

## 224 E. Colorado Boulevard (originally Orange Avenue)

This home has important connections to Monrovia's city government and architectural history.

The home at 224 E. Colorado Boulevard (then called Orange Avenue) was built in 1911 (or late 1910) for J. Frank Miller, Monrovia's City Marshall and tax collector. In early 1910 he had been living at 228 E Olive in a very small house with five children - Ella, Nettie, Clarence, Irma and Herbert and a housekeeper Cora A Flagg, according to the 1910 census. His wife Annie (Wilkinson) Miller had died in January 1910.

Clearly, a larger house was needed.

From the new family home, the adult children worked nearby. In 1910 the census shows Ella as a bookkeeper for a grocery (Frank Cornes' at 501 S. Myrtle Ave.), Nettie as a stenographer for Gas Works, and Clarence as a bookkeeper for Wholesale Vinegar. (By 1932 he was a teller at Security First National Bank.) The younger children were probably still in school. Miss Pearl Miller, perhaps a cousin, is listed in the 1911 City Directory living with them and working at J.W. McCraw - a dry goods and men's furnishings store at 507 S. Myrtle - just a block away.

Sadly 16-year-old daughter Irma died of heart failure in 1911. She had suffered from heart failure since the death of her mother a year before.

Ella married William James Hilts, a building contractor who worked as a carpenter for [S. Gitleson of Hollywood](#) in 1917 who built homes in the 1920s and then for the Tifal Brothers in Monrovia. They lived with their daughter Elizabeth and her brother Clarence Miller in the family home at 224 E Colorado with Clarence. By the time of the 1940 census, Ella had died and William was living in San Diego.

William Hilts' brother-in-law was Charles Tifal, who married William's sister Eva. The Tifal Brothers (Charles and G.R.) were renowned Monrovia architects. In 1910 Eva and Charles Tifal and William Hilts lived at 14a E Palm in Monrovia. Both the Hilts' and Tifal's parents had come from Germany and the families all spoke German.

Clarence lived in the Miller family home at 224 E. Colorado until at least 1940. Frank Miller passed away in February 1913. The Miller family is buried at Live Oak Cemetery.

When the home was up for sale in 1997, then owners said that after they had moved in they discovered two curiosities. There were no electrical outlets on the second floor. Apparently, the Millers had only had electricity put in on the ground floor when the home was built, because they thought it was still experimental and may not last. There were also bullets lodged in the walls of the basement. Apparently, Frank did target practice in the basement. Since he was the City Marshall, who would stop him?

Frank's photo with other City Officials in 1904 in front of City Hall (J.F. Marshall) is in the Legacy Project Object ID "MH 4x5 Neg 223".

*By Sandy Burud, 2024*