

NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY, MILLER LIBRARY
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building No. 115)
2801 Woodstock Avenue
Silver Spring
Montgomery County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1109-Q

HABS
MD
16-SILSPR,
2Q

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

HABS
MD
16-SILSPR
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Seminary, Miller Library
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building No. 115)

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Location: 2801 Woodstock Avenue. The building is located on a small lot at the confluence of Linden Lane and Woodstock Drive, across the street from the main campus.

Significance: The Miller Library was constructed to house the rare book library and archives of Jahu DeWitt Miller, a friend of the Cassedys who was a Chautauqua circuit speaker and a part-time NPS lecturer. The collection of over 10,000 items was owned by Miller, but it was available for the students use. Miller willed it to Cassedy at his death in 1911. The school's main library was in Main. This building was used more like a reading room than a circulating library.

The architecture of the building is an example of the Craftsmen shingle-style design. The use of natural materials, such as the exterior wood shingles and rough-hewn stone entry portal, gave the building a rustic and picturesque quality so valued in the late nineteenth century. Small window frames, probably used to protect the collection from sunlight and to optimize shelf-space within it, made it appear a little less like a dwelling house than its character and size suggest.

History: The Miller Library was built in 1901. Two years after the library was built, on June 6, 1903, Cassedy conveyed the lot "together with buildings and improvements" to Miller for ten dollars, "upon condition that no malt or spirituous liquors shall be manufactured or sold on the said premises" and that no business operating from it will harm the health of the community.¹ Only slight alterations were made to the building over the years. A second-story porch on the north facade was enclosed in the 1920s. Ament made slight alterations in 1924. He added short ledges in front of the portal piers outside the main entrance. A statue of a phoenix, now gone, was placed on each of the ledges.

When the Army took over the school, they transformed the library into officer family housing. The book shelves were removed but the second-floor mezzaine remains in place.

Description: The Miller Library faces northeast. It sits atop a raised terrace. A flagstone in front of entrance is inscribed, "The Class of 1912 plants these two trees to the memory of Jahu DeWitt Miller." The two-story shingle-sided building with basement is square with exterior facades that flare at the bottoms, making the building wider at the bottom than at the top. It has an overhanging hip roof with decorative brackets and a chimney at the southeast corner. The shingles are painted maroon, but a green undercoat is exposed where the paint is peeling. A contrasting stuccoed belt course is located two-thirds of the way up each of the facades. The wide center front door has a large rough-hewn stone surround that flares out at the bottom. It is

¹ Liber 26, folio 263, Montgomery County Land Records Office.

capped by a overhanging pent roof. The surround was extended out to form stone ledges in the 1920s.

The building has asymmetrically-placed and unusually-shaped windows. Originally, there were matching first-floor slender horizontal windows with curvilinear muntins on either side of the door. A large double-light window was added beneath the one south of the front door. On second floor, there are two tripartite semicircular windows in two different sizes.

There is a six-by-two bay enclosed porch (that was once open) across the second floor of the north facade. The porch was one-over-one light windows. Below the porch, is a large central window ensemble with a light colored painted wooden surround with cornice. A stuccoed spandrel divides an upper window with decorative Gothic muntins from a larger single sash window. There is a small single sash window at the northeast corner of the first floor.

The south facade has a second-story oriel with a semicircular tripartite window. The stucco belt course that surrounds the building cuts across the oriel's bottom. Double sash windows flank the oriel. The first floor windows are like those on the front facade. The northeast corner has an ornate slender horizontal window and the northwest corner has the same slender window with a double-light window below it.

The west end has a one-and-a-half story extension with the stuccoed belt course under the eaves, just below the flat roof. The windows have decorative muntins. A one-by-two bay lean-to with door is attached to the extension. It is probably not original to the structure. The interior had a large stone fireplace with cozy inglenooks and a mezzanine.

ADDENDUM TO:
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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