



THE EPHRAIM ALEXANDER McAULEY HOUSE



This report was written on October 1, 1999

Special Note: The Historic Landmarks Commission moved the McAuley House to a site on the Huntersville-Concord Road in 2008.

1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Ephraim Alexander McAuley House is located at 14335 Huntersville-Concord Road in the Long Creek Community of Mecklenburg County.

2. Name, address, and telephone number of the present owner of the property: The present owner of the property is:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission
2100 Randolph Road
Charlotte, N.C. 28207
Telephone: (704) 376-9115

3. Representative photographs of the property: This report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. A map depicting the location of the property: This report contains a tax map that depicts the configuration and location of the property.



5. Current Deed Book Reference to the Property:

6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property adapted from the National Register of Historic Places registration form prepared by Frances P. Alexander and Richard S. Mattson.

7. A brief architectural sketch of the property: This report contains a brief architectural sketch of the property adapted from the National Register of Historic Places registration form prepared by Frances P. Alexander and Richard S. Mattson.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5:

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 House and Farm does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) the McAuley House and Farm represents the development of a typical Mecklenburg County farmstead in the 19th and early 20th centuries, 2) the McAuley House and Farm is significant for its illustration of traditional log building types and methods of construction, 3) The McAuley House and Farm is further significant for its expression of typical early 20th-century farmhouse architecture and outbuilding types in the county, and 4) John Ellis McAuley, who inherited the McAuley House and Farm from his father, was a locally important craftsman and homebuilder in the Long Creek Community.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association: The Commission contends that the attached architectural description by Frances P. Alexander and Richard S. Mattson demonstrates that the Ephraim Alexander McAuley House and Farm meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:

Date of Preparation of this Report: October 1, 1999

Prepared by: Dr. Dan L. Morrill
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission
2100 Randolph Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28207

Telephone: (704) 376-9115

Statement of Significance

Adapted from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form Prepared by Frances P. Alexander and Richard L. Mattson for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission

Comprising a log house, a complex of associated outbuildings of both log and frame, and 16.8 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 for designation as a local historic landmark. The McAuley Farm is also significant for its illustration of traditional log building types and methods of construction. It is further significant for its expression of typical early 20th-century farmhouse architecture and outbuilding types in the county. Finally, John Ellis McAuley, who inherited the property from his father and who substantially remodeled the house in 1914, was a noted craftsman and homebuilder in the Long Creek Community.



Architectural Description

Note: This report was written in October of 1999. The house has since been moved to 14335 Huntersville-Concord Road and is currently undergoing restoration. None of the outbuildings, (with the exception of the wellhouse) survive.

Located in a rural setting with rolling, wooded terrain and pasturage surrounding the property, the McAuley Farm represents one of the more intact agricultural complexes surviving in Mecklenburg County from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The McAuley Farm consists of a two-story log house (subsequently weatherboarded and then aluminum sided) built in 1881, an assortment of log and frame outbuildings arranged in a loosely defined square behind the 1881 McAuley House, and 16.8 acres of pristine fields north and south of this farmhouse. The house, outbuildings, pasturage to the south and cultivated fields to the north total approximately 16.8 acres. Contributing properties consist of the two-story McAuley dwelling, the "old ell" (a workroom), an auto garage, privy, a log corncrib, a log barn, and a brick well. The farmland also contributes to the historic significance of the property. The non-contributing buildings and structures consist of a wooden ca. 1940 well canopy, a mobile home to the west of the 1881 farmhouse, as well as a frame tool shed, pump house, and chicken coop. These three outbuildings are located in the farmyard behind this house, and in form, materials, and construction reflect outbuildings having the same functions as those built during the early 20th century in the county.

The 1881 McAuley farmhouse is one of seven two-story log houses identified in the county, and the only one erected after the Civil War. Although remodeled and expanded to the rear, and now aluminum sided, the house retains its original I-house form and central-hall plan. The principal renovation of this 1881 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. 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 remodeling that survive essentially intact.

The 1881 McAuley House is a traditional I-house and represents the numerous stages of remodeling and expansion. The original log, three-bay, two-story main block flanked by common bond brick end chimneys is an exceptionally late example of log construction for farmhouses in the county. The house was weatherboarded probably at the date of construction in 1881, and a frame rear ell with central corbelled chimney was added before the turn of the century. In 1914, John Ellis McAuley, a house carpenter and son of the original owner Ephraim McAuley, remodeled both the exterior and interior. Evidence of the exterior modifications include the hip-roofed, turned-post front porch which wraps around the front facade, the second-story window centered over the porch, and the standing seam metal roof. John Ellis McAuley replaced the late 19th-century rear ell with a new one, and moved the "old ell," as the McAuley family termed it, to a site west of the house where it still stands.

The interior has unique 1914 mantels in the two main rooms as well as in the bedroom of the rear ell -- evidence of John Ellis McAuley's craftsmanship and standards of design. These mantels have subtly curvilinear shapes and hand-carved brackets and floral-patterned motifs.

The mantels in the two front rooms also feature mirrored overmantels. Five-panel doors with box locks representing the 1914 renovation are evident throughout the residence. John Ellis also altered the original plan of the main body of the I-house, removing the original central hallway that divided the two front rooms to enlarge the living room.

The 1881 McAuley House underwent modifications once again in 1968. During the ownership of Murray McAuley, the weatherboards were covered with aluminum siding, the six-over-six windows that were installed in 1914 were replaced by larger one-over-one panes, and the floors were covered with black-and-white tiles. Murray McAuley also added an additional wing to the east side of the rear elevation and enclosed the rear porch.

The McAuley farm complex also 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.

Historical Overview

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.¹ The farm contained a small log cabin, which McAuley and his family lived in until they built a larger, two-story log house in 1881.² 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, 1881.³

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.⁴ Ten years later, his production was still quite similar. In livestock, he had 2 horses, 1 mule, 3 milk cows, 2 working oxen, 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.⁵ In both crops and livestock, this picture is typical for Mecklenburg County farmers in the post-bellum nineteenth century.

At E. A. McAuley's death, the farm passed to his son, John Ellis McAuley (1861-1929).⁶ John Ellis McAuley 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, including the Osborne House and the Lindsey Parks House; he also made the brick for, and constructed St. Mark's Episcopal Church and its rectory.⁷ 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.⁸

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.⁹ 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.¹⁰ After John Ellis's death in 1929, Alice McAuley received a life estate in the farm, and at her death in 1960, Murray McAuley (1900-1982) received the two-story house and farm as an inheritance and Murray's brother Cecil R. received the adjoining parcel that had a smaller log cabin, which has subsequently been removed from the property.¹¹ Murray McAuley farmed the land, and in addition to raising cotton and corn, also had cows, mules and chickens.¹² The two-story house is presently owned by Evelyn R. McAuley, widow of Murray. Although threatened by rampant development and the outerbelt highway route, the McAuley farm remains as a fragile example of a post-Civil War Mecklenburg County farm that has been in the same family for three generations.

Notes

¹ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 42, p. 395.

² Interview with Paulette (Mrs. Cecil R.) McAuley and Evelyn (Mrs. Murray) McAuley by Mary Beth Gatza, 1988.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 1860 U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedules, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

⁵ 1870 U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedules, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

⁶ E. A. McAuley is buried in the Gilead A.R.P. Church cemetery. There is no record of the transfer.

⁷ 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 Hopewell," *Mecklenburg Gazette*, May 28, 1981, p. 16.

⁸ Droppers, cited above.

⁹ Interviews with Evelyn McAuley by Richard Mattson and William H. Huffman, 1989.

¹⁰ Droppers, cited above.

¹¹ Mecklenburg County Will Book 19, p. 394; Deed Books 2148, p. 262 and 4407, p. 446.

¹² See note 2.