



Survey and Research Report On the Albert McCoy Farm



1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Albert McCoy Farm is located 10401 McCoy Road, Huntersville, N.C. 28078.

2. Name and address of the current owner(s) of the property:

Thomas & Robin McCoy

**431 Fenton Place
Charlotte, NC 28207**

- 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 map depicting the location of the property.**



- 5. Current deed book reference to the property: The most recent deed to the Albert McCoy Farm can be found in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 8731 Page 409. The Tax Parcel Identification Number for the property is 015-20-101 . The property is zoned R.**
- 6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. Richard Mattson.**
- 7. A brief architectural description of the property: This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Mr. William Huffman. This Survey & Research Report was updated in September 2009, by Ms. Mary Dominick**
- 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 Albert McCoy Farm does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

*****1.** The Albert McCoy Farm is a physical reminder of the rural landscape of Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With its simple two-story farm house and modest collection of outbuildings (log crib, a wellhouse, a smokehouse and a privy) the Albert McCoy Farm represents the many small farmsteads that flourished in the county in the decades after the Civil War; 2. The Albert McCoy House is a two-story, timber-frame, side-gable-and-wing dwelling, representative of a type that was common throughout Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth century; 3. The integrity of the Albert McCoy House is excellent, no original material has been removed since the house was constructed.

b. **Integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.**

The Commission contends that the architectural description prepared by Mr. William Huffman and Dr. Richard Mattson demonstrates that the Albert McCoy 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 that becomes a designated “historic landmark.” The current appraised value of the Albert McCoy Farm is \$145,600—\$113,700 for the building, \$7500 for other features, and \$24,400 for the land. [Tax Assessment In Progress]

**Date of preparation of this report:
November 2, 2000**

Provided by: United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet Interview with Dr. Thomas H. McCoy, 4 Aug 1999;
Mecklenburg County Deed Book 10, p. 437; Deed Book 4, p. 629;

Physical Description



The Albert McCoy Farm is located in the Long Creek section of northern Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, about fifteen miles north of the city of Charlotte. Approximately five miles from the center of the town of Huntersville, it has recently been annexed into the rapidly- expanding town limits. The Albert McCoy Farm is entirely rural in character, though it is in an area that is currently inundated by rapid development, which is likely to increase even more when 1-485 (Charlotte's outer beltway) is completed.

The Long Creek section of Mecklenburg County is typical of the southern piedmont region of North Carolina. It is characterized by well-watered, gently-rolling topography that is well-suited for agricultural purposes. Typical vegetation includes open spaces, pastures, cultivated fields, mature hardwood trees, and piney woodlands. The built environment reflects the traditional agricultural nature of the area in the scattered farms that remain, but also exhibits the more current urban and suburban development patterns in subdivisions and free-standing dwellings.

The Albert McCoy Farm has been in the same family since 1770, and has been in continuous agricultural use since

at least 1880. It is a rural historic landscape which retains the setting, characteristics, and associations from the period of significance, c. 1886-1950. The centerpiece of the seventy-six acre farm, which spans both sides of McCoy Road (SR 2120), is the c. 1886 Albert McCoy House. The house faces east; outbuildings spread out on three sides (to the north, west and south) of the house, a typical layout for nineteenth-century Mecklenburg County farms. The significant outbuildings--a log crib, a wellhouse, a smokehouse and a privy-- are contemporary with the house (only a pumphouse and a small animal shelter are later). The house is surrounded by a manicured yard, shrubbery and scattered hardwood trees (including oak, elm, sycamore, poplar and walnut trees). An unpaved driveway runs from McCoy Road along the south side of the house, and turns north into the back yard. A small kitchen garden is beyond the driveway on the south side of the house. Pasture land and fields surround the house and yard on all sides, and woodlands spread along the east and west sides, and across the southwest corner of the tract. A large man-made pond, installed in the 1930s for recreational use, sits adjacent to the western edge of the property. It is fed by a spring near Gar Creek, which traverses the southern edge of the Albert McCoy Farm.



The Albert McCoy House is a two-story, timber frame, side-gable-and-wing (sometimes called L-plan) dwelling on a stone pier foundation. The roof has a shallow pitch, cross gables, and a standing-seam metal covering. The house is sheathed with weatherboard siding, and has large six-over-six sash windows. There are three brick chimneys--one exterior end chimney and two interior chimneys. The porch spans the left (south) two bays of the facade, and features a hipped roof, a cutwork balustrade and sawn brackets. A one-story ell extends out from the rear of the house on the south side. The handmade front door surround includes sidelights and splays out at the top and bottom. The door surround is distinctive and, along with the interior woodwork, identifies this house as the product of local builder John Ellis McAuley (1861-1929).



Front Porch Detail



On the interior, the Albert McCoy House has a center hall plan. The open-string stair rises up from the back of the hall, and features delicate turned balusters and thick turned newel posts. The first floor has three large rooms in the main body of the house, and two smaller rooms in the rear ell. Three large bedrooms are found on the second floor. Seven of the eight rooms have fireplaces with handcarved mantels. Each mantel is different from the others and all are recognizable as the work of John Ellis McAuley. McAuley favored flat pilasters or chamfered boards supporting a plain shelf; but created unique architraves. He often used simple hand-carved shapes, but executed them well, usually adding a deep bevel that varied in angle along the curves he created. McAuley's handiwork can also be seen in the board-and-batten ceiling coverings, and his use of interior closets. Each of the three upstairs bedrooms has a small closet in one corner. Four panel doors with ornate Victorian rim locks are found throughout the house. All interior wall finishes are plaster, and all floors are wide heart-pine boards.



*The Ephraim Alexander McAuley House, ca. 1881
The McAuley House was remodeled by John Ellis McAuley in 1914.*

The integrity of the Albert McCoy House is excellent. No original material has been removed since the house was constructed. A bathroom was added off the first floor hall in the mid-twentieth century. At some point, plumbing was added to the rear first floor room, and it was converted to kitchen use.

Architectural Description and Architectural Context

The Albert McCoy House, a two-story, timber-frame, side-gable-and-wing dwelling is representative of a type that was common throughout Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth century. Its irregular massing identifies its origins as Queen Anne, whether or not any Victorian trim was used in the house. This particular house does not contain any mass-produced millwork or other trim typically associated with the Queen Anne style. Instead, it is a showplace for the individual and highly skilled craftsmanship of local builder, John Ellis McAuley.

John Ellis McAuley

John Ellis McAuley (1861-1929) is the only local builder in Mecklenburg County about whom significant information is known. He was from a local family and ultimately inherited his father's house and

land on Alexandriana Road in the Long Creek area of the county)³ McAuley displayed his carpentry skills as early as age twelve, when he built a functioning miniature water mill that was widely admired by those who saw it. He had a special affection for tools, and took pride in keeping them sharp. His four-foot-by-three-foot toolbox is said to have weighed five hundred pounds when full. He also repaired farm equipment for his father and their neighbors.⁴ McAuley is remembered locally as a “country carpenter.” In 1939, The History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church reminisced that he “had no speculative ability nor any thirst for gain; his labor was solely for the art of his trade.”⁵ McAuley is listed in the census records of 1900, 1910 and 1920 as a farmer.¹⁶ Ironically, he never considered himself to be a builder by trade, and never built a house for himself. He did, however, alter the house he inherited from his father to such an extent that it bore his trademark woodwork.⁷

McAuley was still in his twenties when Albert McCoy asked him to build this house. Though he had built an addition to another home, this was his first commission for an entire building. His unusual splayed front door surrounds and unique hand-carved mantels are considered his signature. The door surround angles outward at both the top and the bottom. On fireplace mantels, he created architraves adorned by distinctive curves with deep bevels whose pitch changes throughout the curve.⁸ No two of the seven mantels in the Albert McCoy House are alike, and all of the woodwork is finely executed. His skills as a carpenter are evident throughout the house.

The History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church documented at least ten houses in the immediate area built by McAuley, though there were probably many more.⁹ In addition to the Albert McCoy House, four others that are still standing include: the Kerns House (1880s) on Kems Road, the W. B. Parks House (c. 1901) on Beatties Ford Road, the Parks-Jetton House (1905) (recently demolished) on Neck Road, and the rectory at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church (c. 1898) on Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road. McAuley also erected houses outside of the immediate Hopewell community. Two such examples are the William and Cora Osborne House (c. 1890) at 12445 Ramah Church Road and the Grey-Knox House (c. 1894) at 108 Gilead Road in Huntersville.

McAuley’s work emphasizes finely-crafted detail over the latest fashion. All of the houses he built are either traditional I-house (Kerns House, Grey-Knox House, Osborne House and Parks-Jetton House) or side-gable-and-wing forms (W.B. Parks House, Albert McCoy House, and St. Mark’s rectory).

All are of frame construction and all feature hand-carved interior woodwork. Every example except the Parks-Jetton House has his signature splayed front door surround. The Albert McCoy House is especially significant, since it is known to have been McAuley's first house-building project. Although it is a common form, the Albert McCoy House is extraordinarily uncommon in its well-executed craftsmanship and attention to detail.



The Albert McCoy Farm, with its seventy-six acres of pasture and woods and c. 1886 two-story, side-gable-and-wing house surrounded by a complete collection of outbuildings, retains the integrity of a working farm from the late-nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth century. The McCoy Farm, eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its significance in the area of agriculture, retains a landscape of fields, pastures, and tree stands that is evocative of historic rural Mecklenburg County, which is a landscape increasingly threatened with development. The McCoy Farm is also eligible under Criterion C for architecture for the well-preserved side-gable-and-wing farmhouse built by skilled local craftsman John

Ellis McAuley. The significance of the McCoy Farm is discussed in “Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina” National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form in the context entitled “Post-Bellum and Late-Nineteenth to Early- Twentieth Century Agriculture (1865-1939).” The property meets the registration requirements for Property Type IC: Postbellum Farmhouses and Property Type 2: Outbuildings. The significance statement that follows provides additional context in order to extend the period of significance to 1950.

Albert McCoy (1843-1925), a Civil War veteran and a founder of St. Mark’s Church, the first Episcopal church in northern Mecklenburg County, established the farm on the land he inherited from his father. The property is a rare surviving example of a piedmont North Carolina farm that has remained in the ownership of the same family, and has been farmed continually, for nearly one hundred and fifteen years. The period of significance is c. 1886 to 1950, a period during which the McCoy Farm held a significant role in the process and technology of farming in Mecklenburg County.

Historical Background & Agricultural Context

McCoy Family

Mecklenburg County was populated in the mid eighteenth century primarily by ScotchIrish settlers who supported themselves by farming. One such settler was Ezekial Beaty McCoy, who had come to North Carolina from Pennsylvania. In 1770, Beaty purchased farmland on Gar Creek in the Long Creek section of the county, which ultimately was passed to his son John McCoy. John’s son, Marshall Rudolphus McCoy (1807-1854) obtained several hundred acres and built and resided in a log house nearby on Kerns Road (still standing). In 1874, Marshall Rudoiphus McCoy’s son, Albert McCoy (1843-1925) acquired 370 acres of his late father’s estate and was farming on the land by 1880.1

Albert McCoy was educated at Statesville Military Institute. At age eighteen, he enlisted in Company C, 37th Regiment (nicknamed “Mecklenburg’s Wide Awakes”) of the Confederate States Army. He served as a private during the Civil War until he was discharged in June 1862. He returned to his native Mecklenburg County and married Catherine J. N. Potts in 1866. Within five years, Catherine had borne a child, Catherine Lura McCoy, and then died. After Catherine’s death, Albert married a neighbor, Mary Catherine Gluyas (1850-1919). Mary was the daughter of Captain Thomas Gluyas (1828-1912), who was a founding member of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, and was described at the time of his death as “one of the most successful planters in the county.”²

Albert and Mary McCoy had twelve children between 1871 and 1895. In 1874, Albert’s mother, Rebecca, deeded to Albert 370 acres of McCoy land that had been owned by her husband, Marshall Rudolphus McCoy (1807-1854). By 1880, Albert and Mary had set up farming and housekeeping on the land. It is thought that they initially lived in a house somewhere near the present dwelling, which has long since perished. In or around 1886, Albert commissioned local builder John Ellis McAuley to construct a new house for his growing family.



Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House, ca. 1865

Family history states that the eighth child, Joseph Bennet McCoy, who was born in November of 1886, was the first child born in

the new house. The 1900 census finds Albert, Mary and all twelve of their children living together at this location. In addition, a ninety-year-old former slave, Lizzie, also lived with the family. Later, Albert's children would erect a stone marker in honor of Lizzie and her husband Jim at the slave cemetery nearby where they were interred. A fund was set up in 1949 for the perpetual care of the slave cemetery, which is well maintained to this day.⁴

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, the first Episcopal church in north Mecklenburg County, was formed in 1883 by Albert McCoy, his brother Columbus W. McCoy, father-in-law Captain Thomas Gluyas, and others. The first meetings were held on Albert's land. The first Rector, Joseph Blount Cheshire said of Albert McCoy "from the first to the last he was attached to the church with an earnest devotion and enthusiasm which I have seldom seen equaled."⁵

At the time of his death in 1925, Albert was "credited with being the oldest member of the Masonic order in Charlotte or vicinity and is believed by some to be the oldest Mason in the state." He had joined the organization in 1863. His obituary further stated that "he was a man of commanding personality, irreproachable character and uprightness in his private life and a citizen of the highest type." Albert was known to his relatives as a local historian and was proud to claim kinship with John McKnitt Alexander and Major John Davidson, both local heroes of the Revolutionary War era.⁶

Albert McCoy supported his large family off the land where he lived his entire life. Agricultural census records, available only for 1880, provide insight into the farm activities in the period just before the Albert McCoy House was built. They reveal that seventy-five acres were tilled, seventy acres were in meadow, pasture, and orchard or otherwise improved, and 150 acres were in woodland. Twenty-five acres were planted in Indian corn, which yielded 400 bushels and was the largest crop. Oats (thirty bushels), wheat (forty-five bushels) and cotton (ten bales) were all produced in smaller amounts. One acre was devoted to each an apple orchard (150 trees) and a peach orchard (50 trees). There were eighty poultry animals, which laid seventy-five dozen eggs in 1879. Bees provided 100 pounds of honey in that year. Other animals around the farm included nine horses, three mules, four cows, three sheep and seven swine. 200 pounds of butter were processed on the farm. Four surviving outbuildings--a smokehouse, a wellhouse, a privy, and a log crib--are thought to have been built at the same time as the house, and are directly related to the activities on the McCoy Farm during the period of significance, c. 1886 to 1950.

At 370 acres, Albert McCoy's tract was considerably larger than the typical farm in Mecklenburg County, which averaged 111 acres in 1880. Spratt's Map of 1911 illustrates that there were no other farms on McCoy Road, or even in the immediate vicinity, at that time. Statistics show that in 1920, only 1.3% of Mecklenburg County farms were between 250 and 499 acres in size, and only .2% were larger than 499 acres.⁸ Evaluated against the analysis done by Dr. William Huffman for the 1990 "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County" National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, the range of production on Albert McCoy's farm proves to have been typical for Mecklenburg County during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Huffman says, "production was mainly grain and cotton, with livestock being an important, but secondary, activity." He mentions cattle, sheep, swine, poultry and eggs, and states that "corn clearly dominated the cereal crops, with wheat and oats next.. Compared to three other National Register farms in the community, the Ephraim Alexander McAuley Farm (NR, 1990), the Samuel J. McElroy House (NR, 1990), and the Dr. Walter Pharr Craven House (NR., 1990), the Albert McCoy Farm was very similar in output to its neighboring farms. Though smaller, these three nearby farms grew primarily corn, followed by wheat and/or oats, and cotton. They all had a few livestock, and two also had some egg-laying poultry. Two farms (McAuley and McElroy) had apple and peach orchards. Evidently, this mix of grains, fruit, cattle and dairy products was a successful combination in north Mecklenburg County.

When Albert died in 1925, his holdings were divided among several of his children, in accordance with the terms of his will. His property was divided into thirteen lots, ten of which were between forty and forty-seven acres in size. Lots four and

five were combined into one sixty-five acre tract, which included the house and outbuildings. This homeplace tract ultimately went to the eldest daughter, Ella Letitia McCoy Nisbet (1875-1946).'^o

Ella married William Alexander Nisbet in 1900, and they had five children together.” They lived in the house and actively farmed the land, though no one cash crop dominated. The youngest son, Dr. Thomas Gluyas Nisbet (1912-1995), recalled living in the house from the mid1920s through 1939. Ella died in 1946, and William died in 1953. The property passed to the three surviving children, Thomas and his two sisters. Thomas G. Nisbet leased the property from 1953 through the mid 1990s, during which time cattle were maintained on the land.’² Farming was thus continued on the land throughout the period of significance, c. 1886 to 1950.

In accordance with Thomas G. Nisbet’s wishes, the Albert McCoy farm was sold to Dr. Thomas H. McCoy after Nisbet’s death. Thomas H. McCoy is the son of Joseph Bennet McCoy, Jr., who is in turn the son of Joseph Bennet McCoy, Sr., who was born in the house in 1886, and was the son of Albert and Mary McCoy. Thomas H. McCoy is thus a direct descendant of Albert McCoy.

[1] *Interview with Dr. Thomas H. McCoy, 4 Aug 1999;*
Mecklenburg County Deed Book 10, p. 437; Deed Book 4, p. 629;
U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: North Carolina
(Agricultural Schedule);
McCoy family genealogy notes.

[2] *Charlotte News, II Apr 1925, p. 2.*
*Weymouth T. Jordan, comp., North Carolina troops, 1861-1865: A Roster vol. IX, *Infantry: 32nd-35th and 37th Regiments. (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1983), pp. 497, 505;*
*Charles William Sommerville. The History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church (Hopewell Presbyterian Church, 1939), p. 160;**

[3] *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. Mecklenburg County Survey, survey files. (1988); Charlotte News, 16 Nov 1912.*

They are: Edwin Monroe (1871-1919), Thomas Marshall (b. 1873), Ella Letitia (1875-1946), Esther Whitley (b. 1878), John Oliver (b. 1880), Mary Elizabeth (b. 1882), Alice (b. 1884), Joseph Bennet (b. 1886), Lamar Alexander (b. 1888), Lelia Rebecca (1891-1947), Robert Oates (b. 1893), and Fenner Hammond Springs (b. 1895).

[4] *Sommerville, Hopewell. pp. 157-58. 160-6 1; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 10, P. 437; Interview with Dr. Thomas H. McCoy, 4 Aug 1999; Interview with Dr. Joseph Bennet McCoy, Jr., 5 Oct 1999; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: North Carolina (Agricultural Schedule); Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: North Carolina (Population Schedule).*

[5] *Joseph Blount Cheshire, Saint Mark's Church, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Its Beginnings: 1884-1886. (n.p., 1927), pp. 4, 6, ii.*

[6] *Charlotte News, 11 Apr 1925, p. 2.*

[7] *William Huffman and Richard Mattson, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina" National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (1990), Table 1.*

[8] *Edgar T. Thompson, Agricultural Mecklenburg and Industrial Charlotte (Charlotte: Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, 1926), p. 169.*

[9] *Huffman and Mattson, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County," p. E9.*

[10] *Mecklenburg County Will Book T, p. 235; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 625, p. 433; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1060, p. 140.*

[11] *They were: William McCoy (1901-1909), Mary Alexander (b. 1904), James McKnitt (1910-1911); Thomas Gluyas(1912-1995), and Martha Barn (b. 1914).*

[12] *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. Mecklenburg County Survey, survey files. (1988); Mecklenburg County Deed Book 2343, p. 258; Interview with Dr. Joseph Bennet McCoy, Jr., 5 Oct 1999.*

[13] *John Ellis McAuley was the son of Ephraim Alexander McAuley (1826-1909).*

[14] *Sommerville, Hopewell, pp. 156-159.*

[15] *Sommerville, Hopewell, pp. 156-159.*

[16] *U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: North Carolina (Population Schedule); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: North Carolina (Population Schedule); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: North Carolina (Population Schedule)*

[17] *This observation was made by the author during the 1988 Mecklenburg County Survey, and is supported by family history.*

[18] *These observations were made by the author during the 1988 Mecklenburg County Survey.*

[19] *Sommerville, Hopewell, pp. 156-159.*

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1880: North Carolina (Agricultural Schedule); Twelfth Census of the United States,
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