

Texas Historical Commission staff (AD), 8/26/2009, rev. 9/8/2009

27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post

Victoria County (Job #09VT03) Subject BH, GN (Atlas) UTM: 14 694256 E 3189838N

Location: Victoria, 3003 North Vine

FRIEDRICH AND MARGARETHA HILLER HOUSE

FRIEDRICH AND MARGARETHA (BECK) HILLER IMMIGRATED TO TEXAS FROM WÜRTTEMBERG, GERMANY CIRCA 1851. FRIEDRICH WAS LISTED AS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF VICTORIA'S GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH FOUNDED IN DECEMBER OF THAT YEAR. HILLER BEGAN PURCHASING LAND IN THE VICTORIA AREA IN 1855. THIS MODEST FRAME HOME WAS CONSTRUCTED ON A TRACT PURCHASED IN 1858, APPROXIMATELY ONE MILE NORTH OF THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF VICTORIA. THE HILLER HOME IS THE OLDEST EXTANT STRUCTURE OF THE HISTORIC SPRING CREEK COMMUNITY, NOW A PART OF THE CITY OF VICTORIA.

THE ORIGINAL LAYOUT OF THE HOME FEATURED TWO DOWNSTAIRS ROOMS WITH A CENTER HALL AND STAIRWELL, AND IN THE HALF-STORY ABOVE THE LOWER ROOMS, A SINGLE FAMILY BEDROOM SPANNED THE ENTIRE WIDTH OF THE HOUSE. THE DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN AT THE BACK OF THE HOUSE WERE ADDED AT A LATER TIME, BUT WERE PRESENT BY THE EARLY 1900s. ONE OF THE HILLERS' SONS, JOHANN MICHAEL, MOVED INTO THE HOME AFTER THE DEATHS OF HIS PARENTS IN 1880 AND 1881, AND THE HOME BECAME KNOWN AS THE "MIKE HILLER HOUSE." THE ORIGINAL HOUSE EXHIBITS AN EXTENDED HALL AND PARLOR FLOOR PLAN, WITH SINGLE ROOMS FLANKING A CENTRAL HALLWAY AND A FULL-LENGTH PORCH SUPPORTED BY SQUARE WOOD COLUMNS.

ACCORDING TO 1865 TAX RECORDS, HILLER HAD ACCUMULATED 198 ACRES OF LAND IN AND AROUND VICTORIA BY THAT TIME. MUCH OF THE HILLER PROPERTY ON THE NORTH SIDE OF VICTORIA HAS BEEN PURCHASED BY THE CITY THROUGH THE YEARS. THESE TRANSACTIONS BEGAN CIRCA 1935 AND CONTINUED UNTIL 1998. TODAY, MUCH OF THE ORIGINAL HILLER LAND IS PART OF RIVERSIDE PARK.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2009

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

**RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS:
2009 Official Texas Historical Marker
Sponsorship Application Form**

Valid October 15, 2008 to January 15, 2009 only

This form constitutes a public request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and therefore approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (building marker) requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or subject markers.

Proposed marker topic (official title will be determined by the THC): **Friedrech and Margaretha Beck Hiller House**

County: Victoria

Town (nearest county town on current state highway map): **Victoria**

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: 3003 North Vine

Marker Coordinates:

If you know the location coordinates of the proposed marker site, enter them in one of the formats below:

UTM Zone Easting Northing

Lat: **28° 49' 17.42" N** Long: **97° 00' 33.17" W** (deg, min, sec or decimal degrees)

Otherwise, give a precise verbal description here (e.g. northwest corner of 3rd and Elm, or FM 1411, 2.6 miles east of McWhorter Creek):

NOTE: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers must be placed at the structure being marked.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers definition: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) markers are awarded to structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical associations and architectural significance. RTHL is a legal designation and comes with a measure of protection; it is the highest honor the state can bestow on a historic structure, and the designation is required for this type of marker. The RTHL designation becomes effective upon approval by the THC. Official Texas Historical Markers signify the RTHL designation, which comes only through application to and approval by the THC and must include public display of an Official Texas Historical Marker. Owners of RTHL-designated structures must give the THC 60 days written notice before any alterations are made to the exterior of the structure. RTHL status is a permanent designation and is not to be removed from the property in the event of a transfer of ownership. Only the THC can remove the designation or recall the marker. The marker must remain with the structure and may not be removed or displayed elsewhere until or unless the THC gives express approval in writing for such action. Once designated as RTHL, properties are subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).

Criteria:

1. **Age:** Structures eligible for the RTHL designation and marker must be at least 50 years old.
2. **Historical significance:** Architectural significance alone is not enough to qualify a structure for the RTHL designation. It must have an equally significant historical association, and that association can come from an event that occurred at the site; through individuals who owned or lived on the property; or, in the case of bridges, industrial plants, schoolhouses and other non-residential properties, through documented significance to the larger community.
3. **Architectural significance:** Structures deemed architecturally significant are outstanding examples of architectural history through design, materials, structural type or construction methods. In all cases, eligible architectural properties must display integrity; that is, the structure should be in a good state of repair, maintain its appearance from its period of significance and be considered an exemplary model of preservation. Architectural significance is often best determined by the relevance of the property to broader contexts, including geography. Any changes over the years should be compatible with original design and reflect compliance with accepted preservation practices, e.g., the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.
4. **Good state of repair:** Structures not considered by the THC to be in a good state of repair are ineligible for RTHL designation. The THC reserves the sole right to make that determination relative to eligibility for RTHL markers.

Special National Register considerations for RTHL marker applications: If a structure has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under either Criterion A or B and Criterion C (Architecture), the historical text compiled as part of the National Register nomination process may be submitted as part of the marker process, provided it includes the required reference notes and other documentation. Acceptance of the National Register information for the purposes of the marker process will be up to the sole determination of the THC. Listing in the NRHP does not guarantee approval for an RTHL marker. See the THC web site at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madnrcrit.html> for National Register criteria.

XX Check this box if the property is individually listed in the NRHP.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements and are submitted online as required can be accepted or processed by the THC (for RTHL markers, the required elements are: sponsorship application form; narrative history; documentation; legal description of the property; site plan; floorplan; historic photograph; and current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure).

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the county historical commission (CHC) in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and sent via email attachments to the THC by no later than January 15, 2008.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview, significance and documentation.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary.
- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. The fee shall be submitted to the THC within ten working days of application receipt notification.

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The duly appointed marker representative (chair or marker chair) noted below for the county historical commission will be the sole contact with the THC for this marker application. To ensure accuracy, consistency and efficiency, all information from and to the THC relative to the application—and throughout the review and production processes—will be via direct communication with the CHC representative. All other inquiries (calls, emails, letters) to the THC will be referred to the CHC representative for response. By filling out the information below and filing the application with the THC, the CHC representative is providing the THC with notice that the application and documentation have been reviewed and verified by the CHC and that the material meets all current requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker program.

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

XX Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC web site. CHC members have reviewed the history and documentation for accuracy and made corrections or notes as necessary. It is the determination of the CHC that the topic, history and documentation meet criteria for eligibility.

CHC comments or concerns about this application, if any:

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): **Gary Dunnam, Marker Co-Chairman**

Mailing address: **205 W. Goodwin City, Zip: Victoria TX 77901**

Daytime phone (with area code): **361.573-1878** **Email address** (required): **gdunnam@vctx.org**

PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Property owner: **City of Victoria**

Address: **Box 1758 City, state, zip: Victoria TX 77902-1758**

Phone: **361.485-3030** **Email address:** **citymanager@victoriatx.org**

Legal Description of the property (metes and bounds, lot and block, etc.): **An 8.934 acre portion of Block 3, Range 1, East Above Town of the Original Four League Grant.**

Upon receipt of the application, the THC will provide the owner with a letter that outlines the legal responsibility of ownership under the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark statute. The letter must be signed by the owner and returned to the THC before the evaluation can be completed.

NOTE: The property owner will not receive any additional copies of correspondence from the THC. All other correspondence—notice of receipt, request for additional information, payment notice, inscription, shipping notice, etc.—will be sent via email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary. Given the large volume of applications processed annually and the need for centralized communication, all inquiries about applications in process will be referred to the CHC for response. The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC on all marker application matters.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to

delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.

- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors or property owners through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): **Keep Victoria Beautiful**

Contact person (if applicable): **Joni Brown, Executive Director**

Mailing address: 3003 North Vine **City, zip:** Victoria TX 77901

Email address: ed@keepvictoriabeautiful.com **Phone:** 361.571-0582

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Name: Victoria County Historical Commission

Street address: 205 W. Goodwin Avenue **City, zip:** 77901

Daytime phone (required): 361.573-1878 **Email** (required): gdunnam@vctx.org

TYPE AND SIZE OF RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS

As part of its review process, the THC will determine the appropriate size marker and provide options, if any, for the approved topic based on its own review criteria, including, but not exclusive of, historical significance, replication of information in other THC markers, relevance to the Statewide Preservation Plan and the amount of available documented information provided in the application narrative. In making its determination, however, the THC will also take into account the preference of the CHC, as noted below.

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

XX 27" x 42" RTHL marker with post (\$1500)

27" X 42" RTHL marker without post* (\$1500)

18" x 28" RTHL marker with post (\$1000)

18" x 28" RTHL marker without post* (\$1000)

RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post (\$750)

RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post* (\$750)

*For an RTHL marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

wood

masonry

metal

other (specify)

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION (via email required)

When the CHC has determined the application is complete, the history has been verified and the topic meets the requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the materials should be forwarded to the THC via email at the following address: markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us.

- The CHC or marker chair should send an email containing the following attachments (see attachment function under file menu or toolbox on your computer):
 - This application form
 - The narrative history (including documentation)
 - Legal description of the property
 - Detailed floor plan for each floor of the structure
 - Detailed site plan of the property
 - At least one historic photograph
 - Current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, see the Markers page on the THC web site (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigs/madmark.html>).

FRIEDRECH and MARGARETHA BECK HILLER HOUSE
3003 North Vine Street
Victoria, TX 77901

CONTEXT

Friedrech and Margaretha Beck Hiller arrived in Texas from Germany circa 1852. One family record written by Georgia May¹, a great-granddaughter, places them in Victoria “about 1849.” The Indianola Immigrant Database² lists members of the family arriving at Indianola on June 2, 1852. The years between 1850 and the Civil War were a period of great growth in Victoria, both population and economy.³ Most of the residents of Victoria had been advised to leave Victoria in 1836, during the Texas Revolution. Anti-Mexican sentiment was running high, and General Thomas Rusk was wisely concerned for the safety of all the Mexican residents of Victoria, regardless of their chosen allegiance.⁴ For ten years the city languished. The influx of German immigrants provided a great boost to the population and diversity of Victoria. The Hiller family, for unknown reasons, decided to put down roots in Victoria. Their descendants still form a vital part of this community. The Hiller house is the oldest extant structure of the historic Spring Creek Community, now a part of the city of Victoria.

¹ May, Georgia, ABOUT THE HILLER FAMILY, June 9, 1997. Copy on file in the office of Victoria Preservation Inc., 205 W. Goodwin, Victoria TX 77901

² Indianola Immigrant Database, maintained at the Victoria College/University of Houston-Victoria Library, <http://vrhc.uhv.edu/manuscripts/indianola/home.cfm>

³ Rose, Victor Marion, SOME HISTORICAL FACTS IN REGARD TO THE SETTLEMENT OF VICTORIA, TEXAS, ITS PROGRESS AND PRESENT STATE, published 1883 by Daily Times Print, Laredo, Texas. Reprinted 1961 as VICTOR ROSE’S HISTORY OF VICTORIA, edited by J. W. Petty, Jr., by Book Mart, Victoria, Texas

⁴ Crimm, Anna Carolina Castillo, SUCCESS IN ADVERSITY: THE MEXICAN AMERICANS OF VICTORIA COUNTY, TEXAS, 1800-1880, 1994. PP. 160-162. University of Texas Doctoral Dissertation printed by UMI Dissertation Services, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106-1346

OVERVIEW

Countless ancestors of current Victoria families came into Texas through the old port of Indianola. More than any other ethnic group, this is true of Germans. Brownson Malsch, who carefully documented the rise and fall of Indianola, states that, “between the years of 1844 and 1887, Indianola grew from a plague-infested immigrant camp to a cosmopolitan port city”⁵ - the second largest in Texas.

In the early years, squalid living conditions, coupled with careless planning and worse administration by those who were luring Germans to Texas, resulted in deaths at a wholesale rate. Promised a place in Paradise, these early emigrants were deposited in a living hell. Typhoid and Yellow Fever ravaged their numbers. With every fiber of their beings focused on the Hill Country of Texas, the survivors began the trek into the interior of the vast state.

Max Krueger, writing somewhat later, describes the land between Indianola and Victoria in these terms: “There were no barbed wire fences in those days, nor were there any tress from which to make fences or enclosures. The boundless prairie, covered with many-colored wildflowers and teeming with prairie chickens, extinct long ago, wild rabbits, herds of deer, and thousands of wild cattle, stretched before my eyes, while human beings and habitations were scarce and far between.”⁶ The sprawling coastal prairie, whose waist-high grasses swayed in the constant Gulf breezes, must have astonished the Europeans who came to Texas. Where were all the towns? Where were all the people? A sea of grass unfolded as far as the eye could see. There being no hills

⁵ Malsch, Brownson, INDIANOLA, The Mother of Western Texas, p. 1. Shoal Creek Press, Austin TX 1977.

⁶ Krueger, Max, SECOND FATHERLAND, P. 17. Published 1976 by Texas A & M University Press, College Station, Texas.

or mountains, the view was interrupted only by the curvature of the earth. Occasional motts of oak trees punctuated the landscape.

As the Hillers moved, on foot, northward from Indianola to the outskirts of Victoria, all the structures they would have seen would have been Mexican-type *jacales*. Vertical limbs and posts - approximately the diameter of a man's arm - were driven into the ground and tied together. The space in between each of the vertical poles was filled with mud and small stones; crude, but effective. Though it would have been imperceptible to the Hillers, they had climbed approximately two feet in elevation for every mile they progressed inland. A quarter mile south from the land where the Hiller house stands today, at the entrance of Evergreen Cemetery, the elevation is the highest in the town: 100 feet above sea level.

For the first twenty-five years of Victoria's history (from 1824) Market Square (where City Hall now stands) was the center of the town. Most of the houses at that time were built around this square, or just off on one of the few side streets. The construction of the first Victoria County Courthouse in 1849 helped moved the center of the city three blocks north, around the public square (renamed De Leon Plaza in the early 1940's).

Victoria Texas was a little over a quarter of a century old when the Hillers arrived here. Were we able to look back to the Victoria of the 1850's we would be surprised at how little there was here. Trees grew mostly along the Guadalupe River and other smaller waterways. You could see great distances, even in town, because there was little to obstruct the view. Frederick Law Olmstead traveled through Texas on horseback with his brother in 1854. He described Victoria thusly: "(Victoria) is an old settled town, and

has about 1,000 inhabitants. About half its population are Germans, many of whom remained at the first settled spot reached during the great immigration.”⁷

The Hillers would no doubt have been impressed to see the Jesse Obadiah Wheeler mansion at the head of Main Street - an Italianate brick villa. Likewise, the Alexander H. Phillips house (700 block of North Craig) had been built in 1851 of brick made on the banks of the Guadalupe River by slave labor, would have been a grand sight.

Tombstones in Evergreen Cemetery record the Hiller’s names as Friedrech and Margaretha Beck Hiller. The Hillers had first docked in Galveston, then sailed on to Indianola. A record of the founding of the German Lutheran Church, below, lists “Fried. Hiller” as a founding member in December of 1851. Family genealogy records and obituaries published in the Victoria Advocate list the children who lived to adulthood, all born in Germany, as (1) Frederick - born 1836; (2) Gottlob Philip - born 1838; (3) Johann Michael - born 1841, and (4) Christoph Adam - born 1842.

It may be that Friedrech and Margaretha simply felt that Victoria seemed to fill all their needs, and decided to abandon the trek into the Hill Country. For whatever reason, they eventually (1858) bought land just north of Evergreen Cemetery and decided to call it home.

Though it is not know exactly where the Hiller’s first lived in Victoria, we do find Friedrech purchasing 27.89 acres of land *south* of Victoria, just below the CP&L power plant, from the Corporation of the Town of Victoria - indicating that Hiller was the first private owner of this land. The purchase price was \$223.12 or \$8.00 per acre. (VC Deed Records: Vol 7 p. 221) The survey mentions Hardey’s Street and Cypress Bayou. John

⁷ Olmstead, Frederick Law, A Journey Through Texas, p.241. Reprinted in 1978 by The University of Texas Press, Austin TX.

J. “Juan” Linn’s brother, Edward Linn, was county surveyor when the land was originally surveyed September 6, 1850. Linn’s note, added at the top of the survey states: Sold Aug 7th 1855 to F. Hiller - Deed Issued May 20th 1857.^{8 9} Hardy’s Street, Cypress Bayou, and the “community” of Cypress Bayou have all passed into history, but accounts of them is to be found in Edward Linn’s Survey Books.

The next land purchase recorded in Victoria County Clerk’s Office occurs on March 20, 1858. Frederick Hiller purchases 34.7 acres *north* of town from our first postmaster, James A. Moody. (Vol 7 p. 335) The property is described as “Lot M on the east side of the Guadalupe River above the town proper.”¹⁰ On October 8, 1859, Hiller purchased an additional 45.7 acres of land from James A. Moody. (Vol 8 p. 18)¹¹ The last piece of land purchased by Freiderech Hiller and recorded in Victoria County deed records was seven acres purchased from Mack Logan for \$100 and filed for record on February 3, 1872. (Vol 10 p. 408).¹²

Discounting the 27.89 acres purchased south of town, the land “east of the Guadalupe River” above town amounted to 87.4 acres. This land was bounded, using today’s street names, by Vine Street, Red River, Independence Drive, and the Guadalupe River.

The land south of town, which was actually an oxbow, cut off from the Guadalupe River during one of that waterway’s treacherous rampages, was sold off in small pieces at different times over the last twenty years of Friedrech Hiller’s life.

⁸ Linn, Edward, CITY SURVEYS, p. 112. Copy on file in office of Victoria Preservation Inc.

⁹ Victoria County Deed Records, Victoria County Clerk’s Office, 115 N. Bridge St. Victoria TX 77901

¹⁰ Victoria County Deed Records, Victoria County Clerk’s Office, 115 N. Bridge St. Victoria TX 77901

¹¹ Victoria County Deed Records, Victoria County Clerk’s Office, 115 N. Bridge St. Victoria TX 77901

¹² Victoria County Deed Records, Victoria County Clerk’s Office, 115 N. Bridge St. Victoria TX 77901

In his history of Victoria County, published in 1883, Victor Marion Rose writes of the *GERMAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH*: “We are indebted to the Rev. W. Krapf, the pastor for the following facts in regard to the above named religious denomination, now one of the most numerous and prosperous in the county. As early as the year 1846 the few German citizens of protestant views, residing in Victoria, were accustomed to meet every Sabbath at the residence of one another, and listen to the reading of the scriptures, and other religious exercises. This they continued to do until the year 1851; the people being a few in number, poor in worldly goods, and suffering much from the sickness which usually precedes acclimation. But the emigration being large that year, and the older residents feeling more able to do so, a congregation was organized December 14, 1851; a constitution adopted agreeable to the Word of God, under the name of the "German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Congregation." Rev. W. Strobel was the first pastor of the church, and the first Lutheran minister to celebrate the holy eucharist in Victoria. Among those who organized the congregation were Anton Lenz, F. Hansz, **Fried. Hiller**, T. Seibel, Louis Zirjacks, Henry Ganz, C. Beck, T. Heck and others.”¹³

The 1860 Census, lists Friedrech Hiller as being a farmer, having real property valued at \$2,600 and personal property valued at \$300. Some accounts indicate that Friedrech Hiller was a baker. Whether he baked bread near the home or at a bakery in the town, is not known.

Significance

¹³ Rose, Victor Marion, p. 186

At some undetermined point subsequent to 1858 the Hiller “cottage” was built. It is typical of “hall and parlor” houses: two rooms wide, one room deep, with a hallway separating the two. Simple side-gable, hall-and-parlor houses were first built of heavy timber framing in the Tidewater South, and then with hewn log walls as land was settled toward the west. After the expansion of the railroad network this form, now executed with light framed walls, remained the dominant folk housing over much of the rural Southeast until well into the 20th century. Careful examination of construction techniques during recent restoration, reveal that the dining room and kitchen “ell” were later additions.

Directly over the front rooms of the house is a room extending the full width of the house, and was originally the family bedroom. Access to this room was from a reverse stairway in the center hall.

The Hiller’s son oldest surviving son, Gottlob Phillip Hiller (1838-1912), was a noted carpenter and cabinet maker in Victoria.¹⁴ It is possible - and easily believable - that this son may have built or helped to build his parents’ house. Gottlob Hiller purchased land and built his home - circa 1867 - at 502 East Church Street. This house is still standing today. The next oldest son, Christoph Adam, was a farmer. He served in Company B, Sixth Texas Infantry in the Civil War.¹⁵ “Adam” raised sugar cane and had a sugar mill near the present location of the golf house in Riverside Park. Adam (1842-1930) lived at an address today known as 108 East Hiller Street. Johann Michael Hiller served the Confederacy in Company C, Fourth Regiment of Texas Mounted Volunteers. “Mike” was also a farmer. All were married and raised families. “Mike” (1841-1909),

¹⁴ Victoria Advocate, Obituary, November 28, 1912, copy on file in office of Victoria Preservation Inc.

¹⁵ Victoria Advocate, Obituary, December 14, 1930, copy on file in office of Victoria Preservation Inc.

and his family moved into the old Hiller cottage after his parents' death.¹⁶ The oldest surviving members of the family have always referred to the Hiller cottage as “the Mike Hiller house.”

According to Desmond D. “Des” Hiller, the Fowler family moved into the old Hiller cottages some time around 1930. One of the Fowler children, Wick, was Des’s age. They were close friends and played together in the area. Wick came to be known as the Texas Chili King. His special chili mix can be purchased in stores today.

The Hiller house was situated so far north of the original townsite of Victoria that it was referred to as being part of the Spring Creek Community. At the time the historic resources survey was conducted by Victoria Preservation in the early 1980’s, the house had sat empty for decades, the roof, doors and windows were covered with tin. Miraculously, the house survived a long period of benign neglect.¹⁷

Much of the original Hiller land north of town has been purchased by the City of Victoria. These transactions began around 1935 and continued through 1998. In 1998 alone, the City purchased thirteen parcels, a total of 61.29 acres of the land originally owned by Friedrech and Margaretha Hiller. The southernmost portion of the original Hiller land now comprises the Athey Nature Reserve. Much of the original Friedrech Hiller land is a part of Riverside Park.

Essentially unaltered over the years, the Hiller cottage is a window to the early settlement of Victoria. The scale and placement of windows, and the proportions of the house are textbook examples of an early Texas house, much favored by German immigrants. Because of its architectural significance and the Hiller family’s involvement

¹⁶ Victoria Advocate, Obituary, January 21, 1909, copy on file in office of Victoria Preservation Inc.

¹⁷ Historic Resources Survey, Original Documents on file in office of Victoria Preservation Inc.

in the development of Victoria, the Hiller cottage was listed on the National Register of Historic Places December 9, 1986. The area behind the home became known Hiller's Mott, due to the proliferation of Anaqua trees on the crest of the hill. To the north and west of the house lies Riverside Park and the Guadalupe River. The area boasted, among other things, ruins of a Spanish mission, a dance hall, plumbing business, sugar mill and farmland worked by mules — and a favorite community swimming hole.

The Hiller House is currently headquarters of Keep Victoria Beautiful, a local 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in Victoria County, Texas. The interior of the house has been completely refurbished, and now features a museum housed in the former dining room, which holds an assortment of furniture and artifacts from the Hiller family's early residency. The house has evolved into a highly visible educational resource, serving not only as an excellent example of Civil War era architecture, but also as an example of the way our historic architectural resources can be used to promote heritage tourism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexander, Drury Blakeley - TEXAS HOMES of the 19th Century, published for the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, by The University of Texas Press, Austin.

Crimm, Anna Caroline Castillo, SUCCESS IN ADVERSITY: THE MEXICAN AMERICANS OF VICTORIA COUNTY, TEXAS, 1800-1880, 1994. University of Texas Doctoral Dissertation printed by UMI Dissertation Services, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106-1346

Indianola Database, records maintained at the Local History Center at the VC/UHV College Library, Victoria TX.

Rose, Victor Marion - History of Victoria County, published 1883, reprinted 1961

Deed Records of Hiller Family, Victoria County Clerk's office, 115 North Bridge, Victoria TX

Obituaries of Hiller Family members - The Victoria Advocate, copies on file in the office of Victoria Preservation Inc, 205 West Goodwin, Victoria TX

Wolff, Henry Jr - Henry's Journal - Column published in the Victoria Advocate, May 2, 1996, taken from an interview of Desmond David "Des" Hiller. Copy on file in the office of Victoria Preservation Inc, 205 West Goodwin, Victoria TX

Notes on Hiller Family Genealogy on file in the office of Victoria Preservation Inc, 205 West Goodwin, Victoria TX

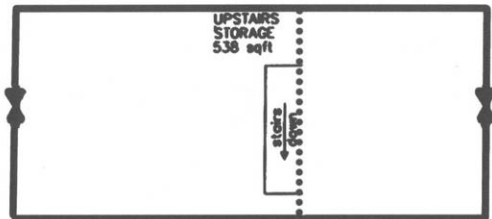
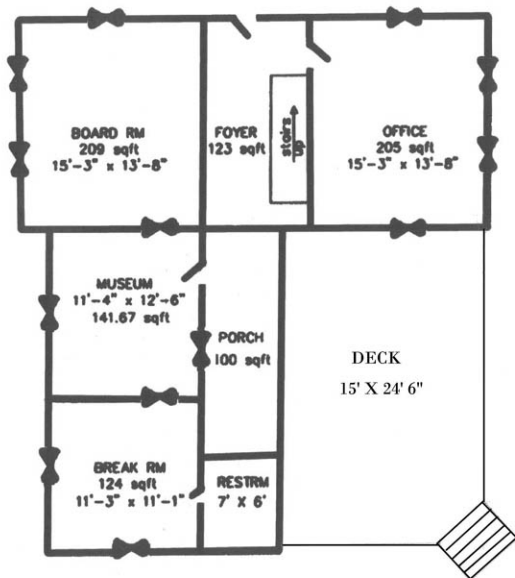
Interview with Elizabeth Atzenhoffer Greeson, notes on file in the office of Victoria Preservation Inc, 205 West Goodwin, Victoria TX

Interview with Dan Hiller, notes on file in the office of Victoria Preservation Inc, 205 West Goodwin, Victoria TX

Hiller Family History Notes, by John F. May and Georgia May, 1996 & 1997, copy of notes on file in the office of Victoria Preservation Inc, 205 West Goodwin, Victoria TX

Malsch, Brownson, Indianola, The Mother of Western Texas, published in 1977 by Shoal Creek Press, Austin TX

Krueger, Max, SECOND FATHERLAND, Published 1976 by Texas A & M University Press, College Station, Texas.



TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE= 847 sqft.
UPSTAIRS STORAGE TOTAL= 538 sqft.

Friedrech and Margaretha Beck Hiller House
3003 North Vine St. Victoria TX

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

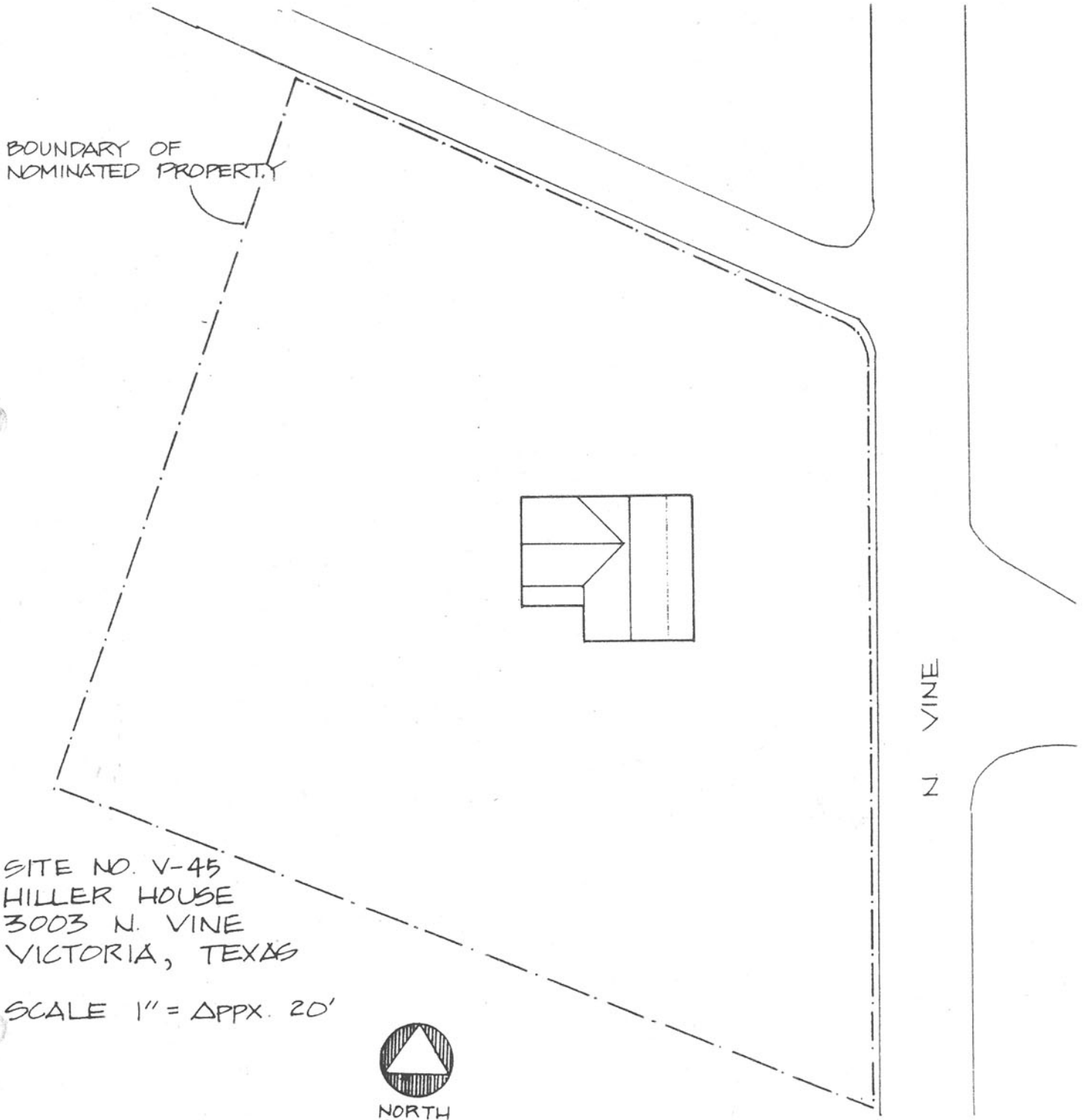
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 5

Page 147-A



This site plan was drawn in 1983.
None of the original outbuildings have survived

RESOLUTION NO. 2009- 111 R

A resolution of the City of Victoria, Texas, approving the Texas Historical Commission 2009 Official Texas Historical Marker Sponsorship Application submitted by the Victoria County Historical Commission for the Friedrech and Margaretha Beck Hiller House, located at 3003 N. Vine Street; and declaring an effective date.

The City endorses the efforts of the Hiller Family in securing an historical marker for the Hiller House.

THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VICTORIA, TEXAS:

1.

The City approves the Texas Historical Commission 2009 Official Texas Historical Marker Sponsorship Application submitted by the Victoria County Historical Commission for the Friedrech and Margaretha Beck Hiller House, located at 3003 N. Vine Street. The Hiller Family will be designated as the Sponsor and responsible for all fees required by the State in obtaining an historical marker.

2.

This resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

PASSED, this the 7th day of July, 2009.

AYES: 7


NAYS: 0


ABSTENTIONS: 0

APPROVED AND ADOPTED, this 7th day of July, 2009.

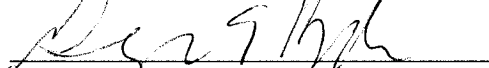


ATTEST:


SCARLET SWOBODA, City Secretary


WILL ARMSTRONG, Mayor of the
City of Victoria, Texas

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:


BY: GEORGE E. HYDE, City Attorney
Denton, Navarro, Rocha & Bernal, P.C.

Distribution: Legal Department

Copies Sent: **JULY 8, 2009**



OF IT



Caroline

Mary Magdalene

Mollie

John Michael Hiller

James Walter Hiller

Louis Hiller - standing

Mary Louise Hiller













Keep It
Hille
CO

CO
LAURA

A large, mature tree with green leaves stands on the left side of the image. A brick path leads from the foreground towards a sign. The sign is mounted on two black posts and has two sections. The top section is arched and contains the text 'Keep Victoria Beautiful's COTTAGE' and 'In The Victoria Botanical Gardens'. The bottom section is rectangular and contains the text 'THANKS VICTORIA CO MASTER GARDENERS'. In the background, there is a house with a porch and a lawn.

Keep Victoria Beautiful's
COTTAGE

In The Victoria Botanical Gardens

THANKS VICTORIA CO
MASTER GARDENERS