



The Rogers-Miller House at 312 State Street (1885) is a fairly typical Queen Anne style home. The elaborate decoration on the exterior of this house clearly expresses the prosperity that Adrian was enjoying at the end of the nineteenth century. One of the early occupants of the home was an extraordinary character named Reverend Dr. Frank Lewis, renowned for his affiliation with the Ku Klux Klan. Over the years, the home was converted into five separate apartments, but since 1989 the current owner, Douglas Miller, has restored most of the home to a single-family dwelling, while retaining two small apartments.

In the 1890's Adrian handled the second worst depression in American history rather well despite the loss of two railroad shops. Charles Lindquist, in his book *Adrian, the City that Worked* describes how the population went unfazed during this decade, growing by ten percent. According to Lindquist, the main reason for Adrian's success through this time was because of one product: woven wire fence. Page Fence and Lamb Fence were the most notable manufacturers during this time. Page and Lamb Fence were both the dominant companies of the era, although several other industries came and went. Other economic developments did occur though, which involved Adrian's third

railroad—from Lima, Ohio, that began service in 1896. Adrian had been a commercial center well as being an industrial town since it was founded in the 1820s, and during this period Adrian's commerce also went unfazed despite of the departures of industries and loss of certain jobs.

According to *Old House Web*, the Queen Anne style—the style of the Rogers-Miller House—was first introduced to America in 1876, at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. The British government displayed two buildings there in the Queen Anne style. These buildings inspired a new fashion in houses, although the earliest American example of Queen Anne had been built by Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) in Rhode Island in 1874. The term "Queen Anne" was coined in England to describe buildings inspired by architecture erected during the reign of Queen Anne from 1702-1714 that featured classical ornament applied to medieval forms. The style is associated with the Scottish-born architect Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912) and his followers.

In general, the American versions of Queen Anne are more highly decorated with scroll work and other details than are the British examples. While British Queen Anne houses are usually brick, decorated with ceramic tiles on the upper stories, the American versions employ more wood. Frequently the first floor is constructed of brick or stone, with upper floors in

half-timbers, stucco, clapboard, or decorative shingle.

Some key features of a Queen Anne style home is a steeply pitched roof of



irregular shape, usually with dominant front-facing gables, partial or full-width asymmetrical porch that is usually one-story high and extended along one or both side walls, textured shingles (and/or other finishes) used to avoid smooth-walled appearance, and an asymmetrical facade. Additional features usually seen in Queen Anne style homes are large panes of glass bounded by smaller panes, shallow rectangular windows over main windows, bay windows, and patterned masonry chimneys. According to Virginia and Lee McAlester, details often include: gable ornaments, finials, roof cresting, incised ornaments, spindle-work frieze, lace-like brackets, spindle-work porch supports, corner brackets, Palladian windows, dentils, classic grouped columns raised to porch level, decorative terra cotta panels, half-timbering, lines of windows, solid brackets, and decorative stone and brick patterns. Irregular wall surfaces were achieved by including integral porches usually on upper floors, cutaway bays, pent roofs enclosing gables, bands of shingles or trim, overhangs either real or simulated by trim, brackets accentuating real and false overhangs, and cantilevered wall extensions (McAlester, 263).

Other common features include: complex roofs that are typically a combination of hips and gables, steeply pitched, and often covered with patterned shingles; chimneys that are tall and usually complex and decorated; half timbers, verge boards and/or fish scale shingles that appear in the steeply pitched gables; and wraparound porches with lathe-turned spindle work. Floor plans are always asymmetrical and spacious. Towers and bays project while verandahs and niches recede. Windows are often large, single panes of glass below and an arrangement of smaller panes above. Materials are various and contrasting: wood, brick, stone, stucco, shingles, tiles, and a variety of glass (clear, etched, leaded, stained, huge panels). Colors are various and contrasting, never white nor muddy brown. Modest houses would have been treated in light, warm, neutral



colors. Larger houses might be painted with a combination of neutrals and strong, complementary trim.

The Rogers-Miller House has many typical features of the Queen Anne style. It is currently seen with patterned masonry painted grey as a base for the facade. The facade includes an oversized window comprised of five stain-glass window panes

which seem to contain blues and maroons that repeat the band of textured shingles above the main window and the trim on and around the brackets and the Palladian style windows at the top of the facade. Above these windows is a matching gable ornament that has been extended forward as in most Queen Anne style homes. There are also maroon trimmed brackets on the ends of the dentils of the facade. Directly left of the facade is a one story high porch with spindle-work porch supports as well as balustrades, solid brackets, and a frieze that matches the window panes used in the Palladian windows. This section of the porch has no public entrance. On the second story, just above another band of textured shingles, is an integral porch which matches the porch below it. Right above this porch on the very top of the house is a hipped roof gable containing solid brackets and dentils with two square windows. The top of the house also holds a patterned masonry chimney. Around the side of the first-floor porch is a set of bay windows with matching solid brackets. On the right side of the facade one can find the main entrance porch that does not directly face the street but rather angles at about 45 degrees. This porch also has matching features from the front facing porch, but also contains brackets not seen anywhere else but on the porch gable.

Up until 1989 when Douglas Miller had purchased the house this home held five separate apartments. Before any remodeling could be started Miller had to make

sketches and design floor-plans to be given to a

committee of the Historical Society to be approved for preserving purposes.

Each apartment had a kitchen and a full bath that had to be removed to convert the house back to



suitable family conditions. Over a ton of poured concrete had to be removed from these different locations throughout the house. Two apartments still exist and are rented out to this day. An apartment behind the house, which was originally a maid's quarters, and the third floor, which was originally intended for storage space are the two apartments that remain. The maid's quarters can comfortably fit two and the third floor can adequately hold four, both of which have one in each as of the moment. Other notable changes that have been made are completely redone wiring along with a new roof, gutters, fence, garage and parking area. Miller has painted the house three times now and has spent close to \$15,000 on the paint alone. Current remodeling projects consist of revamping the six porches and balcony along with the two fireplaces and laying new wallpaper. Miller had originally purchased the house because of his love for the architecture and the location in which he and his family could afford to make changes in a growing community, not to mention the lower price because of the condition.

The home's first owner William H. Rogers and his wife Mary were business owners. Rogers Bros. Grain, Wool, and Produce, which later changed to William H. and

Son, Hides and Pelts after Williams' brother's death (*Polk's Adrian City Directory*, 72). William Rogers died in 1915 at the age of 78, after which the house was then turned into a parsonage. The first named owner after that was Fredrick Perry a pastor of Plymouth Methodist Protestant Church in 1917. Between 1920 and 1925, the pastor of the Plymouth Methodist Protestant Church was the Reverend Dr. Frank Lewis, an anti-Catholic bigot who joined the newly formed Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in January 1924 and "began preaching the 'virtues' and the importance of the KKK at his regular Sunday evening service" (Lindquist, *Adrian: The City that Worked*, 179). This, combined with Lewis's confrontations with Adrian Mayor Herbert Clark over cross burnings upset some members of the congregation, including Harlan Feeman, President of Adrian College. The following year, as Charles Lindquist describes in his book on Adrian, Lewis was removed from the church:

The Plymouth Methodist Church was part of the Methodist Protestant denomination and Adrian College was the college in Michigan for this denomination. As a result, President Feeman had considerable influence at the highest levels of the church in Michigan. It was at the state level that yearly ministerial appointments to the various churches were made, and in 1925 the state conference decided not to re-appoint Reverend Lewis to the Plymouth Methodist post (p. 181).

By the 1930s the KKK had disappeared into the depths of the Great Depression.

After World War II the house was changed into an apartment house to accompany for all of the returning soldiers (interview with Douglas Miller). Just as Adrian held up through these troubled times; the Rogers-Miller house has also withstood the test of time. Hopefully this pattern continues for the City of Adrian and its astonishing architecture.

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Lenawee County Historical Museum

Heritage Room, Adrian Public Library

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