown, *Lawrence County Archaeological Report*]. Joseph Miller appears on the 1818 tax list as owning 3 horses and 3 cattle. Miller appears in the 1820 population census under Rome Township along with seven other males and five females. Joseph Miller's major source of income, as well as his food, likely came from farming, although a cryptic deed reference in 1837 to "Joseph C. Miller & Co." is being investigated [Deed, *State of Ohio to Jos. Miller*, 17 July 1837]. Joseph's brother Jacob Miller purchased adjoining land and platted the village of Millersport. In 1837 the small river hamlet was still known as Millersport, but by 1860 it was simply identified as "Miller's, a post office in Lawrence County [Hawes, p. 441]. Today the hamlet simply is known as "Miller."

In July 1848 Joseph and Elizabeth Miller's granddaughter Rachel (1824-1856) married Captain William Knight (1825-1884), a native of Virginia. During the period from 1847 - 1856 the farm was rented to family members with the income earmarked to support Miller's widow. Joseph Miller's will, probated in 1847, stipulated "my farm on which I live be rented out by my administrators for money and in such payments or installments as will be to the best advantage for my wife Elizabeth" [Will Book 1, Page 9]. In 1856 the 56-acre farm was transferred to William and Rachel Knight [V 19, p.42]. The 1850 population census lists Knight as a 24 year-old merchant living with his wife Rachel and 1 month old son Jacob [Coats, *Census*]. William and Rachel Knight had five children between 1848 and 1856, and two more children with his second wife Mary Miller after Rachel's death in 1856. In addition to farming, Knight was for many years a river boatman. He served in the 1860s as a master on the *C.T. Dumont*, a side-wheeler plying the Ohio between Cincinnati and Gallipolis and also on the *Moses McLellan*, a low water boat on the U.S. Mail Line between Cincinnati and Louisville. The McLellan also delivered U. S. Army supplies to Camp Piatt above Charleston on the Kanawha River. From 1864 - 1868 Knight was the owner of the *William Butler*, a sternwheeler that ran the Marietta and Cincinnati route from 1864 - 1868 [Way, pp. 66-67; 332-333]. During this period Knight also captained and raced the *Wild Wagoner*, a sidewheeler owned by the Marietta and Wheeling Packet Company [*The Herald-Advertiser* 1928]. In 1860 the census listed Knight as a steamboat captain with real property worth \$15,915. Evidently Knight suffered a debilitating spinal injury; both the 1870 and 1880 censuses list him as an invalid [Miller-Knight Family Records].

Following Captain Knight's death in 1884, the farm passed to William Barlow Knight, one of four children born to Captain and Rachel Knight. William Barlow Knight (1850 - 1938) lived on the farm until his death, when the property passed to his widow Amy Knight. In 1983 James T. and Clara Knight purchased the farm, and have since then conveyed it to Robert Miller, who is descended from Jacob Miller, Joseph Miller's brother.

Presently there are eleven listings on the National Register in Lawrence County, none of them in Rome Township.

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**Miller-Knight House
Miller, Lawrence County, Ohio**

Bibliography

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Correspondence. Peter A. Thomas, FEMA, to David Snyder, Ohio Historic Preservation Office, 11 January 2001.

Gallipolis Bulletin. 4 July 1896.

Gordon, Stephen C., and Kane, Kathy Mast. *Lawrence County Overview and Survey Report*. Columbus: Ohio Historic Preservation Office, June 1986.

Hawes, George, comp. *George W. Hawes Ohio state gazetteer and business directory for 1859 and 1860*. Cincinnati: G. W. Hawes, 1859.

Hutslar, Donald A. *The Architecture of Migration: Log Construction in the Ohio Country, 1750-1850*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986.

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Kniffen, Fred. "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55 (December 1965): 549-577.

Knight, Clara, comp. *Miller-Knight Family Records and Research*. 2001.

Lillie, Shirley. "*Following John's Footprints: A Compilation of Documents Relating to John Miller of the Ohio Valley*." March 1, 1999.

Lawrence County Will Records Vol. 1, Page 9.

Lawrence County Deed Records.

Map of Lawrence County. September 1837.

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Section number 10 Page 1

**Miller-Knight House
Miller, Lawrence County, Ohio**

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“Wild Wagoner’ Thrived on Racing in Days When Bacon Was Used for Fuel.” [Huntington] *Herald-Advertiser* 5 August 1928.

Wilhelm, Hubert G. H. *The Origins and Distribution of Settlement Groups: Ohio 1850*. Athens: Ohio University Department of Geography, 1982.

Williams' Ohio State Directory for 1878-9. Cincinnati: Williams & Company, 1879.

Verbal Boundary Description

The Miller-Knight House rests on Parcel Number 18-199-0100, found in Deed Book 485, Page 650, which is 15.78 acres in area.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The area being nominated represents the remnants of the historic parcel owned by the Miller-Knight families since the early 19th century. The parcel includes the house, domestic space, pasture, Ohio River frontage, and woods adjoining Federal Creek to the north and west.

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Section number Photos Page 1

**Miller-Knight House
Miller, Lawrence County, Ohio**

Photo Log

The following information applies to all photos:

Property Name	Miller-Knight House
City, County, State	Miller, Lawrence County, Ohio
Photographer	Clara Knight
Location of Negatives	James T. & Clara Knight Rt. 3 Box 269 Milton, WV 25541
Date of Photos	June 2002

Photo Log Numbers and Views

- 1 Looking north at south & east elevations.
- 2 Looking west/northwest at east elevation.
- 3 Looking east/northeast from front porch.
- 4 Looking west toward house from tree-line above Ohio River.
- 5 Looking southwest at east and north elevations.
- 6 Looking southeast at north and west elevations.
- 7 Looking west at porch framing, east elevation.
- 8 Looking west at upper porch framing.
- 9 Looking east, interior front door.
- 10 Looking north at fireplace in parlor.
- 11 Looking south from parlor toward hallway.

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**Miller-Knight House
Miller, Lawrence County, Ohio**

Photo Log continued

- 12 Looking east at door and transom detail in living room.
- 13 Looking south at fireplace mantel in living room.
- 14 Looking southwest from living room toward doorway into dining room.
- 15 Looking southwest into dining room.
- 16 Looking west at door and spring latch between dining room and living room.
- 17 Looking north toward second floor landing and upstairs bedroom.
- 18 Looking northeast toward stair rail and upstairs bedroom.