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HISTORY
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Colonial Charm, Hollywood Bathrooms, Striking Contrast in Old Miller House

An echo of an exciting Revolutionary past in the midst of a modern suburban town, the old Miller House on Ridgedale avenue is filled with the grace and the charm of bygone days.

Blue-painted doors against white walls, on stone foundations, the house is set on a huge plot beneath the shade of century-old trees. A gnarled pear tree nods over the back door, while stately oaks and locusts shade the front. A profusion of flowers of all kinds scent the air.

A quaint broken flagstone walk leads to the front door, over which hangs a colonial lantern. There are old-fashioned wooden shutters at the windows, while three small dormer windows break the line of the roof.

Inside, the house is even more interesting. There is an old fireplace in every room, to heat the house Colonial fashion, in contrast with the modern and more prosaic radiators that have been recently installed. Newly panelled walls in light wood and electric lights contradict the engagingly old low plastered ceilings with heavy oak beams. The walls on the first floor are covered with a paper that resembles tapestry, showing a pastoral scene, with stately ladies and courtly gentlemen watching boatmen lazily poling their boats up a river.

Wandering through the quaint rooms with their old-world charm, one is amazed to open a door and come upon a super-modern, Hollywoodian, black-and-crystal tiled bath, complete with shower and tub and every modern improvement. Another bath, tiled in orchid and crystal, is on the second floor.

There are numerous and ample closets in the house, many of them blue-lined. Linen closets, china closets, clothes closets and bookcases are found in every corner and cranny. The stairs carry out the blue and white motif, their century-old treads being painted a very modern and cheery bright blue.

On the second floor are two charming bedrooms with stippled plaster walls and low ceilings, with rough-hewn beams. The dark and eerie old closets have been brightened by the introduction of up-to-date electricity. Throughout the house, there are interesting old wide-beamed doors, with iron laths and iron hinges—typically Colonial.

The basement is possibly the most interesting part of an exceptionally interesting house. Here are the same white plaster walls, with blue and white tile bases, and the heavy hinged doors. The floor in one room is of variegated flagstones, the other is painted blue. China closets are charmingly set beneath small windows. Again, the modern touch is shown in the introduction of an up-to-date laundry room and fully equipped kitchen.

Here in the basement is that unfailing thrill for mystery-lovers—a secret passageway, leading from a hidden sub-basement to a storage building, set at the extreme end of the two-acre plot on which the house is situated. Although the passageway is blocked up today, its mysterious, hidden entrance still breathes some of the romance and mystery of Revolutionary days, when Colonial soldiers stayed at the house and were forced to beat a quick escape from invaders.

There is an interesting history connected with the house. The land on which it stands was purchased from the Indians by one David Burnet, who sold it to Andrew Miller, who erected the house some time before 1750. It was occupied by his son, Josiah Miller, at the time of the Revolution, at the time when Josiah's son, the famous Major Luke Miller, was only 17 years old. Major Miller was born in the house and lived there until his death at the age of 91.

When the Colonial army was encamped at Loantaka Valley and near Bottle Hill, the house was the scene of much hospitality and gaiety, due as much to the owner's prominence as to the young Major's army connections. Both officers and men received an open welcome there and many distinguished men frequented it. For a long time, there was a "Washington chair" in the house—probably one of the few genuine ones, for the great commander was undoubtedly there many times.

Even today, in the midst of the hurry and bustle, the old Miller house stands serene and unchanged, set deep in its wooded land, living in its past glory.