

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name McLeán, Dr. Joseph A., House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number North side US 70, 0.1 mile W of junction with SR 3053 not for publication N/A

city or town Sedalia vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Guilford code 081 zip code 27342

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William S. King, Jr. SHPO 12-19-94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Name of Property

Guilford County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
walls weatherboard
roof asphalt
other wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1850

Significant Dates

ca. 1850

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Name of Property

Guilford County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.64 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	6 2 3 2 2 0	3 9 9 2 4 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claudia R. Brown and Paul Fomberg

organization NC State Historic Preservation Office date December 1994

street & number 109 E. Jones St. telephone 919/733-6545

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27601-2807

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Set close to the road on a small knoll overlooking the Burlington Road (U.S. Highway 70) near Sedalia, in eastern Guilford County, the Dr. Joseph A. McLean house is a vernacular Greek Revival style dwelling. A rail fence at the top of an embankment marks the edge of the front lawn and a combination of mature deciduous and evergreen trees surround the house and dot the large side and rear yards. There is a drive to the west of the house, looping around a tree. The rear (north) yard is marked by scattered trees and an unmowed area, beyond which are cultivated fields slated for residential subdivision.

Apparently the house originated as a two-story log structure encompassing the current east rooms and center hall, where deep window and door casings reflect the log construction. Around 1850 the dwelling substantially achieved its current appearance when it was overbuilt and enlarged with frame construction as the two-story, one-room-deep main block that is three bays wide, sheathed in plain weatherboarding, and covered by a low-pitched gable roof. The vast majority of the weatherboards are original and all are painted white. The two-story unit features interior end brick chimneys laid up in a modified common bond with ratios varying from one-to-five to one-to-nine. The corbelled stacks were originally free-standing, but the spaces between the stacks and the house were filled with brick early in this century to provide stability. Windows are tall with double-hung sash that are nine-over-six in the main block (except for the middle second-story window on the main facade which is six-over-six) and six-over-six in the ell. All window surrounds are three-part with the exception of two in the end elevations (second-story west end north of the chimney and first-story east end south of the chimney) that have flat replacements. Several of the windows are flanked by fixed vinyl shutters that are scheduled for removal. Corner posts are treated as pilasters and a short, plain friezeboard carries across the front and rear of the house beneath a molded cornice. The flush gable ends display applied cornice returns and molded rake boards.

The focal point of the main facade is the massive one-story pedimented portico at the central entrance bay. It is supported by a large, simplified Doric column of solid wood at each front corner that is mirrored by tapered pilaster on the facade. Originally a pair of columns appeared at each corner of the porch, but the two inner columns have been removed. The tall frieze, originally divided by molding, was reconstructed in the mid-twentieth century and is now unadorned except for a small band of cyma recta molding at the top. Similar molding outlines the plain tympanum and larger, more prominent cyma recta molding highlights the raking cornices of the pediment and the porch's side cornices. A symmetrically molded architrave bearing plain corner blocks enframes the single doorway with sidelights set over short aprons with recessed square panels. The door is of Greek Revival design with two vertical panels. The replacement porch deck is concrete edged in brick.

Extending from the east end of the rear (north) elevation of the main block is a one-story gable-roofed ell with a central chimney and cornice and cornerboard treatment are similar to those of the main block. A door in the gable leads to the attic of the ell, but there is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

no evidence of an exterior staircase. The ell may originally have been a separate one-room building, extended by the addition of a second room at an as yet unknown date to join the main block of the house. The circular sawn framing of the ell suggests that it post-dates the Greek Revival style overbuilding of the front block. A small flat-roofed addition (ca. 1965) along the west side of the ell replaces a hip-roofed porch. In the room closer to the main block, the east side of the ell contains one six-over-six window and a modern door leading to a concrete deck.

The brick foundation of the entire house, including the pedimented portico and ell addition, is a ca. 1965 replacement. The original foundation probably consisted of stone piers. The house rests quite close to the ground. The roof of both the main block and the ell are covered with asphalt shingles; evidence of original wood shingles survives.

Typical of mid-nineteenth century dwellings in the region, the interior of the house follows a center hall plan with entrances at the front and rear of the hall. Here, there is a dogleg staircase with a long flight rising front to back along the east wall and a short, three-step upper flight. The second-floor plan corresponds to that of the first, but with a window at each end of the hall. The ell is two rooms deep and contains a dining room and a kitchen.

Interior finish is simple with plain but characteristically Greek Revival detail throughout. In the two-story block, walls are flush-sheathed in wide, random-width horizontal boards and the ceilings are covered in similar boards, except for the first-floor west room which originally was plastered and now is sheetrocked. The south room of the ell has horizontal board walls and a board and batten ceiling, while the north room (the kitchen) has been remodelled with wallpapered sheetrock. Doors are typical of the Greek Revival style, with two long vertical panels. Polychrome wood graining is intact on the second-floor doors and on the back side of the door opening into the first-floor west room. All of the other doors on the first floor may originally have been grained, but are now heavily varnished. Original hardware has been retained throughout. All mantelpieces are of simple post and lintel composition, the pilasters carrying a wide lintel or entablature with a simple flat shelf. In the ell, both mantelpieces have been removed. The kitchen mantelpiece has been replaced with a raised brick hearth while the fireplace in the south room has been covered with a tall, built-in wardrobe that appears to date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The open string stair is adorned with curvilinear brackets, while slender squared balusters and simple turned newel posts support a rounded rail. The terminus of the rail above the first floor newel post is missing.

Window and door surrounds occur in several forms. The center hall and the first-floor west room have symmetrically molded surrounds with a wide concave central channel and plain corner blocks. In the first-floor east room, surrounds are grooved to give the impression of fluting and have plain corner blocks. On the second floor they are three-part with applied moldings and mitred corners, similar to the exterior window surrounds. The south room of the ell has plain surrounds. Baseboards throughout are fairly simple except for those in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 3

downstairs west room which are taller and three-part. Replacement strip flooring appears in the first-floor east room; elsewhere the original random-width flooring remains intact.

Overall, the Dr. Joseph A. McLean House retains a high degree of integrity. The primary alterations to the exterior occurred at the entrance portico where an inner column was removed at each corner and the architrave was simplified. Despite these changes, however, the basic historic character of this important feature endures. Elsewhere, noticeable exterior changes are confined to the rear ell where the gable-end window was replaced, a modern door added to the east side, and the west side porch enclosed to accommodate a bathroom. The dwelling is particularly noteworthy due to the preservation of its interior finish as well as its plan. With the exception of the modernization of the north ell room as a kitchen around 1965, the interior is remarkably unaltered.

Three outbuildings are situated in the rear yard. The oldest building, of indeterminate age but apparently no later than the main house (and thus considered contributing for the purposes of this nomination) is a single-pen V-notched log house with a second story loft. The stone chimney on the west end has a brick stack and firebox. A rather makeshift shed-roofed porch without a deck is supported by five slender peeled and trimmed tree trunks. The interior is crudely finished with a large open hearth and an enclosed corner stair next to the fireplace leading to the loft. The gable roof is now covered in metal and there are dilapidated weatherboarded shed additions on the east and north sides.

An early twentieth-century wellhouse and garage comprise the two noncontributing buildings. Just to the west of the ell of the main house, the small one-story weatherboarded frame wellhouse sheltering the pump has a gabled roof that extends over a stone well as a canopy supported by two posts fashioned from tree trunks. A weatherboarded garage with sliding doors and a shallow gable roof with exposed rafter ends is to the west and north of the house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetDr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Dr. Joseph A. McLean House, on US 70 near Sedalia in Guilford County, is a vernacular Greek Revival style two-story, one-room-deep frame building with a one-story rear ell and exterior gable-end chimneys. The most distinctive exterior features of the house is the pedimented entrance porch which recalls the ca. 1840 Dr. Shubal Coffin House in Jamestown, the most robust example of the Greek Revival style in Guilford County. The interior of the McLean House features a two-run staircase in a center hall, grained two-panel doors, and modest Greek Revival trim throughout. Joseph A McLean (1819-1896), a locally prominent physician for whose family nearby McLeansville was named, had the house built about the time of his marriage to Elizabeth F. Wharton in 1850. The house is a complete overbuilding of a log hall and parlor dwelling probably built by the Wharton family. Family tradition holds that Dr. McLean maintained his medical office at his home, where he also successfully cultivated his surrounding farm. The Dr. Joseph A. McLean House is locally significant in the area of architecture under Criterion C as one of a small group of well-preserved vernacular Greek Revival style houses in rural Guilford County, and the only one that is an I-House. Today the property remains in the possession of the McLeans' great-grandson, who is intent upon preserving the family homeplace. The house currently is rented to a contractor who is in the process of restoring the interior.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Joseph A. McLean (1819-1896) was a descendant of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who emigrated to Pennsylvania during the first half of the eighteenth century. In the 1750s or early 1760s, his grandfather, John McLean, Jr. (1724-1807), came to what later became eastern Guilford County and built a log and stone house there ca. 1767, portions of which survive, reconstructed, in the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem. The house stood on property which is now part of the old Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia, approximately .35 mile east of the Dr. Joseph A. McLean House. Joseph McLean's parents were Marshall McLean (1769-1834) and his second wife, Hannah Greer, who were married in 1809. Born and reared in the old log house, Joseph was one of nine children of this union. (Five children were born to McLean and his first wife, Mary Thom.) Marshall McLean was a farmer and a member of Alamance Presbyterian Church.¹ The local prominence of the McLean family is indicated by the naming of nearby McLeansville for them.

¹See the McLean Family Records in the possession of the Greensboro Public Library, Greensboro, hereinafter cited as McLean Family Records; an obituary dated 10 August 1896, newspaper unknown, in the McLean Family Scrapbook, also in the possession of the Greensboro Public Library, Greensboro, hereinafter cited as Dr. Joseph A. McLean obituary; also *Greensboro Daily News*, 30 October 1932; see also *Greensboro Record*, 18 December 1936, p. 1; also Second Census, 1800; Third Census, 1810; and Fourth Census, 1820. The Palmer Memorial Institute is listed in H. McKeldon Smith, ed., *Architectural Resources: An Inventory of Historic Architecture* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1979), P. 102, hereinafter cited as *Architectural Resources*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetDr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 2

Joseph McLean was educated at the Caldwell Institute in Greensboro and later attended the University of North Carolina. After leaving school about 1842, he became the teacher for the sons of Edwin M. Holt and Col. Carrigan, partners in the Alamance Cotton Factory. McLean later taught at an academy in Washington, North Carolina, under the principalship of a Mr. Bogart. Returning to Greensboro, McLean "began the study of medicine" under Dr. D. C. Mebane, along with fellow students Algernon Porter, "Dag" Graves, and Nereus Mendenhall. He returned to Greensboro to teach mathematics at the newly established academy known as Greensboro High School, then under the principalship of the Rev. Eli Caruthers and occupying the building formerly used by the Caldwell Institute, which had moved to Hillsborough.²

Later Joseph McLean attended the Medical College of South Carolina in Charleston, from which he was graduated in 1848. He then practiced medicine in Greensboro for a year or more.³ In May of 1850 Dr. McLean married Elizabeth F. Wharton (1827-1904), daughter of David Wharton (1803-1902), a prominent farmer and businessman, and Elizabeth Donnell, also from a well-known Guilford County family.

It was on Wharton's property that McLean built his house, probably in or shortly after the year of his marriage.⁴ The house was the result of a complete overbuilding of an earlier hall and parlor log house, presumably built by the Wharton family in the 1830s. (Some time after the overbuilding, the rear ell was added.) Here, McLean and his wife raised their family of five sons and two daughters. McLean also was a successful farmer, cultivating the surrounding land that was among the several hundred acres he owned in Guilford County.⁵

Dr. McLean was one of the three earliest doctors to serve his community and the nearby town of Gibsonville.⁶ He based his medical practice at his home, probably in one of

²Dr. Joseph A. McLean obituary; Charles Lee Raper, *The Church and Private Schools of North Carolina, A Historical Study* (Greensboro: Jos. J. Stone Co., 1898), pp. 106-107. The "Greensboro High School" occupied the building vacated by the Caldwell Institute. It is not known how long this school continued. See also Joseph A. McLean (II), M.D., "A History Pertaining to My Family from 1690-1971 Essentially," typewritten, dated May 1971, hereinafter cited as J. A. McLean (II), M.D., "A History;" and McLean Family Records. Copies in survey file, Survey and Planning Branch, NC Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

³Dr. Joseph A. McLean obituary; McLean Family Records; and J. A. McLean (II), M.D., "A History."

⁴Guilford County Marriage Bonds, 1938 compilation, p. 286; and Rev. S. M. Rankin, *The Rankin and Wharton Families and Their Genealogy* (Greensboro: Jos. J. Stone & Co., n.d.), pp. 218, 221; also Sallie W. Stockard, *History of Guilford County* (Knoxville: Gaut-Ogden Co., 1902), pp. 190-191; see Guilford County Will Book G, p. 309 (David Wharton); and Seventh Census, 1850; Eighth Census, 1860. The 1860 census lists David Wharton's real estate value at \$34,000.

⁵*Architectural Resources*, p.101.

⁶Melvin O. Wyrick, *History of the Town of Gibsonville, N.C., 100th Anniversary 1871-1971*, 1971, p. 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 3

the first floor rooms. Family tradition contends that the itinerant doctor mixed his remedies in a mortar and pestle on a table in the hall of the house.⁷

According to a published obituary for Dr. McLean, he "always took an interest in public affairs in church and State." He was a Ruling Elder in the nearby Bethel Presbyterian Church for more than forty years and served as the clerk of session. In 1866 to 1868 he was on the committee to erect the present church building. He often represented the church in the Presbytery and in the Synod, and once represented the Presbytery of Orange in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.⁸ Of Dr. McLean's service in the North Carolina House of Representatives during the session of 1879-1880, it was said that he "was in no sense an orator but frequently took part in the debates, was well informed, expressing his opinions briefly and clearly, and . . . always commanding the respectful attention of the House." He also served for several years as a Justice of the Peace, "being elected first by the Legislature under the old law and after the war by Jefferson Township."⁹

In 1882 Dr. Joseph A. McLean was again nominated to run for a seat in the North Carolina House of Representatives but was defeated "together with the entire Democratic ticket in the county." He was later solicited to become a candidate again, but declined. Continuing his medical practice until late in life, McLean died in July 1896. He is buried at Bethel Presbyterian Church along with other members of his family.¹⁰

After his death, Dr. McLean's wife Elizabeth and his two daughters, Cora L. and Julia W. McLean, both unmarried, continued to reside in the old homeplace, which had been willed to Elizabeth by her father, David Wharton.¹¹ Elizabeth McLean deeded the house and farm to

⁷Interview with Cindy (Mrs. John Marshall) McLean, 2 February 1983 (hereinafter cited as McLean Interview). Although the North Carolina Medical Society and the Guilford Medical Society had been organized by 1802, it has not been determined whether Dr. McLean was associated with either of the organizations. By 1860 there were 1,266 physicians practicing in North Carolina, increasing from 273 in 1823. Guion G. Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1937), pp. 747, 758-759.

⁸McLean served as an elder of the church from 1853 to 1896. "Brief History of Bethel Presbyterian Church," in Guilford County file: Churches--Presbyterian, Greensboro Public Library, Greensboro, NC; and Jerry S. Nix, *One Hundred, Sixty Years History of Bethel Presbyterian Church 1812-1972*, 1972, p. 9. The Bethel Presbyterian Church is listed in *Architectural Resources*, p. 92.

⁹Dr. Joseph A. McLean obituary. There is also an unsubstantiated tradition that Dr. McLean was his community's postmaster. He possibly served in this capacity between 6 December 1866, when the local post office was discontinued, and 17 April 1868, when the post office was reestablished with David P. Foust as postmaster. McLean interview; and National Archives and Records Administration, letter to Cindy McLean dated 11 May 1994.

¹⁰Dr. Joseph A. McLean obituary. McLean apparently died intestate.

¹¹"I give and devise and bequeath unto my daughter, Elizabeth F. McLean, wife of Dr. J. A. McLean two tracts of land now in their occupation and possession, the one on which they now live, containing about 28 acres, and the other the place I bought of Dr. McDaniel . . . Guilford County Will Book G, p. 309.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetDr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 4

Cora and Julia in July 1897.¹² Mrs. McLean died in 1904. Cora willed her interest in the property to her brother John C. McLean (1860-1952) upon her death in 1918.¹³ He in turn willed it to his daughter Ethel McLean Price of McDonalds, North Carolina, who in turn deeded it to her brother Dr. Joseph A. McLean (1898-1972), a physician in Ayer, Massachusetts, in 1968.¹⁴

Dr. McLean moved back to North Carolina upon his retirement in the mid 1960s, to the house in which he had grown up. A modern kitchen and bathroom were installed at this time (ca. 1965). His widow, Caroline P. McLean, deeded the property to her son, the present owner, Dr. John Marshall McLean of Peoria, Illinois, in 1977.¹⁵ The house is now rented out to a contractor who is restoring it. What remains of the farm property has been under cultivation by tenants and is scheduled for residential development. The present owner wishes for the old homeplace to remain in the family and intends to pass it on to future generations.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT: GREEK REVIVAL STYLE HOUSES IN GUILFORD COUNTY

The Greek Revival style made its appearance in Guilford County in the late 1830s and remained popular for almost thirty years. Unlike Eastern North Carolina, where the lavish wealth of large plantation owners produced robust Greek Revival style houses such as the temple-style Orton Plantation in Brunswick County and the monumental brick Land's End in Perquimans County, the Piedmont's Greek Revival style houses tended to be austere and conservative. All of the Greek Revival houses in Guilford County are traditional two-story, one- or two-room-deep forms with low-pitched gable or hip roofs, six-over-six windows, and, usually, interior or interior-end chimneys. Greek Revival decoration is typically restrained and limited on the exterior to windows and doors.

The most distinctive residential example of the Greek Revival style in Guilford County is the first Shubal Coffin House in Jamestown (NRHD, 1973), which attained its present appearance around 1840 when it was enlarged. Temple-style Doric porches featuring two pairs of squat columns and prominent entablatures at the windows made the otherwise plain building a modern show-piece of its day. In *Architectural Resources*, the publication of the comprehensive survey of rural Guilford County and the towns of High Point, Jamestown, and Gibsonville, McKelden Smith comments, "Despite the attention that was lavished on these details, the house has an ingenuous and charming vernacular flavor that shows even the well-versed builders in the county were not perfectly fluent with the sophisticated subtleties of the style."¹⁶

¹² Guilford County Deed Book 11, p. 629.

¹³ Guilford County Will Book I, p. 315. Julia McLean apparently died intestate.

¹⁴ Guilford County Will Book 2, p. 59; Guilford County Deed Book 2368, p. 563.

¹⁵ Guilford County Deed Book 2863, p. 750.

¹⁶ *Architectural Resources*, p. 17.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 5

Other imposing residential examples of the Greek Revival style in the county are the Bumpas Troy House of ca. 1847 and the mid-nineteenth-century Sherwood House. Both are two-story brick dwellings that are among the very small number of surviving antebellum buildings in the county seat of Greensboro.

Smith notes that "Not everyone . . . who built Greek Revival houses took to the style with the enthusiasm, boldness, and relative proficiency of Shubal Coffin's unknown builder."¹⁷ Of the approximately twenty Greek Revival style houses surviving in Guilford County, all but four are frame structures and the great majority are rather modest in scale and detailing. Outside of the towns, the greatest concentration occurs in the western part of the county, which was the center of Guilford's intellectual life that was rooted in the Quaker community. Here, all but one of the ten remaining Greek Revival style houses are of frame construction and most have very simple period detailing. The impressive mid-nineteenth-century frame Elihu Mendenhall House near High Point and the frame house built about 1858 by Jesse Benbow House (NR 1983) near Oak Ridge have double-pile plans, interior chimneys, and notable decorative interior painting, while the others are more modest gable-roofed I-Houses with exterior end chimneys. Only the Benbow House is virtually intact; the rest have porches that were altered or replaced in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and of these, three houses have additional extensive alterations.

In rural eastern Guilford County, only six dwellings, including the ca. 1850 Dr. Joseph A. McLean House, may be described as Greek Revival. The most imposing example of the style is the mid-nineteenth-century Parker-Troxler House near Browns Summit, a double-pile brick structure better termed transitional Greek Revival-Italianate due to its bracketed cornice. As in the western part of the county, most of the Greek Revival style dwellings are simply-detailed frame I-Houses with exterior end chimneys. Of these, only the McLean House remains relatively intact and is especially notable for its original front porch as none of the others retains Greek Revival style porch elements.

In addition to construction and overall form and proportions, distinct parallels may be drawn between the McLean House and Guilford County's other noteworthy frame Greek Revival houses in terms of both stylistic elements and integrity. The McLean and Shubal Coffin houses bear the strongest similarities to each other due to their temple-style entrance porches, while the McLean House recalls the Jesse Benbow House in its restrained interior finish and decorative graining. All three houses are rare and important for their high degree of preservation; in fact, these are the only three Greek Revival style houses in the county to retain their original front porches.

Interesting parallels among these and other frame Greek Revival style houses in the county extend to the circumstances of their construction. For example, the McLean House, Coffin House, and Nereus Mendenhall House, an I-House with Greek Revival detail near High Point,

¹⁷*Ibid.*

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 6

were built near railroad lines for professional men. Joseph A. McLean, Shubal Coffin, and Nereus Mendenhall all were physicians, and Mendenhall's career also embraced engineering (as a surveyor of the North Carolina Railroad) and, like Jesse Benbow's, education. (In fact, McLean and Mendenhall had studied medicine together.) As well-educated men they were attuned to artistic trends and had the wherewithal to take advantage of popular mainstream architectural designs and materials afforded by their close proximity to the railroad.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Brief History of Bethel Presbyterian Church." Typescript in Greensboro Public Library, Greensboro, NC.

Greensboro Daily News, 30 October 1932.

Greensboro Record, 18 December 1936.

Guilford County Records. Guilford County Courthouse. Greensboro, NC. (Subgroups: Deeds, Estates, Marriage Bonds, Wills).

Johnson, Guion G. *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1937.

McLean Family Records and Scrapbook. Greensboro Public Library, Greensboro, NC.

McLean, Mrs. John Marshall. Interview conducted by Paul Fomberg, 2 February 1983.

McLean, Joseph A. (II), M.D. "A History Pertaining to My Family from 1690-1971 Essentially," May 1971. Copy in Survey & Planning Branch files, State Historic Preservation Office, N.C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

Nix, Jerry S. *One Hundred, Sixty Years History of Bethel Presbyterian Church 1812-1972*, 1972.

Rankin, Rev. S. M. *The Rankin and Wharton Families and Their Genealogy*. Greensboro: Jos. J. Stone & Co., n.d.

Raper, Charles Lee. *The Church and Private Schools of North Carolina, A Historical Study*. Greensboro: Jos. J. Stone & Co., 1898.

Smith, H. McKeldon, ed. *Architectural Resources: An Inventory of Historic Architecture*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1979.

Stockard, Sallie W. *History of Guilford County*. Knoxville: Gaut-Ogden Co., 1902.

United States Census Records, 1800-1860. North Carolina: Guilford County.

Wyrick, Melvin O. *History of the Town of Gibsonville, N.C., 100th Anniversary 1871-1971*, 1971.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point in the north side of US 70 that is 232 feet north 64 degrees 51' west of the southeast corner of lot 7 in block 241 of Guilford County tax map 18-1175, proceed 285 feet north 26 degrees; thence 250.23 feet north 58 degrees 31' 20" west; thence 285 feet due south; thence along the north side of US 70 to the point of beginning.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries encompass all of the property historically and currently defined as the Dr. Joseph A. McLean House lot.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House
Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number _____ photographs _____ Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information applies to all photographs:

Dr. Joseph A. McLean House, Guilford County, NC
Michael T. Southern, photographer, 6/92
Negative on file at North Carolina Division of Archives and
History, Raleigh, NC

- A. west and south facades; to the northeast
- B. main facade; to the northeast
- C. rear and west elevations; to the south
- D. rear and east elevations; to the southwest
- E. first floor center hall; toward main entrance
- F. southwest room, first floor; to the west
- G. door to southwest room, second floor
- H. southwest room, second floor; to the west
- I. wellhouse (foreground) and log house, to the northeast
- J. log house, to the east



860000
FEET

3996

3995

3994

5'

3993

3992

3991

3990

Dr. Joseph A. McLean
House
Sedalia vicinity,
Guilford Co., N.C.
McLeansville Quad
N/17/3992460
E/17/623220

WHITSETT 4.3 MI.
BURLINGTON 12 MI.

WHITSETT 3.8 MI.
GRAHAM 12.7 MI.

