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REPORT ON McMILLAN HOUSE

GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

ARCHITECTURAL SECTION

by

Norman M. Souder, Architect

January, 1962

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FOREWORD

At the request by memorandum from Acting Director Scoyen, dated August 25, 1961, I visited Gettysburg National Military Park on September 25th to examine and make recommendations on the McMillan house which is located within the park and now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Guillermo Barriga.

I would like to express appreciation to Superintendent Myers and his staff for the briefing on the situation and historical background of the house, as well as for supplying the photographs which are included in the report. A historical report furnished by the superintendent also forms a part of this report.

The McMillan house was built in 1840 by David McMillan, a deputy surveyor and school teacher, on a tract of 40 acres. The house was the scene of intensive action during the Civil War and remained in the McMillan family until recently when it was purchased from Miss Margaret McMillan by the present owners.

DESCRIPTION

The existing house, due to a large addition in the early twentieth century, has been greatly altered. The original house as shown on the accompanying photographs and sketch plans forms only a small part of the present structure. The old house has been further changed by recent alterations made by the present owners. Thus the house as it appeared in the historic period is almost completely hidden.

The historic portion of the McMillan house is approximately 24 x 28 feet, of frame construction with brick nogging filling the framing of the interior partitions and the exterior walls. The exterior was covered originally with random width horizontal wood siding and the roof shingled. The house, one and one-half stories prior to alterations, contained four rooms and wide center hall on both floors. The 1894 photo shows a shed kitchen with large stone fireplace, brick chimney and rear porch. These features were removed when the front building was added to the former rear of the house in order to face the later battlefield drive.

There were three original fireplaces, one of which was removed by the present owners. A large stone fireplace remains in the basement and a small fireplace remains in one of the parlors. The original floors, staircase and trim in the old portion are largely intact. There is no doubt that a thorough architectural investigation would uncover many additional features in the old structure.

The large two story frame addition to the rear of the house, now the front, was erected without regard to the proportion of the mass. The resultant roof lines form a large irregular shed roof sloping upward to the front, capped by a pseudo mansard roof on the front of the addition. A two story entrance bay is centered in the front topped by a gable. Possibly at this time also, a dormer was broken through the one remaining slope of the older section.

The framework of the kitchen-shed was removed when the front section was erected and re-erected, or moved, to the side of the house.

The present owners effected the following changes to the original portion of the house:

1. Added partition and lavatory to first floor parlor.
2. Converted one of the bedrooms to a modern bath.
3. Removed fireplace, installed double window and new exterior door, reduced one original window opening, in order to install a modern kitchen.
4. Replaced single window with double unit in present dining room.
5. Added carport across the rear (original main entrance).

The roof, originally wood shingled, is now covered with tin. The original siding is either covered or replaced by later narrow wood siding.

Attached to this report is a series of sketch plans showing the relationship of the old house to the present structure.

Due to time limitations, no accurate measurements were taken and only superficial architectural investigation of the structure was made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The opening of the house as a house museum in its present state as proposed by the owners would be a misrepresentation of

the historic McMillan house in that the original lines of the house are almost completely obscured by later alterations.

Interpretation would be difficult, if not impossible, due to later intrusions in the old house. It would not represent the McMillan house of the Civil War period.

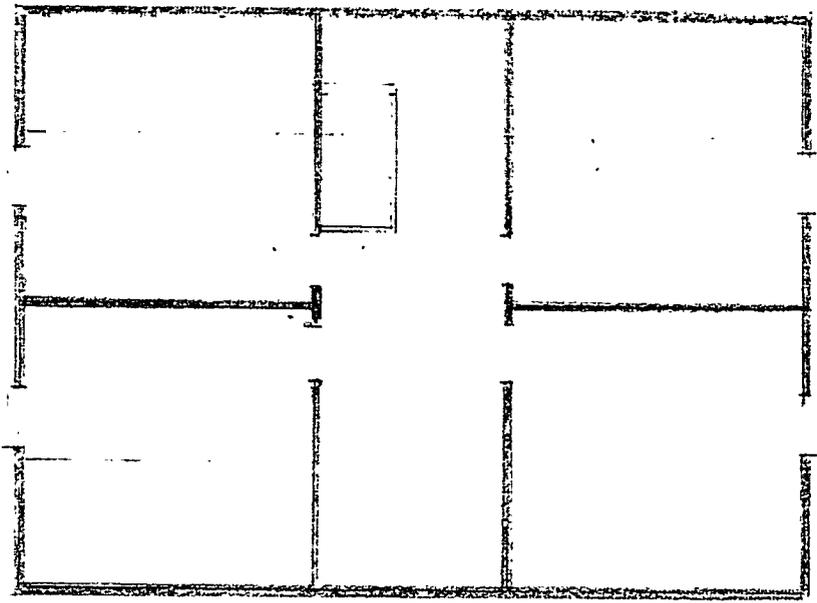
While there are several pieces of furniture of the pre-civil war era which belonged to the McMillan family in the house, together with a number of pieces of the Federal and Empire periods owned by the Barrigas, there are also large amounts of non-pertinent furnishings throughout the house.

The owners proposed additions and alterations to the later portion such as tall columns and shutters to the present front, would tend to mislead the public and obscure the original house even further.

The writer recommends the removal of all the late portions and a careful restoration of the original McMillan house if it is to be opened to the public. This would include a carefully planned furnishings scheme in order to show the house in its proper period. The owners, however, plan to exhibit it as it now exists.

The ideal solution of the problem would be that the Park obtain the property eventually and restore the historic house in order to interpret it properly.

If authentically restored, the McMillan house would be an important interpretive feature depicting country life at the time of the Civil War.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

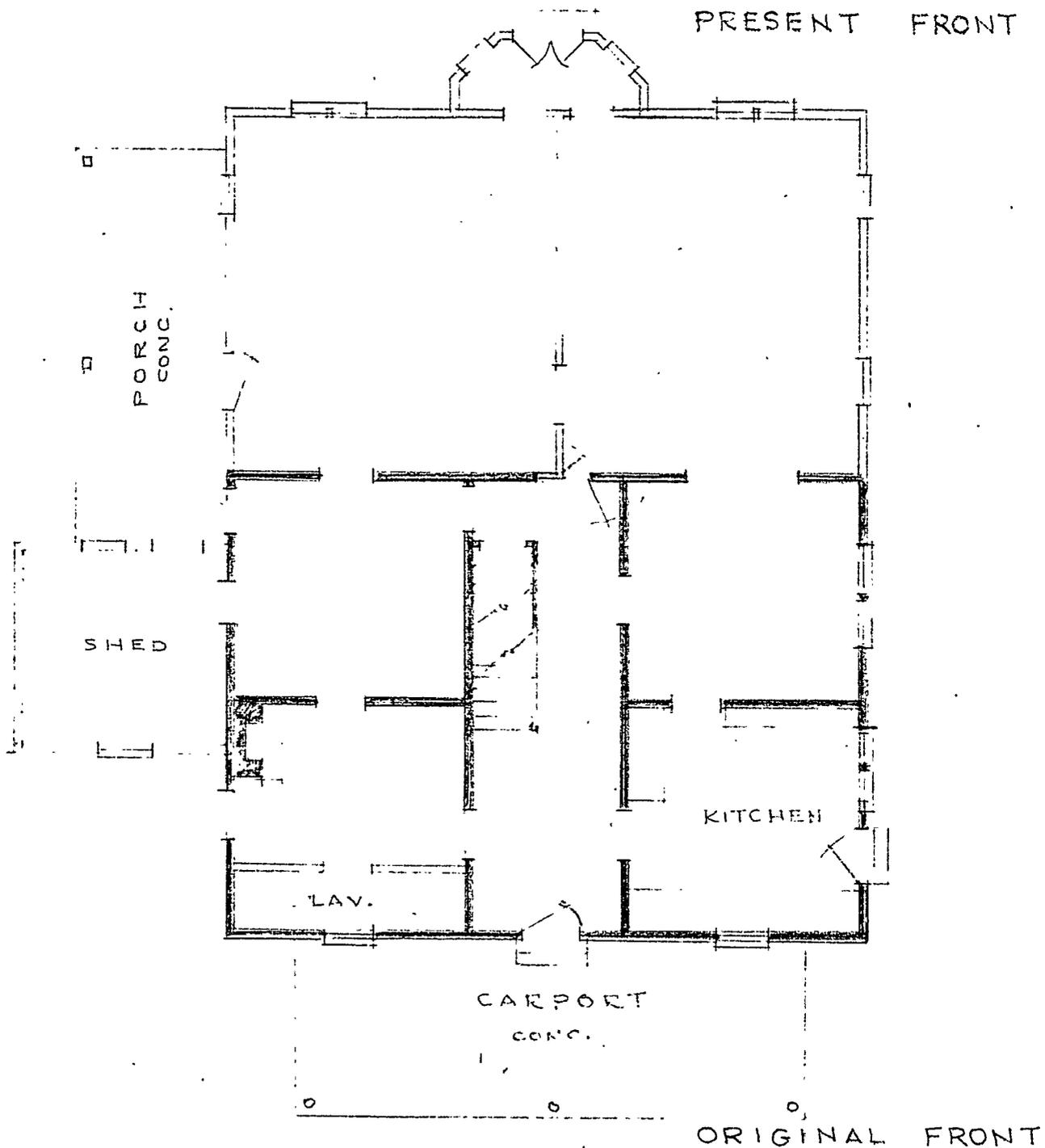


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

ORIGINAL

Notes -
 THE POTTERY FOUND IN THE
 BASE OF THE 1914 FOUNDATION
 IS NOT A PART OF THE 1914 FOUNDATION.

McMillan, J. P., Jr.
 1947 - 2011
 GETTYSBURG, N. M. P.

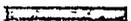


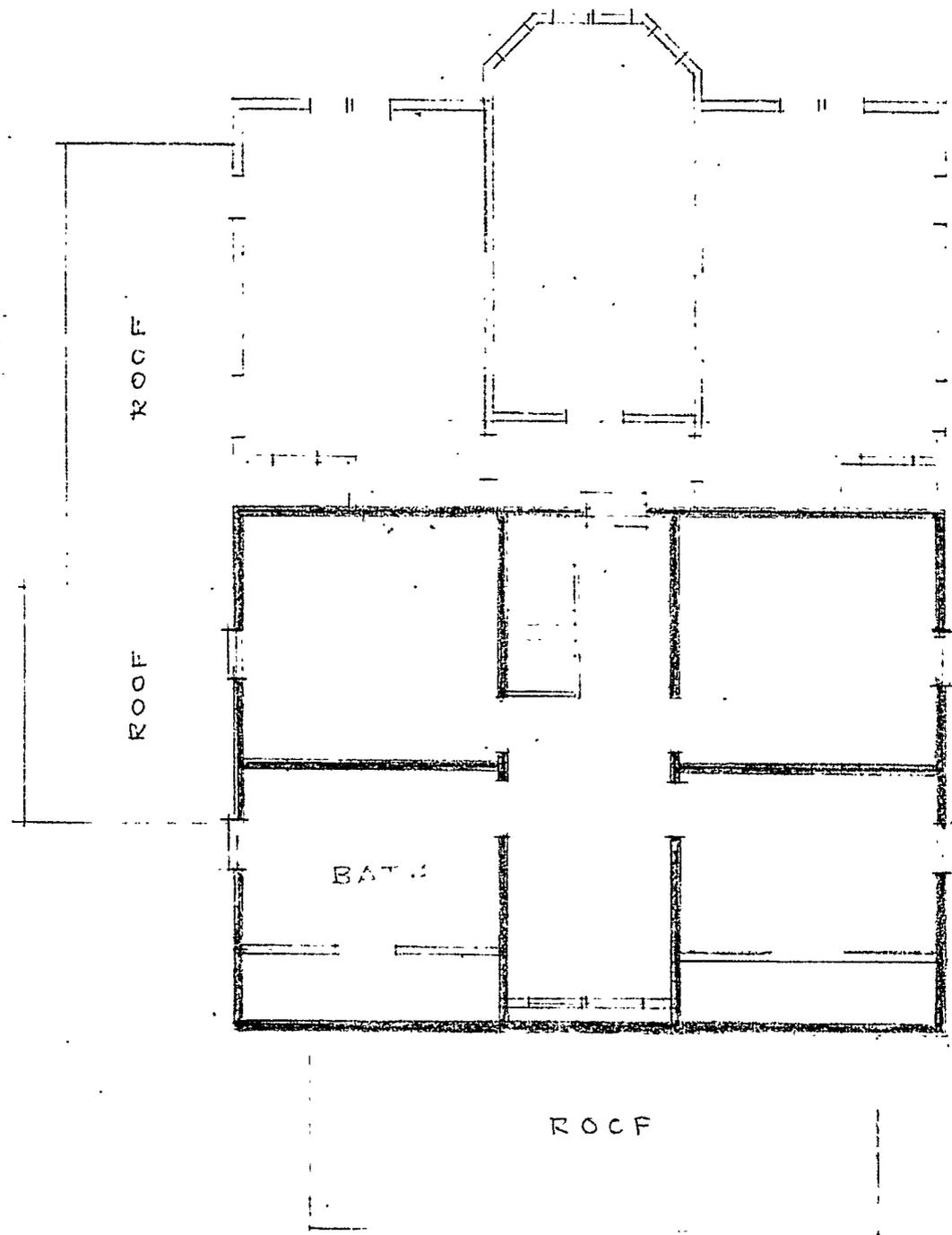
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

McMILLAN HOUSE
 EXISTING - 1840-1900 -
 GETTYSBURG N.M.P.

LEGEND

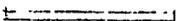
-  ORIGINAL WALLS 1840-1900
-  WATER CONSTRUCTION



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

-  ORIGINAL WALLS REMAINING 1840-1900
-  LATER CONSTRUCTION

McMILLAN HOUSE
 GETTYSBURG NATIONAL
 MILITARY PARK

HISTORICAL STATEMENT
CONCERNING
THE DAVID McMILLAN HOUSE

The McMillan land is located about three quarters of a mile southwest of Gettysburg and includes a considerable section of Seminary Ridge, the main Confederate battle line of July 2 and 3. The farm, which was considerably larger at the time of the Battle of Gettysburg than its present size, extended over the eastern and western slopes of the ridge, the northern boundary of the farm beginning about one-half mile south of Fairfield Road.

As the troops of Pender's division followed the Union retreat from McPherson Ridge, west of Gettysburg, on the evening of July 1, they established their battle lines from Hagerstown Road southward on Seminary Ridge to a point south of McMillan Woods. On this section of the Confederate lines were also posted the batteries of Brander, Crenshaw, McGraw, Marye of Pegram's Battalion and Lewis, Grandy, Mauric, and Moore of Garnett's Battalion. On July 2, Rode's troops moved southward from Middle Street across the McMillan farm to reach the starting point of the attack which was to be directed against Cemetery Hill. The left flank of Pickett's Charge on July 3 started from the McMillan Woods area and the charge was supported by the entire line of Confederate artillery on Seminary Ridge, including the several batteries on the McMillan land. The distance between Seminary Ridge, in the vicinity of the McMillan land, and Cemetery

Hill, a landmark on the Union battle line, is approximately three-quarters of a mile.

The southern part of the McMillan farm was purchased by the U. S. Government in 1907 for the preservation of the historic scene, and since that time all of the remaining land was acquired with the exception of two acres surrounding the house, a parcel which was retained by Guillermo Barriga, who purchased the house and adjacent land in 1953.

The late Margaret McMillan, a granddaughter of David McMillan, in a written statement in 1941, stated that the original house, built in 1841, was a one and one-half story frame structure, "interlined with brick, with a fireplace in the basement, and a fireplace on the first floor".

As the battle action of July 1 at Gettysburg shifted from the northwest of the town to the ridges west and south of it, the McMillan family was forced to leave the house and took refuge with friends near the Round Tops. The main Confederate battle line was soon established on Seminary Ridge and infantry units as well as batteries took positions on the slopes of the ridge about the house.

On July 8, according to Miss McMillan's statement, David McMillan and his son-in-law, the Rev. M. L. Drus of Wrightsville, Pennsylvania,

returned to the house. They found the building badly damaged, nineteen shell holes being counted in the walls and roof, and a round bullet embedded in one of the doors where it has remained. All of the furniture, clothing, books, surveying instruments and other personal effects were found partially covered in hastily constructed earthworks adjacent to the house.

The McMillan family resided in the original house until 1895 when it was enlarged. A two-story structure was added to the west side, facing recently acquired battleground upon which was constructed a few years later a battlefield road known as West Confederate Avenue. An entrance from the avenue to the property was granted to the owner, Oscar McMillan. A barn, the foundation of which is still in evidence about 50 yards south of the house, was built in the early post-war period and was long ago destroyed by fire.

Recommendation

In the enlargement process of the original house, the exterior of the original house has been considerably altered. Moreover, the design of the addition does not match that of the original structure.

It is recommended, in view of the radically altered exterior appearance of the house, that it should not be described as a historic house and that it should not be exhibited as a historical structure. If

the owner is willing, on the basis of the structural evidence appearing in the photograph of the original house attached to this report, to remove the addition and thereby render possible a faithful restoration of both the exterior and interior appearance of the house, consideration would be given for exhibition as a historical structure.

Prepared by:
Park Historian Frederick Tilberg

Lee did not know until June 28 that the Union army—now commanded by Gen. George G. Meade—was following him. Then, realizing that a battle was imminent, Lee ordered his scattered forces to concentrate at Cashtown, 8 miles west of Gettysburg.

Two days later, on June 30, Gen. John Buford's Union cavalry flushed a Confederate detachment from Gettysburg, then occupied McPherson Ridge, just west of the town. Thus, groping through the fog of war, the fingertips of the vast armies had chanced to touch at Gettysburg. Now began the race to concentrate winning power.

THE BATTLE BEGINS

Early on July 1, Buford's pickets opened fire on the Confederate vanguard approaching from Cashtown. Soon the Union cavalry was reinforced by Gen. John F. Reynolds' infantry. Meanwhile, jamming the roads which converged like spokes on the hub of Gettysburg, dusty columns of both armies pounded toward the sound of the guns.

Until 1 p.m., the Union troops on McPherson Ridge held the attacking Confederates at bay. But suddenly the hills and ridges north of town came alive with charging men. In a concerted attack from west and north

the powerful Confederate forces smashed into the Union lines.

Back through the town fled the men in blue. Many units fought heroic rearguard actions to protect their retreating comrades. By 5:30 p.m., the Union remnants were hurriedly entrenching south of Gettysburg on Cemetery Hill, where Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock—a rock in adversity—rallied their shattered ranks.

At the sound of the cannonade, General Lee had galloped to the front. He watched the Federals stream toward the hills south of town and begin their entrenchments. Though aware that their position was a strong one, he believed it could be crushed by attacking Culp's Hill or Cemetery Ridge, the southerly extension of Cemetery Hill.

THE SECOND DAY

By dawn, July 2, Lee's army overlapped the hook-shaped Union line; he hoped to break it before Meade's main force reached the field. His plan of attack called for Gen. James Longstreet to assault the Union left on Cemetery Ridge. To aid the main attack, Gen. Richard Ewell's men would advance on Cemetery and Culp's Hills, at the right of the Union line.

Action on July 2. Longstreet's Confederates charge across the Wheatfield. Reproduced from an original glass-plate negative at Gettysburg National Military Park. Original painting by James E. Taylor, 1885.

