

**Sandwiching in History**  
**John F. Weinmann House**  
**2214 S. Battery Street, Little Rock**  
**November 4, 2016**  
**By Revis Edmonds**



Intro

Good afternoon, my name is Revis Edmonds, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Thank you for coming, and welcome to the “Sandwiching in History” tour of the John F. Weinmann House. I’d like to thank Jennifer Carman for allowing us to tour her amazingly beautiful home!

This tour is worth one hour of HSW continuing education credit through the American Institute of Architects. Please see me after the tour if you're interested.

This home is located in the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District (Boundary Increase 2: National Register-listed 6/04/2012), the John F. Weinmann House was built in 1917. The house was built in Tudor Revival style with Craftsman influences. It expands the boundary of the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District, which was listed in the National Register in 1996 and amended in 1997 and 2004, to include contiguous historic development on the east side of the present district, thereby expanding the boundary to the west side of Dr. Martin Luther King Drive between West 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Wright Avenue that once constituted the Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association. This addition, which comprised the Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association, added 54 contributing buildings to the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District. It also included a re-evaluation of the buildings in the existing district based on a resurvey that was undertaken after 2000.

The majority of the area within the district's expanded boundary is residential in nature, with only one contributing commercial property, and a contributing religious property, the Pilgrim Valley Baptist Church, and one property belonging to the Arkansas Baptist College. The expanded area is bounded to the east by Dr. Martin Luther King Drive and to the south by Wright Avenue. It is bounded to the north by West 17<sup>th</sup> Street and to the west by South Summit from Wright Avenue to West 18<sup>th</sup> Street and by South Battery Street between West 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets. The current Central High School Neighborhood Historic District surrounds the expanded boundary on the north, south and west sides. The buildings located within the expanded boundary reflect the varied architectural styles prevalent from about 1895 to 1963.

John F. Weinmann was one of the largest millers in the region, heading the J. F. Weinmann Milling Company. He steadily expanded his holdings from about 1919 onward, when he and partner Guy F. Williams purchased the Marco Mills of Pine Bluff. Eventually he would merge his holdings with Edward M. Brown, and the company would

become known by its current name, Arkansas Mill Supply Company, based in Pine Bluff. Weinmann had married Jeannie Fox of Little Rock and raised her son, Cecil, by her first marriage. She had a long history of civic and social involvement, most notably with the National Society United States Daughters of 1812, where she served for many years as President National. She was also active in the United Daughters of the Confederacy, where she served as President General from 1946 to 1948. Mrs. Weinmann served as president of the T. J. Churchill Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Chevalier Commander of the Order of Lafayette in Arkansas, and a member of the Mary Washington Memorial Association. Doubtless the most distinguished honor which was been bestowed upon her was her election to life membership in the Societe Academique de Histoire Internationale. Up to that point in time, she was the only American woman to have been accorded election to that body. She was also long active in the Arkansas Historical Association, helped to establish the Arkansas Historical Quarterly in 1942, and served as President from 1953-1955. In keeping with her longstanding interest in the War of 1812, Jeannie Weinmann presented a paper, the last of the 1953 session, "The War of 1812 Moved Into Arkansas," which emphasized the important part the War of 1812 had played in the lives of most of the early prominent figures in Arkansas history. She also served as a member of the Arkansas History Commission from 1933 until her death in 1962. She is buried next to her husband in Historic Mount Holly Cemetery.

The Weinmann home was the social hub of what was in their day a very prosperous and prominent neighborhood in the capital city. A modest frame home in the area during the period that the Weinmann home was constructed could typically be purchased for around \$2000, while \$5000-\$7000 was the normal asking price for the larger two-story homes on some of the more prosperous streets like Summit, Marshall, Wolfe, and Battery. The *Centennial History of Arkansas* described Jeannie Weinmann as a woman who "presides with most gracious hospitality over her beautiful home but is not a society woman in the usually accepted sense of the term. She is keenly interested in those affairs which make for better citizenship and the promotion of civic interests...She is keenly interested in the vital questions and problems of the day and especially those things which have to do with the advancement of civic standards and

ideals in Little Rock.” Jeannie Weinmann provided her home extensively to host organizations such as the United States Daughters of 1812, the Arkansas Historical Association, the United Daughters of the Confederacy as well as local groups like the Little Rock Junior Auxiliary and the Junior League of Little Rock. It is believed on good authority that the architect of the Weinmann house is Theodore Sanders, who also designed the Cornish House at 1800 Arch Street. Some other interesting features of this home include the original rafter design which is not visible under the current guttering; the current pantry entrance actually once led to a boiler room through the kitchen; and the unique upstairs porch that is attached to the master bedroom. From the rear of the home, a contrast in the roofing tile is readily apparent as the concrete tiles prevalent on much of the property contrast with the shingles on the roof over the kitchen addition. It has been explained to me that the concrete tiles were made for a much steeper slope, while the roof over the kitchen is more suited to traditional shingle roofing. Both inside the home and in the back yard, one can imagine the kind of entertaining that Jeannie Weinmann presided over in her day. About 2009 the house was remodeled by Paul Hastings, who has rehabbed several homes downtown. Also, this place once housed the ministries of St. Francis House. Their flagpole is still in the front yard.