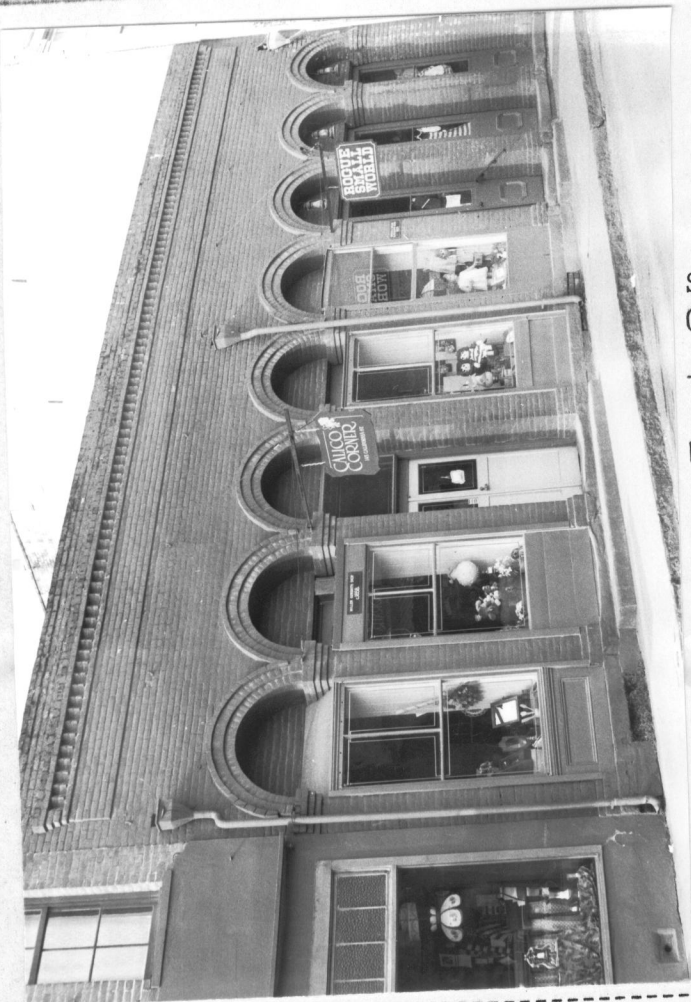


STATE OF OREGON INVENTORY
OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
State Historic Preservation Office
Oregon State Parks, Salem, OR 97310

Significance Primary No. 336
County Jackson
Theme _____
Name Calico Corner
(Common) "Miller's Gunsmith Shop"
(Historic) John Miller's Hunter's Emporium
Address 145 West California Street
Jacksonville, Oregon 97530
Present Owner Heisel, Joan C.
Hornecker, Gregory
Address P.O. Box 869
Jacksonville, Oregon 97530
Original Use Commercial
Date of Construction 1874



Physical description of property and statement of historical significance:

John Miller's Hunter's Emporium was erected in 1874 and is in the commercial Italianate style. It is a one story, rectangular building constructed of brick and is presently unpainted. The architect and builder are unknown.

The main facade of Miller's building (adjoining Schumpf's on the west) consists of a continuous arcade of eight bays - originally, probably all were doorways. The bays have since been altered to allow for the introduction of display windows with wood panels below that are nearly flush with the wall surface. The third opening from the east has been retained as a doorway with a double leaf glass and wood door. Piers with stepped brick bases and capitals separate each opening. Semicircular arches spring from the capitals; the tympanum of each has been filled in with brick and is deeply recessed from the plane of the wall. Each opening has a sandstone sill.

The roof is low pitched gable, hidden behind a parapet. The entablature consists of a frieze of slightly projecting bricks and two courses of dentils formed by bricks laid at an angle.

Miller's building is located on the south side of California Street between South Oregon and South Third Streets. To the west is

continue on back if necessary

Recorded by Gail E.H. Evans Date November 1979

Photographed by Gail E.H. Evans
Sources consulted (continue on back if necessary):
Please refer to footnotes

Please enclose map. Township 37 N 2 E Section 32, Block 7, part of lot 2.
Account No. 10800 (32BA)

a one story brick edifice with an identical facade except for more recent window alterations that have been made to Miller's and not Schumpfs. A two story brick building adjoins Miller's Hunter's Em-porium on the west. In the rear (south side), there is a small yard with sandstone steps leading to a back entrance and shaded by a single tree. South of the yard there is a dirt parking area. Miller's building extends further to the south than the adjoining Schumpf's building.

Originally a wood awning supported by iron brackets stretched across the sidewalk. In the later part of the 1800's John Miller identified his business with a sign reading "John Miller," written in the parapet.

The present one story brick building, now occupied by a gift shop, was erected in 1874, very likely at the same time as the arcaded brick facade joining it on the west.¹ It was in that year that a raging fire eradicated the west half of this block which was then dominated by a collection of Jacksonville's earliest wood frame structures.² Three months after the fire, John Miller, who had by then gained a regional reputation for his craftsmanship as a gunsmith, purchased the vacant lot and soon began erecting the present brick edifice.³

Prior to the fire, legal ownership of the land appears unclear; often more than one individual claimed title to the land at one time. For many years this lot was identified by its close association with the "house known as the Eldorado,"⁴ a saloon which occupied a portion of a wood frame structure extending for 100' on the south side of California Street. Kenny and Appler, who operated one of the first and heaviest stocked establishments on the northeast corner of California and Oregon Streets, were the first to claim ownership of this large parcel.⁵ Subsequently, William Burke, James Leslie, W.W. Fowler, Julia Owen, and Patrick McManus all affirmed their right to the land at various times between 1853 and 1857.⁶ Late in 1857 James Clug-gage, who had by then acquired his legal patent rights to his original donation land claim holdings, which included most of the Jacksonville townsite, sold this same 100'x25' strip to John Paw Paw, an early town resident.

By 1868 the two story wood frame structure east of the Eldorado, where Miller's store now stands, housed a "Bootblack" and "Grocery."⁸ In the early 1870's John Drum bought this parcel that then included "the Store House now occupied by the said Drum on California Street."⁹ In the 1874 conflagration that leveled the "Store House" as well as others on the western portion of the block, the Oregon Sentinel newspaper reported that "this gentleman [James Drum] [had] nearly closed out his stock of groceries and provisions preparatory to seeking a new location . . ."¹⁰

Pushed forward no doubt by the occurrence of the fire, Drum in a matter of days relinquished his ownership of the burned lot to Alexander Martin,¹¹ who acquired clear title to a 25'x25' parcel and sold it to John Miller for \$250.00.¹²

Miller and his neighbor to the west joined efforts in raising a brick building which spanned two 25' lots and today appears as a continuous arcaded facade. In November 1874, "John Miller familiarly known as 'Gunsmith Miller', has at last got his new brick building finished and has moved his store and shop into it. He has now one of the neatest and handiest establishments of the kind in Oregon."¹³ Ben Sachs (Jacksonville's second wealthiest resident in 1868),¹⁴ whose store on the north side of California Street had also been damaged in the fire, temporarily "removed his notion and variety store to Miller's

new fire proof building. . ." in 1874.¹⁵

John Miller, a native of Bavaria, Germany, arrived in Oregon in 1860. He advertised his "Hunter's Emporium," specializing in guns and later hardware and cutlery for roughly four decades.¹⁶ All evidence indicates his business prospered; in 1880 he substantially improved and enlarged his store by removing the "partition dividing him from Mr. Howard's old stand . . ." ¹⁷ And by the early 1890's he had erected a large, elaborately decorated Queen Anne style residence, fashioned after a pattern book design of George F. Barber of Knoxville, Tennessee. In addition to his business enterprise, Miller acquired considerable property in the area and was sole owner of the Miller Mining claim (Farmer's Flat), four miles southwest of Jacksonville.¹⁸

John Miller died in 1893, but his brick store continued to dispense "Hardware" and "Guns" until at least the late 1890's.¹⁹

FOOTNOTES

1. The Oregon Sentinel, November 21, 1874.
2. Ibid., April 18, 1874.
Photographs, "Jacksonville Looking East." (Southern Oregon Historical Society)
3. Jackson County Deeds, July 8, 1874. (Christopher Owens)
4. Ibid., April 4, 1853, November 7, 1854. (Christopher Owens)
5. Ibid., April 4, 1853. (Christopher Owens)
6. Ibid., April 4, 1853; November 1, 1854; November 4, 1855.
(Christopher Owens)
7. Ibid., December 7, 1857. (Christopher Owens)
8. "Silk Map," Jacksonville, approximately 1868.
9. Jackson County Deeds, May 18, 1872. (Christopher Owens)
10. The Oregon Sentinel, April 18, 1874.
11. Jackson County Deeds, April 29, 1874. (Christopher Owens)
12. Ibid., April 29, 1874; July 8, 1874. (Christopher Owens)
13. The Oregon Sentinel, November 21, 1874. (Marshall Lango)
14. Jacksonville Reveille Weekly, July 4, 1868. (Christopher Owens)
15. The Oregon Sentinel, November 21, 1874.
16. Ibid., August 8, 1875. (Marshall Langos)
The Democratic Times, September 21, 1876. (Marshall Lango)
Photograph, "Jacksonville Looking East." ("John Miller" is written in the parapet of the store.) (Southern Oregon Historical Society)
17. The Oregon Sentinel, November 24, 1880.
18. _____ Chapman, Portrait and Biographical Record of Western Oregon, Chapman Publishing Co., Chicago, Illinois, 1904, p. 200. (Southern Oregon Historical Society file)
19. Jacksonville, Sanborn Map and Publishing Co. 1890, 1898.