United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form  

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections  

1. Name  

historic McLeod Family Rural Complex  

and or common  

2. Location  

street & number  
Approximately 1.5 mi. down a dirt lane whose entrance is .4 mi. west of US 1, at the junction with SR 1102  

city, town  
Pine Bluff  

state  
North Carolina  

3. Classification  

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4. Owner of Property  

name  
Mr. Watson B. Thomas et al  

street & number  
115 Village Court  

city, town  
Greer,  

5. Location of Legal Description  

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.  
Moore County Courthouse, Register of Deeds  

street & number  

state  
North Carolina  

6. Representation in Existing Surveys  

title  
n/a  

has this property been determined eligible?  

yes  

no  

date  

federal  

state  

county  

local  

depository for survey records  

state
Two McLeod Houses, seats of the family farm since the mid-19th century, a collection of outbuildings, and the lands which have remained in McLeod ownership since the early 1800s, compose the McLeod Family Complex. This complete rural district depicts the evolution of agricultural practice and domestic architecture in 19th century, rural Moore County, as well as the succession of one family on the land. The two houses and surrounding outbuildings are the focus of the district and are unified visually by the historic vista over family farmland lying between them.

Standing on a dirt lane which winds through woods and fields, the John McLeod House is a largely intact, one-and-a-half story, frame dogtrot plan house. Its antebellum construction and the survival of the open breezeway completely intact, a perhaps unique example in the sandhills area, make this dwelling an important element of the historic building fabric of Moore County.

The simple, three bay house is clad in plain weatherboard. Sheet metal covers its gable roof. Originally, the structure had flush eaves and a box cornice. At some point the roof was raised and the eaves along the front and rear (east and west) elevations were extended. The original, hand-hewn rafters remain in place beneath the newer, sawn roof frame. On each gable end of the house are exterior, single shoulder brick chimneys, the one on the north elevation being stepped, and both are laid in common bond. The stepped chimney is flanked by a pair of six over six windows. The opposite chimney is flanked on its south elevation by an exterior, five-panel door and a 20th century porch addition. The entire structure rests on brick piers.

All remaining sash are six over six except for one small, six pane window in the front (east) elevation, and all are framed with simple surrounds. Projecting, curved sills are found on windows within the breezeway. Two, six raised-panel doors survive, all others are newer replacements. Original door surrounds in the breezeway have simple Federal outer moldings, as do some doorways in interior rooms.

Evidence of a porch railing remains on both the front and rear elevations, and a ca. 1900 photograph of the house shows the simple rail in place. One porch post survives on the front elevation.

When built, the configuration of the breezeway and six (original) rooms was symmetrical, forming an "I" shape, with the top and bottom of the "I" forming porches flanked by small shed rooms. The stem of the "I", in the exact center of the house, was flanked by two large rooms, each with a fireplace. The small shed room on the southwest corner of the house was larger than the other three shed rooms, its north elevation flush with the large central room on the same side. It is the only one of the six original rooms which does not open onto the breezeway. Rather, it has access to the large room it flanks and access to the outside through a door on the south elevation of the house.

Portions of the interior plan are currently inaccessible and obscured by hay which is stored in the house. However, all interior rooms appear to be flush horizontal sheathed. Simple chair rails survive in the middle room of the south side of the house and in the two shed rooms on the opposite side. The only original mantel still visible because of
the hay is found in the middle room on the south side of the house. It is very simple, consisting only of plain pilasters supporting a frieze with three flat panels and a plain board shelf.

During the early 1900s, two minor alterations were made to the house. A portion of the front (east) elevation porch was enclosed to create an additional small room, which is very simply finished. Also probably at this time, a small kitchen/porch addition was made to the southeast corner of the front elevation. This addition is sheathed in board and batten and has a vertical panel door. A concrete stoop is covered by a shingle-clad gabled portico. The kitchen retains its very simple fireplace. The room is accessible to the breezeway only through the shed room on the same side of the house.

A documentary photograph dated ca. 1900 indicates that the house was enclosed by a picket fence, now gone. The house is overgrown, though cedar trees, crete myrtle, old roses, hollies, and privet remain as evidence of former landscaping. The house is abandoned except for use as agricultural storage. Only three outbuildings remain in the vicinity of the house. Two metal-clad tobacco barns stand along the drive to the structure and a dilapidated, frame farm building (possibly a tenant house) stands at the end of the drive.

Nearly a mile away, across McLeod family farm and woodlands, Alex McLeod, John's son, built his house in 1884, testament to the next generation of McLeods to live on and work the land. The two-story, traditional frame farmhouse is virtually unaltered, retaining the form and appearance typical of late-19th century domestic construction.

The five-bay east (front) elevation of the house is sheltered by a full facade, shed roof porch. Delicate sawnwork brackets, chamfered posts, and a cutwork balustrade beneath a molded handrail decorate the porch, as does the scalloped edging along the eaves. This scalloping is repeated on the eaves all around the house. Centered in this facade is an unusually wide front door, framed by a molded surround with eight narrow sidelights above raised panels. A five-part transom tops the door, with the three middle panes being broader than those on the ends. The door itself is composed of three elongated, vertical raised panels above three shorter ones, separated by a wide stile. Double screen doors open in front of this door. All window openings have four over four sash windows with simple molded surrounds. Many retain their original louvered blinds.

On the north gable end, which is devoid of fenestration, is an exterior, single shoulder brick chimney with a stepped base. An interior chimney pierces the metal-clad roof where the main house joins the rear ell, and another interior chimney appears at the west gable end of the rear ell, serving the kitchen. This four-bay ell features a full-length porch which repeats the decorative elements on the porch on the front facade, and shelters adjacent four-panel doors which open into the original dining(?) room and kitchen. The porch roof is curved to create a tunnel effect.
small shed addition occupies the west gable end of the rear ell, with a door on its east elevation.

The south elevation of the house is six bays in length. A small, secondary porch on this side has been enclosed to house a bathroom.

The remarkably intact and consistently finished interior of the house follows a center hall plan, one room deep. The wide hall is finished with plaster walls, sheathed ceiling, a plain baseboard, and narrow, hardwood floors which appear to be replacements. The pendant door at the west end of the hall is similar in size and form to the door at the front entrance. The north room on the front, originally the parlor, is entered through a painted four-panel door which retains its original hardware. The rich brown, gray, and black paint scheme on this door, and the one opposite it across the hall, may be original. A low chair rail, slightly molded baseboard, and sheathed ceiling finish this room. These same elements appear throughout the house. The mantel, with its narrow, molded shelf supported by thick curved brackets, a dentil course along the frieze, and applied diamond-shaped designs on the pilasters and frieze, is the most elaborate in the house. It retains faint traces of what may be original paint, in colors of turquoise, red, and brown. All other mantels in the house are of the same basic form and character, varying only in their vernacular decorative elements.

The room directly across the hall is finished in similar fashion, except that the mantel on the projecting fireplace carries a simple diamond motif, with applied decorations flanking the opening and centered in the frieze with a raised star atop the central diamond shape.

The two rooms of the rear ell, probably the original dining room and kitchen, have been altered with modern paneling and acoustical tile ceilings. Four-panel doors which open onto the porch retain their three-part transoms and hardware. Simple mantels remain intact as well.

An enclosed, straight stair connects the first and second floors. Access is gained through a door in the east wall of the dining room. The stair rises in an easterly direction in the northwest corner of the front (south) room. The center hall, single pile plan of the first floor is repeated on the second floor, except that roughly half of the hall has been enclosed to create a small room adjacent to the top of the stairs. The rooms on the second floor are finished consistent with the downstairs, with simple mantels, painted four-panel doors in schemes of yellow and blue on one door and pink and blue on the other, and wide original board floors.

An unpainted, lichen-covered picket fence, which appears in a ca. 1900 photograph of the house, is a significant element in the landscape of the house and grounds. It encloses the immediate house grounds, which are planted with hollies, crepe myrtle, magnolia, and various flowering shrubs. Rock borders delineate walkways and beds.

Completing the domestic and agricultural landscape are the log and frame outbuildings, dating from the 19th and 20th centuries, which are clustered mainly to the north and west of the house. Immediately adjacent to the house, at the southwest corner, are
frame root cellar and smokehouse. Both appear to date from the late 19th century. On the north side of the house is the saddle-notched log house which was the family's first home. The interior of this much deteriorated structure has been removed over the years. Behind the log house, to the north, stands a large frame barn with an attached, gable-end addition and a shed along the south side. The barn is sheathed in weatherboard and has a tin roof. There are openings into stables underneath the shed addition. The barn is deteriorated. A frame, gable roof crib stands beside the barn. It is covered in flush board sheathing. Gable and shed-roofed chicken houses, of frame construction, stand to the north and west of the house as well. An open, wood shingle-roof shed stands west of the log house and a crude wood shed is set at the northwest corner of the fenced yard. Farther north of the house, along the drive, are a frame fertilizer house and pack house.

It is the entire ensemble of all these elements in the landscape - the traditional house in its fenced yard among trees and foliage and rock-lined walks, surrounded by outbuildings, and its command of surrounding family lands - which give the property a strong sense of place, tradition, and belonging and, thus, physical and visual significance.
Inventory List

Key:  P - Pivotal  
      C - Contributing  
      NC - Non-contributing

1. Farm building (tenant house?) - early 20th century - NC
2. Tobacco barn - early to mid-20th century? - C
3. Tobacco barn - early to mid-20th century - C
4. John McLeod House - ca. 1840 - P
5. Packhouse - late 19th or early 20th century - C
6. Fertilizer house - late 19th or early 20th century - C
7. Barn with stables - late 19th century - C
8. Crib - late 19th century - C
9. Saddle-notched log house - ca. 1865 - C
10. Pump House - mid-late 20th century - NC
11. Chickenhouse - early-mid-20th century - C
12. Open shed - early to mid-20th century - C
13. Alex McLeod House - 1884 - P
14. Root cellar - late 19th century - C
15. Smokehouse - late 19th century - C
8. Significance

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Specific dates: ca. 1840, 1884

The two McLeod Houses, their attendant outbuildings, and the lands to which they have historically been tied form a complete, unique rural complex which is significant as the remaining physical evidence of the social and economic progression of an immigrant Highland Scot family in the North Carolina sandhills region. The John and Alex McLeod Houses are significant as part of the succession of the family on the land, but they are primarily significant because of their architectural and visual qualities. The elder of the two houses was built ca. 1840 for John McLeod, a first generation Highland Scot immigrant and progenitor of a large McLeod family. The house, largely intact, has an atypical dogtrot configuration, fully intact, and is a rare survival of the antebellum period in Moore County. The property derives an additional measure of significance as the documented site of an overnight camp on March 8, 1865 by General Kilpatrick's Union troops, sweeping through the state during the last days of the Civil War. Nearly a mile away, across the family farm and woodlands, stands the house built in 1884 for Alex McLeod, John's son. This handsome, typical late 19th century farmhouse has acquired a very strong sense of place, standing as it does among large trees and natural plantings and serving as the focus of acres of cultivated fields and woodlands which surround it. A full array of log and frame outbuildings, including the family's original log house, remain on the grounds as important parts of the overall landscape, contributing significantly to the traditional agricultural character of the rural complex.

Criteria Assessment

A. The McLeod Complex is associated with the immigration of Highland Scots, major settlers of the sandhills region of North Carolina, beginning in the mid-18th century. The complex is typical of the agricultural patterns established by Highland Scots in the area, that of small family farms.

C. The John McLeod House has an atypical form and is a rare survival of the antebellum period in Moore County. It is believed at this time to be the only example, in the sandhills area, of the dogtrot form with its open breezeway completely intact. The Alex McLeod House, exhibiting a two-story form, porch detailing, and simple vernacular interior finish, is more typical of architectural styles popular in the late 19th century. 19th and 20th century outbuildings, both log and frame, surround the Alex McLeod House and reflect domestic and agricultural uses. They are integral parts of the overall landscape and contribute significantly to its sense of place.

D. The sites may be likely to yield information important in history.
The John McLeod and Alex McLeod farmsteads are located about one mile apart off US 1 north of Drowning Creek in the southernmost part of Moore County. The nearest communities are Pinebluff and Addor (formerly Keyser). Both villages were established in the late nineteenth century as part of a development boom that also included nearby Pinehurst. Yet the McLeod Houses, built around 1836 and 1884, belong to an earlier time, one of small farms operated chiefly by Highland Scots and their descendants.

Moore County was formed from Cumberland County in 1784. Some forty years earlier Highland Scots had begun to settle along the Cape Fear River and its tributaries. Initial settlement of the area was slow. The first set of land grants for the Drowning Creek area were not patented until the decade between 1765 and 1775. The McLeods were typical of the Highland Scots who came to the Cape Fear region although they were not part of the initial influx.

John McLeod (12 February 1801-25 January 1864), born in Scotland on the Isle of Skye, came to America as an infant. He and his mother Effie joined his father Murdoch who had preceded them by a few months. The elder McLeod had settled on Field Branch off Rockfish Creek, a section of Cumberland County which is now part of Fort Bragg Military Reservation. Murdoch McLeod (1769?-1843) remained on that tract until his death whereupon it passed to Effie and to his two daughters. He left his son John forty dollars, the value of a horse he had sold him but for which he had not yet received payment.

By the time of his father's death the younger McLeod had long since begun a life for himself some miles west in Moore County. Court records for 1830 show that he served as a juror and was among hands appointed to tend local roads. On November 18, 1831, he married Flora Johnson. They settled on a fifty-acre tract on Drowning Creek, land for which McLeod received a land grant in 1834. To this McLeod eventually added several adjacent tracts. He received land grants in 1845 for 100 acres and in 1851 for seventy-five and 640 acres.

John and Flora McLeod built their first house, a small cabin, next to a spring. Architectural evidence indicates their second house was built around 1840. Family tradition has it that an ancestor was born in the second house in 1838 (likewise with several siblings before him). The McLeods' first child, a son William, was born in September 1832. Six more sons and then six daughters followed, the last being born in 1854. Eleven children lived in the house in 1850. In time several built their own houses nearby. By 1860 nine children lived at home.

By occupation John McLeod was a farmer and a hatter, the latter being a profession also followed by his brother Daniel. Though he had by 1860 acquired an estate of 2,750 acres he farmed only 150 of that, growing mostly corn, wheat, and oats. McLeod kept a fairly small livestock herd. He owned only two slaves, both of them adult females, probably domestic servants. Presumably the labor of McLeod's grown sons was sufficient to operate the farm. At least five of McLeod's sons, Duncan, John, Alexander, Evander, and Samuel, served in the Confederate army during the Civil War.

John McLeod, who died in early 1864, is buried in an unmarked grave at Bethesda Presbyterian Church near his home in southeast Moore County. With the head of the household dead and the sons either living away from home or away fighting, the widow McLeod and her five daughters, age fourteen to twenty-two, spent the last months of the war alone. During the war's closing days several Union companies led by General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick swept through the area. Some of the soldiers spent the night of March
8, 1865, encamped on the McLeod place. By prior arrangement between Flora McLeod and the officers armed sentries were appointed to protect her and her daughters.11

The John McLeod House remained in the hands of his widow and several of his children from the close of the Civil War to the beginning of the New Deal. In 1870 Flora McLeod tended an estate of 1450 acres, 100 of those cultivated. Five children and a fifteen-year-old black male lived in the house. Ten years later the same members of the family lived at home. However, by 1880 they planted only forty-eight acres in corn, rye, and cotton. The McLeods kept small mixed herds of livestock.12 Flora McLeod, aged seventy-five, died in 1883, leaving her real and personal property to three of her children.13

The three, Evander (1839–1917), Effie (1850–1893), and Flora (1848–1932) lived out their days at the home place. All remained unmarried. Up until his death at age ninety-three in 1903, John McLeod's brother "Hatter" Daniel also lived in the house.14 Evander McLeod continued to farm the arable land. In 1910 he and his sister sold the timber rights to 237 acres.15 Since Flora outlived all her siblings the place in time became known locally as "Aunt Flora's House." She and Evander are buried in the Bethesda Cemetery along with other family members.16

Flora McLeod's nephew, Dr. Alexander Hardin McLeod, bought the house from his aunt prior to her death, giving her lifetime rights to the place. Few changes have been made to the house over the years. A portion of the porch was enclosed while Flora McLeod lived there. The house was wired for electricity around 1957 so that it might be used as a tenant house. However, there is no running water, only an outside pump. The present owner is Watson Benjamin Thomas, a descendant of the family, who acquired it from the estate of Dr. McLeod in 1948.17

Alexander McLeod (17 April 1838–31 August 1905) was the fifth child of John and Flora McLeod. In 1860 he lived with his brother Daniel and worked as a turpentine distiller.18 After a period of service to the Confederacy he married Margaret Warner on February 28, 1864. They had seven children, five sons and two daughters, born between 1864 and 1878. His first house, a log structure probably built at the time of his marriage, was long used as a barn and is now an outbuilding on the property.19 The present-day Alexander McLeod House, located about a mile from the John McLeod House, is believed to have been built in 1884. Family tradition holds that Alex McLeod commissioned Belgian architect Joseph Rosy to build the house.

Although Alexander McLeod operated a sawmill and kept an interest in naval stores production he also kept active as a farmer. His plantings were small, with only eight of 250 acres cultivated in 1870 and seventeen acres in 1880. Almost all of that was set in corn to feed his stock.20 McLeod died in 1905, leaving his house, land, sawmill, turpentine distillery, and other property to his wife Margaret, daughter Mattie, and sons Alexander and Robert. At that time McLeod had a fire insurance policy of $1,000 on the house, $250 on his furniture, and $250 on a warehouse.21 He was buried with other family members in Bethesda Cemetery.
In 1910 Margaret McLeod and her daughter Mattie lived in the house. A hired man who lived on the property took care of the farm. Mattie McLeod lived there until her death in 1965 at age eighty-five. Today her grandnephews own the house.*

Thus, the John McLeod House has been in the family for almost 150 years. The Alex McLeod House has been owned by family members for 100 years. Both are material remnants of a Highland Scot heritage shared by many in Moore County and the surrounding area. Both are also the major elements in a rural complex which illustrates continued domestic and agricultural activity since the early 19th century. Both the uses of the land and the landscape remain virtually unchanged, preserving intact the character, heritage, and landscape of a significant rural enclave in Moore County.

*Mrs. Margaret Rice Wester, mother of the Thomas children who currently own the house, was granted lifetime ownership of the Alex McLeod House.
Keyser, incorporated in 1881, was a railroad stop with a few stores, a boarding house, and saloons. The town's name was changed to Addor in 1918 due to its similarity to "Kaiser." Manly Wade Wellman, The County of Moore, 1847-1947: A North Carolina Region's Second Hundred Years (Southern Pines: Moore County Historical Association, 1962), 87, 104; William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 4, 382.


In time the McLeods became one of the area's largest families thereby causing confusion for historians and genealogists. One Moore County writer has observed, "The McLeods, in common with other Highland families, are extremely difficult to identify." Rassie Wicker, Miscellaneous Ancient Records of Moore County, North Carolina ([Aberdeen?): Moore County Historical Association, 1971), 328.


Moore County Court Minutes, May Term 1830, and Cumberland County Marriage Bonds, North Carolina State Archives.

Land Grant Office, Office of the Secretary of State, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Information from Watson Benjamin Thomas, present owner of the John McLeod House (see files of Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina).


Eighth Census, 1860, Agricultural and Slave Schedules.


John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 303; letter from Barrett to Alexander C. McLeod, 16 October 1963 (copy in the files of the Survey and Planning Branch). Barrett surmised from the written record and from the family tradition conveyed to him by McLeod that the incident took place. However the official record confirms only that Union soldiers were in the area. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the

12 Ninth and Tenth Censuses, 1870 and 1880, Population and Agricultural Schedules.

13 Moore County Will Book D, p. 168.

14 Twelfth and Thirteenth Censuses, 1900 and 1910; Moore County Will Book D, p. 401, and Will Book C, p. 168 (wills of Effie and Evander McLeod).


17 Information provided by Watson Benjamin Thomas.

18 Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedule.


21 Moore County Will Book E, p. 391.

22 Nineteenth Census, 1910, Population Schedule.


. Historical and genealogical information in the files of the Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.


Pilot (Southern Pines), 30 October 1974.


The State, 19 September 1953.

Thomas, Watson Benjamin. Historical and genealogical information in the files of the Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.


Geographical Data: UTM references.

Reference points A & B are on the Pine Bluff Quad map
Reference points C & D are on the Hoffman Quad map

The approximately 225 acres being nominated are part of a larger tract historically associated with the McLeod family. John McLeod began acquiring land along Drowning Creek in 1834; by 1860 he owned 2750 acres. The land has passed down through the McLeod family and remains in family ownership today. The McLeod land was traditionally used for agriculture and naval stores production. The 225 acres include both cleared fields and woodlands, which are consistent with the historic character of the landscape, and reflect the continuum of land uses. Finally, the 225 acres include the historic vista between the houses, establishing a strong visual link between the dwellings already linked by family ties.

The boundaries of the nominated property are shown on the attached plat map marked in green.
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: Approx. 225 acres

Quadrangle name: Pine Bluff and Hoffman

Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheets

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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11. Form Prepared By

Michael Hill, Researcher: Historical Significance

Beth Thomas, Survey Specialist: Architectural Description

N.C. Division of Archives & History

October 31, 1984

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature: [Signature]

State Historic Preservation Officer title: [Title]

October 11, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Chief of Registration
McLeod Family Rural Complex
Moore County
Pine Bluff & Hoffman Quads
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
A 17 637060/17 3882790
B 17 637080/17 3881800
C 17 636120/17 3882700
D 17 636100/17 3881800