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**Building plans are restricted to  
permission of the office of  
Planning Design and Construction**

#1856

Edgar R. Dethlefsen, Collector.  
William Henry Miller Papers,  
1890-1957.

Guide

Reading Room copy - please return

1) NYCV84-A2070  
 Dethlefsen, Edsar Raymond, 1930- , Collector.  
 William Henry Miller papers, 1890-1957.  
 .4 cubic ft.

William Henry Miller (1848-1922), was a student of the Cornell University College of Architecture from 1868 to 1870, later becoming a prominent Ithaca, New York architect. He designed several buildings on the Cornell University campus.

Summary: Drawings, photographs (positive and negative), plans, and specifications of Ithaca and Cornell buildings by Miller, list of newspaper articles concerning Miller and notable architecture in Ithaca (1870-1917), and biographical sketch of Miller by Dethlefsen.

Indexes: Item list.

Cite as: Edsar Raymond Dethlefsen, Collector, William Henry Miller Papers, #1856, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cornell University Libraries.

1. Miller, William Henry, 1848-1922. 2. Cornell University--Buildings. 3. Architecture, Domestic--United States. 4. Architecture, Modern--19th century--United States. 5. Architecture, Modern--20th century--United States. 6. Ithaca (N.Y.)--Architecture. 7. Architectural drawings. 8. Photoprints. 9. Photonegatives.

RGPN: 1856

ID: NYCV84-A2070

CC: 9554

DCF:

PROC: P

MAY 11 1990

DETHLEFSEN (EDGAR R.), Collector, William Henry Miller Papers, 1870-1917

1. Specifications for Addition to Residence of A. D. White  
Aug. 2, 1895 ----- typescript copy - 14 pages
2. Specifications for Plumbing Addition to A. D. White residence  
Aug. 3, 1895 ----- typescript copy - 5 pages
3. Specifications for Sigma Chi Fraternity House  
May 4, 1900 ----- typescript copy - 12 pages
4. Specifications for foundation wall of Stable for Mr. T.S. Williams,  
Cold Spring Harbor, L.I., N.Y. -- February 26, 1903 - 1 piece
5. Mason and Carpenter Specifications for stable - Mr. Williams  
March 6, 1903 ----- 1 piece
6. Mason and Carpenter Specifications for residence of Mr. Williams  
March 6, 1903 ----- 1 piece
7. Plumbing Specification for residence and stable of Mr. Williams  
Sept. 22, 1903 ----- 1 piece (2 cop. - one pgs. 7 & 8  
missing; some variations between the two)
8. Heating Specification for residence and stable of Mr. Williams  
Sept. 22, 1903 ----- 1 piece (3 copies with diff. notations in  
each, one with additional information at end)
9. Incandescent Light wiring, Electric Bells and Telephones for residence  
and stable of Mr. Williams  
Nov. 16, 1903 ----- 1 piece ( 2 copies - modifications on second copy)
10. Chronological Index for 1870-1900 of Ithaca Daily Journal and Weekly  
Democrat - W.H. Miller Research - typescript copy, 30 pages, a listing  
of article titles concerning Miller.
11. Chronological Index of Ithaca Journal for 1901-1917  
W.H. Miller Research ----- typescript - 18 pages  
A listing of article titles concerning Miller.

Listed by Sharron Walther.

*Note: Call # for  
Dethlefsen's thesis  
1957  
D479*

*(2") Box 1 on shelf.*

Dethlefsen (Edgar Raymond), Collector. William Henry Miller Papers, 1870-1957.

Specifications for buildings designed by William Henry Miller (1848-1922), including additions to the Andrew D. White residence in Ithaca, 1895, and the Sigma Chi fraternity house in Ithaca, 1900, both typescript copies; original specifications for the residence and stable of Timothy Shaler Williams, Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, 1903; typescript chronological index, 1870-1900, 30 pp., to news articles concerning Miller, which appeared in the Ithaca Daily Journal and Weekly Democrat, and index to Miller articles in the Ithaca Journal, 1901-1917, 18 pp.; biographical sketch of Miller written as an introduction to Dethlefsen's thesis at Cornell, for which this material was collected, 10<sup>4</sup> pp. typescript, 1957; and *Dethlefsen's analysis of Miller's design*, 10 pp. typescript, 1957.

Card entries:

Dethlefsen (Edgar Raymond), Collector. William Henry Miller Papers (1870-1957)  
 White, Andrew Dickson (1832-1918)  
 Williams, Timothy Shaler (1862-1930)  
 Sigma Chi (Cornell University)

cross reference:

Miller, William Henry (1848-1922)  
 → Tompkins County (Ithaca)  
 [ ~~Architecture~~ Suffolk County (Cold Spring Harbor)  
 Architecture

kj. 6/4/59

\*ITEMS donated by Edgar R. Dethlefsen to Cornell University Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, September, 1984  
RE: William H. Miller, Architect

Page 1

1. Psi Upsilon Chapter House: Exterior photograph (negative print)
- 2-6. First Unitarian Church: 3 Exterior photographs  
Perspective view (positive and negative prints)
7. Bela P. MacKoon House: Exterior photograph (before 1885 remodeling)
- 8-9. J. C. Forbes House: Exterior photograph  
Exterior photograph (negative print)
10. "411 University Ave. 1901?": Perspective sketch (pencil and watercolor wash)
- 11-16. A. D. White House: Exterior photograph (positive and negative prints)  
Exterior photograph " " " "  
Exterior photograph  
Interior photograph
- 17-26. W. H. Sage House: Interior photograph (positive and negative prints)  
Exterior photograph " " " "  
South elevation " " " "  
Second floor plan " " " "  
Third floor plan " " " "
- 27-42. H. W. Sage House: Basement plan " " " "  
First floor plan " " " "  
Second floor plan " " " "  
Third floor plan " " " "  
Roof plan " " " "  
3 Exterior photographs (each positive and negative prints)
- 43-71. Jennie McGraw Fiske House/Chi Psi:  
3 Exterior photographs  
5 Exterior photographs (each positive and negative prints)  
Newspaper articles on Chi Psi fire (2 negative prints)  
7 Interior photographs (each positive and negative prints)
- 72-86. University (now Uris) Library:  
Exterior photograph  
Main floor plan (positive and negative print)  
Third floor plan " " " "  
2 Interior photographs (each positive and negative prints)  
3 Exterior photographs " " " " " "
- 87-90. Risley Hall: 2 Exterior photographs  
Exterior perspective view (positive and negative prints)
- 91-94. Barnes Hall: 2 Exterior photographs (each positive and negative prints)
- 95-97. Stimson Hall: Exterior photograph  
Exterior photograph (positive and negative prints)
- 98-99. First Baptist Church: Exterior perspective view (positive and negative prints)
- 100-04. Boardman Hall/Law School: Exterior photograph  
Exterior photograph (positive and negative prints)  
Exterior perspective view (positive and negative prints)
- 105-06. A. D. White Gate/Eddy Gate: Photograph (positive and negative prints)

- 107-09. Ithaca Savings Bank: Exterior photograph (positive and negative prints)  
Newspaper article, with sketch (negative print)
- 110-12. Jane P. McGraw House: Exterior photograph (positive and negative prints)  
Exterior photograph (clipping from magazine)
- 113-14. Aerial perspective view of Cornell campus (positive and negative prints)
115. Dining room (fraternity house?) (photograph)
116. W. H. Miller House: Page with 2 interior photographs
- 117-25: Ithaca High School: Newspaper article and illustrations (9 negative prints)
126. Chi Phi Chapter House: Exterior photograph (negative print)
- 127-28. Sigma Chi Chapter House: Exterior photograph (positive and negative prints)
129. Delta Kappa Epsilon Chapter House: Exterior photograph (negative print)
130. Delta Tau Delta Chapter House: Exterior photograph (negative print)
131. Clinton House: Exterior perspective view (from adv.) (negative print)
- 132-44. 6 pages each with several photographs of various buildings, with negatives for each page (one page has 2 negatives)
- 145-46. Residence: 2 Exterior photographs (*Timothy S. Williams house*) MRT
147. Delta Upsilon Chapter House: Exterior photograph (negative print)
- 148-83. 36 Exterior photographs, in envelope (Various buildings, including Greycourt Apartments, C. D. Stowell House, Wells College, Congregational Church, University (now Uris) Library, etc.)
- \*\* 184-90. Sigma Chi Chapter House: Blue line prints: North Elevation  
Details, Fireplace  
Second Floor Plan  
Third Floor Plan  
Basement Plan  
Front Elevation  
First Floor Plan
- \*\* 191-98. House for Warren E. Dennis, Esp., Southampton, L.I.  
Ink drawings on linen: West Elevation  
East Elevation  
North Elevation  
First Floor Plan  
Second Floor Plan  
Third Floor Plan  
Basement Plan  
Roof Plan
- \*\* 199-202. University (now Uris) Library (apparently preliminary schemes)  
Blue line prints: East Elevation  
First Floor Plan  
Second Floor Plan  
Third Floor Plan

\*List compiled by Mary Raddant Tomlan, 3 September 1984.

\*\* *oversize plans, filed in Knap case E-10.*

William Henry Miller biographical data taken from Dethlefsen's paper:

B. 1848 in Barneveldt, Oneida Co., son of Major Henry Miller and Clarissa Burlingame Miller.

Early education: common school, private instruction, Mechanicsville Academy.  
2 yrs. at Clinton Liberal Institute.

Entered Cornell in 1868; first student in the School of Architecture; studied under Charles Babcock.

Education enriched by close association with Andrew D. White.

First commission was house for ADW.

Within 3 yrs. of the completion of his university study and 1st commission, Miller's architectural office was established and flourishing.

1874, able to leave office in hands of assistants while he toured Europe for several months. Studied European architecture and made valuable personal contacts through references given him by ADW and Willard Fiske.

Upon return from Europe, married Miss Emma Halsey of Halseyville and "they set out to build one of the finest residences in the area, modest but architecturally unique in many respects."

Millers purchased from Ezra Cornell large plot on East Hill and put up a small frame house, which was to receive his constant attention; was designed and redesigned to house his family of 4 children, an extensive collection of art objects, and his music.

Practiced architecture vigorously for almost 50 yrs. Office in Ithaca, for most part in Sage Bldg. on State St.

Practice not confined to Ithaca--spread to many states and several foreign countries. Most famous residence designed was the McGraw-Fiske mansion; led to his being asked to design the CU Library.

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From Dethlefsen's "Analysis of Design"

Commissions for ADW, Sage, and McGraw homes gave Miller funds to enable him to exhibit talents at once.

ADW House, 1873, modified English style, typical of the period  
massing of high and angular forms

none of innovations which were to become important in later work

John Earden home--different vehicle--rustic Gothic with embellishments of Swiss style

Displayed, as did later homes, rich but tasteful use of materials in interior -- contrasts in color, form, and texture achieved through use of various woods --oak, butternut, ash, walnut, chestnut

Miller's own home -- Eddy St.

Likewise displays adept use of woods -- simple wood paneled ceilings and mouldings

Entry--stained glass panels, della robbia plaque

"elegantly simple"

Henry W. Sage and Wm. Henry Sage mansions --exhibit some of sweeping changes taking place in architecture in 1870's.

Used the "living hall" concept introduced earlier by E. H. Richardson

Small confined entry opening into the great hall which is surrounded by drawing room, sitting room, and dining room, all of which could be thrown together for grand entertaining.

Houses for CU profs, ranging from Swiss to Italian Renaissance style



T. F. Crane home -- interesting effect created by playing one heavy roof form against another -- this massing of heavy forms to create an active and pleasing composition characteristic of Miller's early residential work.

1883, McGraw-Fiske Mansion

Miss McG. turned entire project of designing, decorating, and landscaping over to Miller, went off to Europe, and did not return until it was compl. Modeled upon at chateau at Blois--pronounced by foreign visitors to be more castle-like than anything to be found elsewhere in U.S.

Impression created by numerous un-related roof forms

Exterior left much to be desired

But interior beautifully conceived

Living Hall an enormous lofty space providing core for all the irregularly shaped rms. that led from it.

This work enhanced Miller's reputation tremendously--much newspaper publicity

Simple home of 70's gave way to more elaborate ones of the '80's; latter designed to accomodate European works of art purchased by American travelers  
Several rms. in McG-F mansion designed to display such treasures  
Likewise, Sibley-Averill house in Rochester, 1882.

Mid-80's, many community bldgs. in Ithaca

First use of brick -- very adept -- freedom of design, indicating change in direction from his former heavy stone bldgs.

First church--Congregational Church

Circular openings in the brick and arched entry unified by strip of marble (white) which runs along the 2 main sides carrying inscriptions -- ~~Miller~~ calls this "distinguished" Dethlefsen

Miller's hand at brick patterning can be seen in the tower, where subtle color change to darker red created interesting line from top to base.

Same pattern in Sage Bldg.

1887, Barnes Hall -- modified Romanesque--one of Miller's 1st attempts in this style  
Dethlefsen terms this one of Miller's most handsome works --- beauty derived from fine proportions of brick tower and the central mass

1888, Wells College Bldg. -- Dutch profile gables, tower

1889, CULibrary -- Miller selected after Trustees had rejected entry of Van Brunt & Co. noted library architects of Boston

Bldg. is Miller's greatest accomplishment, marks peak of his creative life-- none of later designs were to "surpass the library in excellence of proportion and planning, feeling for materials, and perfection in detail.

1891, Boardman

Was seen as an acutal part of the library composition

Late 80's and 90's, professors' homes and fraternity houses

Chi Phi, high above gorge, English half timber with Swiss flavor

1890, Baptist Church of Ithaca -- a singular design--totally different from anything else he did in this general style. Gray limestone instead of typical tan Indiana limestone -- rugged quality -- none of the refinement of the Library; one of last jobs with such a feeling of freedom.

1893, Unitarian Church -- more refined; his fine sense of proportion exhibited--a bldg. of "dignity and repose".

1893-98, mostly work in other parts of country.

1898-1902, large homes in campus

English half-timbered style until 1900, when he changed approach radically.

After 1900, plan and utility became more important than appearance.

Intro. of new plasters and hollow blocks to bldg. trade contrib. to change.

Robert H. Treman Residence -- pleasing mixture of half timber and new heavy designs of the 1900's.

Sigma Chi and Mynderse van Cleef homes, complete turn to the new style based on Italian Renaissance

This new direction also applied to Stimson Hall, 1902. Most important result of this bldg. is the admirable expression on the exterior of the different interior functions. Interior efficiency now of greatest importance; his earlier "masterful interplay of forms" no longer evident.

Prudence Risley was last Cornell commission.

That and the later Ithaca H.S. in English collegiate style.

In earlier yrs, had drawn from past for basic outlines, but product was a very personal one.

With PR and IHS, was concerned with "fitting an alien shell around complex modern planning."

"This period in architecture was one of searching for a form to satisfy the rapidly changing aspects of our culture. William Henry Miller would not be considered as a pioneer of new concepts, but as a sensitive man with a keen sense for materials, color, and proportion whose architecture gave the people of the time what they wanted--surroundings of beauty." -- Dethlefsen's conclusion.

Above info. taken from the 14 pp. submitted to Alumni News by Mr. Dethlefsen, March 1956  
designed

Copy of Ithaca Journal obit. also says he ~~wrote~~ Ithaca Savings Bank Bldg., which was later destroyed by fire, and the Cascadilla School bldgs.