

STATE OF OREGON INVENTORY  
OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Oregon State Parks, Salem, OR 97310



County Linn  
Ranking \_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
(Common) Lowe House  
(Historic) Ralston-Miller House  
Address 481 Main Street  
Present Owner Roger A. Lowe, et al  
Address 481 Main Street  
Original Use residence  
Date of Construction c. 1892  
Map Reference Number 159

Physical description of property and statement of historical significance:

The Ralston-Miller House is a one and a half story Queen Anne/Eastlake building with a square plan and a pyramidal roof with gabled bays. There is a belt of stucco around the bottom of the second floor, fish scales below the eaves and shiplap siding above the red brick foundation. The gable ends contain half timbering at the peak, jigsaw cut brackets at the corners and decorated verge boards.

On the north side of the west elevation there is a front porch with three turned posts, a balustrade and brackets below a flat roof. The paired front doors have single lights bordered with colored glass. On the south is a three-sided, flat roofed, one-story bay containing double-hung windows with colored glass borders in the upper sashes and panels below the windows. A cornice ties the porch and bay roofs together. Above the bay there are paired double-hung windows with colored glass borders and above the porch there is a small gable containing a single light door.

In the middle of the south facade there is a one-story, three-sided, hip roof bay containing double-hung windows with colored glass borders in the upper sashes. There are panels below and above the windows. In the gable end directly above there are paired double-hung windows with colored glass borders. A chimney with the top removed rises up to the

(continued)

Recorded by Heritage Investment Corporation, 813 SW Alder, Portland, OR 97204 (228-0272)  
Allen, McMath-Hawkins, Architects, 213 SW Ash, Portland, OR 97204 (228-5154)

Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sources consulted: see attached.

eaves on the west side of the bay. There is a one-story, gable roof addition along the east facade which on the south features two one/one, double-hung windows and a side porch with a jigsaw cut arched entry. There is a hip roof back porch on the east with lattice walls.

On the east side of the north elevation there is a full height rectangular bay with paired double-hung windows that have colored glass borders in the upper sashes located on both stories. To the west of the bay there are a pair of small windows with colored glass borders located in the stucco band and a single one where the bay meets the side of the house. On the west wall of the bay a porch has been removed, but the door with a colored glass transom remains.

There is a one-story addition projecting off the rear elevation with one/one, double-hung windows. A corbeled chimney rises where the addition's gable meets the main roof. There are stairs and an entry in the center of the hip roof porch which runs along the east wall of the addition.

### History

John and Edith Ralston were early owners of this residence. John's parents, Jeremiah and Jerima, settled here in 1847 with their original Donation Land Claim including this site. Jeremiah Ralston laid out the town around 1856 opening the first store in the county here. The Ralstons were members of the Methodist Church donating land for the church building, cemetery and Santiam Academy. John was one of nine children, two of whom saw service in the Indian wars. John and Edith lived here for several years until a fire took the lives of two children. Not wanting to remain in the house they moved to Albany in 1889.

Milton A. Miller, the next occupant, was a state senator. Miller was responsible for William Jennings Bryan's making a campaign stop here which drew 20,000 people to the Santiam Academy campus and Bryan stayed at the Miller residence July 12, 1886. This was shortly after he had made his famous "Cross of Gold" speech at the National Democratic Convention in Chicago at which Miller was an Oregon state committeeman. He and Bryan stayed in the same hotel and became lifelong friends.

Nathan C. and Winifred Whitlock Lowe purchased the house from the Millers. The Lowes had previously lived in Silverton and then Portland, where he was a streetcar conductor and undertaker's assistant. They moved to Lebanon and established an undertaking business in 1912, building the Lowe Funeral Home at Grant and Park Streets in 1930.

### Sources Consulted

1. Interview with Ada Lowe, May 11, 1984.
2. "Lowe Funeral Home Nearing Completion," Lebanon Express, March 26, 1930.
3. Sanborn Insurance Map, 1888.
4. Welsh, William D., A Brief History of Oregon City and West Linn, Oregon, Crown Zellerbach Corporation, 1941.

