

**Survey and Research Report**  
**On The**  
**Ephraim Alexander McAuley Log House**

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Tax Parcel Number 025-081-07

Deed Book 2198, Page 262 Zoning: R15 Appraised Value: Land (16.160 acres)

Improvements

Total:	\$45,250
	<u>86,710</u>
	\$131,960

6. A brief historical sketch of the property. This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. William Huffman, Ph.D..

7. A brief architectural description of the property. This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Dr. Richard Mattson, Ph.D.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 16QA-40Q.5.

a. special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and /or cultural importance. The Commission judges that the property known as the Ephraim Alexander McAuley Farm does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following consideration: 1) the Ephraim Alexander McAuley Farm represents the typical development of a Mecklenburg County farmstead in the early 19th and 20th centuries, 2) the ca.1780 log house is among the most intact of the ten similar log dwellings inventoried in Mecklenburg County; 3) the ca.1880 farmhouse is one of seven two-story log houses identified in the county and the only one erected after the Civil War; 4) the property contains several log building types and methods of construction; 5) John Ellis McAuley, son of Ephraim, was a well-known builder in the Hopewell and Long Creek areas (his buildings include the landmark, St. Mark's Episcopal Church); 6) in an era of limited opportunities for women, Alice Eugenia Johnston McAuley, wife of John Ellis McAuley, successfully managed the farmstead, and 7) the property is a rare example of a Mecklenburg County farm held in the same family for three generations.

b. integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling., and/or association. The Commission contends that the architectural description by Dr. Richard Mattson which is included in this report demonstrates that the Ephraim Alexander McAuley Farm meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal. The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a designated "historic landmark." The current appraised value of the improvements is \$121,560. The current appraised value of the 32.96 acres is \$92,290. The total appraised value of the property is \$213,350. The property is zoned R15.

Date of Preparation of this

Report: February 1990

Prepared by:

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## **Architectural Description:**

Comprising two log houses, a complex of associated outbuildings of both log and frame, and about 14 acres of pasturage and cropland, the McAuley Farm represents the development of a typical Mecklenburg County farmstead in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and is therefore eligible under Criterion A (see Historic Context Statement - Post-Bellum Agriculture). The McAuley Farm is also significant under Criterion C for its illustration of traditional log building types and methods of construction. It is further significant under Criterion C for its expression of typical early 20th-century farmhouse architecture and outbuilding types in the county. The one-story, single-pen log house, said to date from ca. 1780, is among the most intact of ten one-story and story-and-a-half, single-pen log dwellings inventoried in Mecklenburg County. Said to have been the initial homeplace of Ephraim McAuley, the original owner of the McAuley Farm, this house retains its original basic form and one-room plan, as well as its original half-dovetail notching which is clearly visible behind subsequent weatherboarding. The interior includes exposed whitewashed log walls and original wooden flooring. Modifications which took place probably in the early decades of the 20th century, such as the frame shed-roofed rear addition and common-bond brick end chimney, do not obscure its traditional form, plan, and log construction. Rather, they typify changes that occurred to smaller log and frame dwellings county-wide during this period (Gatza 1987). The ca. 1880 McAuley farmhouse is one of seven two-story log houses identified in the county, and the only one erected after the Civil War. Although remodelled and expanded to the rear, and now aluminum sided, the house retains its original I-house form and central-hall plan (see Associated Property Type 1 - Houses

- Log Dwellings). The principal renovation of this ca. 1880 house occurred in 1914, and many of the features added at this time survive to portray a middle-class farmhouse of this period in Mecklenburg County (see Associated Property Type 1 - Houses - Early 20th-century Small-Town Dwellings and Farmhouses). Designed and crafted by Ephraim McAuley's son John Ellis McAuley, a local house builder, the wraparound turned-post front porch, mantels, doors, and staircase are notable features of this 1914 remodelling that survive essentially intact. The McAuley farm complex includes a ca. 1880 log corncrib and log barn that represent in their basic forms and half-dovetail notched construction outbuildings constructed of log in the county from the earliest period of white settlement to the early 20th century. They are basically intact vestiges of such log barns and cribs which once prevailed on farmsteads across rural Mecklenburg but which are now rare. The contributing early 20th-century frame auto garage and privy also represent in their forms and construction these buildings types as they appeared locally in this period (see Associated Property 2 - Outbuildings).



## **Historical Context:**

In 1859, Ephraim Alexander McAuley (1826-1909) bought a 98-acre tract from Samuel Garrison for one thousand dollars, which began the since uninterrupted McAuley presence on this land that continues today.<sup>1</sup> The farm contained a small log cabin, which McAuley and his family lived in until they built a larger, two-story log house in 1881.<sup>2</sup> According to family tradition, McAuley preferred to build the house out of logs, even though such construction was long out of favor. The logs were acquired from a neighbor, Columbus McCoy (1834-1912), and with the help of other neighbors, the house was raised in April, 1881.<sup>3</sup>

The small log cabin was, according to family tradition, built in 1780, but this date cannot be independently verified. Although they are not clear, it appears from the deed records that the original owner of the site was either a James Sharpe, who acquired property in the area from 1794 to 1801 and is not otherwise identified, or John McKnitt Alexander (c.1733-1817), who sold 225 acres to Sharpe in 1801\*

The year after he bought the 98-acre farm, E. A. McAuley is shown in the 1860 census records as having 2 horses, 2 milk cows, 1 other cattle and 5 hogs. He raised 117 bushels of wheat, 200 bushels of corn, 10 bushels of oats, 1 bale of cotton, 10 bushels of peas and beans, 20 bushels of Irish potatoes, 30 bushels of sweet potatoes, and produced 100 pounds of butter, 4 pounds of beeswax and 50 pounds of honey.<sup>5</sup> Ten years later, his production was still quite similar. In livestock, he had 2 horses, 1 mule, 3 milk cows, 2 working oien, 5 other cattle, 7 sheep and 6 hogs; and produced 70 bushels of wheat, 300 bushels of corn, 30 bushels of oats, 3 bales of cotton and 6 pounds of wool.<sup>6</sup> In both crops and livestock, this picture is typical for Mecklenburg County farmers in the post-

bellum nineteenth-century (see Historic Contest Statement - Post-Bellum Agriculture).

At E. A. McAuley's death, the farm passed to his son, John Ellis McAuley (1861 -1929)<sup>7</sup> John Ellis was a well-known builder, master carpenter and toolmaker in the Hopewell area. He built a number of houses in the Long Creek community that are still occupied today; and also made the brick for, and constructed St. Mark's Episcopal Church and its rectory.<sup>8</sup> Taking great pride in his work, McAuley was meticulous about his tools, many of which he fashioned himself:

His tools were his great pride. They were stored in a special chest, which fit on the back of his wagon, and when the chest was loaded, it weighed five hundred pounds. Each tool was cleaned and polished and whetted... At the end of the day's work, the tools were cleaned again, cared for like favorite friends, neatly laid in their places again in the chest.<sup>9</sup>

The wooden toolbox he carried with him on the back of his wagon is presently stored in the small log cabin.

Sometime in the 1890s, he moved in the two-story house to care for his father, and, on the senior McAuley's death in 1909, inherited the family farm. In 1914, John Ellis made extensive changes to the two-story house, which is the appearance that it has today.<sup>10</sup>

Since John Ellis usually stayed with the family for which he was building a house, coming home only on weekends, and was not interested in farming, the farmstead was successfully managed by his wife, Alice Eugenia Johnston McAuley, who put five children through UNC-Chapel Hill.<sup>1</sup> After John Ellis' death in 1929, Alice McAuley received a life estate in the farm, and at her death in 1960, Murray McAuley (1900-1982) received the newer two-story house and farm as an inheritance and Murray's brother Cecil R. received the adjoining parcel that has the smaller log

cabin.<sup>12</sup> Murray McAuley farmed the land, and in addition to raising cotton and corn, also had cows, mules and chickens.<sup>13</sup> The two-story house is presently owned by Evelyn R. McAuley, widow of Murray, and the adjoining parcel by Paulette McAuley, widow of Cecil R.

Although threatened by rampant development and an outerbelt highway route, the McAuley farm remains as a fragile example of a pre- and post-Civil War Mecklenburg County farm that has been in the same family for three generations.

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 42, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Paulette (Mrs. Cecil R.) McAuley and Evelyn (Mrs. Murray) McAuley by Mary Beth Qatza, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Books vol. 14, p. 190; 16, p. 137; 17, p. 783; 15, p. 27; 14, p. 333; and Vol. 17, p. 612.

<sup>5</sup> 1860 U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedules, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

<sup>6</sup> 1870 U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedules, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

<sup>7</sup> E.A. McAuley is buried in the Gilead ARP Church cemetery. There is no record of the transfer.

<sup>8</sup> William H. Huffman. "A Historical Sketch of the St. Mark's Episcopal Church," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983; Mary Ellen Droppers. "John Ellis McAuley: craftsman-builder of Hopevell." Mecklenburg Gazette. May 28, 1981, p. 16.



<sup>9</sup> Droppers, cited above.

<sup>10</sup> Interviews with Evelyn McAuley by Richard Mattson and William H. Huffman, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Droppers, cited above.

<sup>12</sup> Mecklenburg County Will Book 19, p. 394; Deed Books 2148. p. 262 and 4407, p. 446.

<sup>13</sup> Seenote2.