

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **MAR 11 1985**

date entered **APR 11 1985**

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

1. Name

historic Major James W. McMullin House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 403 First Avenue East not for publication

city, town Oskaloosa vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Mahaska code 123

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u> </u> district	<u> </u> public	<u> </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture <u> </u> museum
<u>xx</u> building(s)	<u>xx</u> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial <u> </u> park
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational <u>xx</u> private residence
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment <u> </u> religious
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<u>xx</u> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government <u> </u> scientific
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial <u> </u> transportation
	<u> </u> N/A	<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military <u> </u> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mary David Jones

street & number 403 First Avenue East

city, town Oskaloosa vicinity of state Iowa 52577

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Mahaska County Courthouse

city, town Oskaloosa state Iowa 52577

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Area XV Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes xx no

date 1984 federal state xxx county local

depository for survey records Iowa HPO, E. 12th & Grand Ave.

city, town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Major James W. McMullin and his first wife, the former Carrie Munsell, built this house in 1882 for themselves and only child. Original architect's plans for the house remain extant. They are without ascription or date. Mr. Hadley, an Oskaloosa carpenter, was contractor.

This 2 1/2 story, frame house has two primary facades (south and west elevations) unified by a wrap-around porch. The building consists of a main block approximately 18' x 51'. Bay windows on east and west are placed slightly asymmetrically. Main block is also slightly asymmetric. A side porch is at northeast. A small addition on northwest added a bathroom to first floor sometime between 1902-10. Interior has side-hall plan three rooms deep. Scale of the building is large. Each full story has approximately 1,800 square feet.

Foundation is brick laid common bond. There is a bull basement with ash pits for two working chimney stacks.

Structural design is balloon frame with clapboard. Exposed vertical and horizontal framing outlines bays. A wrap-around porch originally had spindlework and two gabled entries. Modifications in the 1950s removed gables and spindlework but left porch basically intact. Side porch remains unaltered. Reed banding surrounds building between first and second floors. Bays feature corner brackets and stained glass windows. Sash are 1/1 throughout (storm windows render appearance 2/2). Gables have paired windows above pent roofs. Three massive chimneys are located southwest, northwest, and north. They feature inset panels and original crowns. Roof system is facade gable with two sets of lower cross gables. Cross gables reflect asymmetry of floor plan. Two hipped roofs tie into system, hipped at facade and hipped with deck at rear. Roof ridge crenellations and finials are non-extant. Roof is steeply pitched.

Level of architectural detail in interior is high. Plasterwork is exuberant employing a wide range of techniques such as stipplework, the plasterer's tube, impressed sculpture, and applique. Cartouches on parlor walls and ceilings are set off by contrasting colors. Similar techniques are employed on hall cartouches and floral motif in dining room.

Interior woodwork is notable. It includes a walnut staircase; three fireplaces with ceramic surround and carved mantelpieces; double, sliding doors between formal rooms with pierced archwork; and an original finish with rich patina. Most wood is walnut but dining room employs pine.

The grounds measure 70' x 128'. A garage built circa 1922 is included in the nomination. The property is located on a corner lot which borders the central business district and a residential neighborhood. Land is level. First Avenue East is 14' wider than standard Oskaloosa streets. The neighborhood is a showplace and probably eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as a residential district.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1880's **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Major James W McMullin House is a good example of vernacular architecture. The exterior employs Queen Anne Stylistic details. The interior is most notable. It features rare, decorative plasterwork on ceilings and walls and also quality millwork. Interior retains a very high degree of architectural integrity and blends vernacular interpretations of Eastlake and French revival styles.

Major McMullin (1827-1910) received his commission from the US Army during the Civil War. He returned to Oskaloosa and established a transport and livery business which prospered with Mahaska County's coal economy during the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century. McMullin intended his new house a showplace for this success and it demonstrates conspicuous consumption as the McMullin family numbered three. Their former residence was on the same lot.

The building gains an important dimension through the survival of original floor plans, elevations, and a sectional drawing. Such documentation is unusual for Nineteenth Century Iowa. The drawings were found following World War II hidden behind an architectural bookcase in the living room.

The drawings raise several points of significance. Firstly, the house was designed for brick bearing-walls. An old newspaper account strongly suggests that McMullin balked at the price gouging Oskaloosa brick dealers practiced in 1882.* A housing shortage and construction of new courthouse had created demand for building materials and inflated prices. Clapboard was no acceptable for show place residences, as Isaac Kalbach (a successful lumber merchant) had demonstrated in the 1882 construction of his home. Major McMullin opted for frame instead of the planned brick. His financial position and the opulence of the interior indicate the decision was voluntary.

Secondly, Mr. Hadley, the contractor, demonstrated skilled craftsmanship altering the plans to balloon frame. He clearly understood the shape of Queen Anne style. Analysis indicates, for example, that the planned roof was hipped deck. Hadley added considerable verticality to the building by employing a steep facade gable as axis for the roof.

The primary architectural significance of the Major McMullin House is its interior. Chief among the ornamentation is the plasterwork. Local tradition relates that a Chicago plasterer came to Oskaloosa for this job. Such ornamentation is exceedingly rare in Oskaloosa for the period.

There is a nice balance of decoration among the rooms. Entry hall and parlor, for example, exhibit best grade millwork and plaster design. Living room has best grade wood with little plaster ornamentation. Dining room has second grade wood with elaborate wainscot and cornice worked in plaster and Eastlake design. Bay windows feature bevel and stained glass.

Comprehensive cultural resource surveys exist for Oskaloosa. They provide limited context, however, as their focus chiefly on exteriors. Concerning methodology, research

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet 9-2

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Oskaloosa Iowa

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	5	3	0	1	0	0	4	5	7	1	3	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 3 and a strip of ground 10' wide off the west side of Lot 4, all in Block 17 Original Plat of Oskaloosa, Iowa. Contains house and garage only.

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

state n/a code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Text: William C. Page, Public Historian
Form: James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa HPO date 13 February 1985

street & number E. 12th & Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

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 Adrian A. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 28 February 1985

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

for Alloway Byers date 4-11-85
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

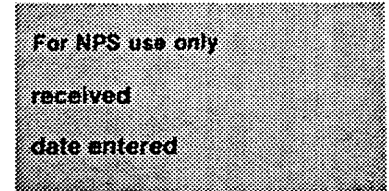
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for this application relied on informant interviews to assess the Major McMullin House's interior in relations to others' in Oskaloosa. Results indicated that few residences of similar scale remain single-family dwellings and that ornamental plasterwork is exceedingly rare for the 1880s.

The Major McMullin House has been in the David family since 1918. The building has received careful maintenance over the years and the present owners are committed to its preservation.

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Continuation sheet Bibliography

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PRIMARY SOURCES:

Abstract of Title; Johnson Abstract Company #61579 Property Mary David Jones; Oskaloosa, IA.

"Pioneer is Summoned/Major J.W. McMullin Answers/Last Role Call" (obituary); (Oskaloosa) Daily Herald; 23 August 1910; p 4 c 5.

"Pioneer is Summoned" (obituary); The Oskaloosa (Weekly) Herald; 25 August 1910; p 5 c 6. Repeats above obituary.

*"THE BOOM--Major McMullin has his plans arranged for a fine ten room house...;" The Weekly (Oskaloosa) Herald; 20 April 1882; p 3 c 4.

Oskaloosa City Directories:

1876-1877	(Peasley's)	
1887	(Springer's)	JWmMcM, pres. O.L.&T.Co.
1898-99	(Colman's)	JWmMcM, retired & Carrie McM
1900-01	(Edgerton's)	JWmMcM & Carrie McM
1902-03	(Colman's)	JWmMcM, retired & Etta I McM
1904-05	(Colman's)	JWmMcM & Etta I McM
1907-08	(Colman's)	JWmMcM, retired, & Etta McM
1914-15	(Colman's)	Mrs Etta McMullin, widow JWmMcM
1919-20	(Snyder's)	David S David & Maguerite B David. Clyde A David (student).
1921-22	(Snyder's)	David S David & Maguerite B David. Clyde David (barber): Virgil David (student)

Fire Insurance Maps

January 1902	Sanborn	First neighborhood FIM. Barn and adjoining shed in NE corner Lot 4.
January 1910	Sanborn	House without dependencies. 1-story addition at NW corner (bathroom)
March 1917	Sanborn	House without dependencies. Lot 4 sold off except west 10'. 407 1st Ave E built.

History of Mahaska County; Union Historical Company; Des Moines; 1878; pp 351, 392, 298, 448, 250, 548-51, 583. Includes lithographic portrait of Major McMullin (p 399).

Andreas, A T; Illustrated Atlast of the State of Iowa; Andreas Atlas Company; Chicago; 1875; p 354. Illustration: "Downing, McMullin & Co. Bashaw Livery Stable, Oskaloosa, Iowa."

Portrait and Biographical Album of Mahaska County, Iowa; Chapman Brothers' Chicago; 1887; p 414. "Maj. J.W. McMULLIN;" biographical sketch.

Stereoview; "Oskaloosa Livery & Transport Co.;" Collection Oskaloosa Public Library. Pictures McMullin's business house at 223 High Avenue East circa 1885.

Original Plans, Elevations, & Section Detail; Major J W McMullin House. Includes South Elevation & Section; West Elevation; Basement Story Plan; "First Story Plan;" "Second Floor Plan;" "Attic & Roof Plan." Ink on sized linen. Without date and without attribution. Property Mary David Jones; Oskaloosa, IA.

Spofford, Harriet; Art Decoration Applied to Furniture; New York; Harper; 1878.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Area XV Cultural Resources Surveys; Ottumwa, IA; 1982 & 1984. Historical Survey (Mahaska

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Bibliography

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County); Architectural Survey (Oskaloosa).

Informant Interview: Judith A McClure AIA; Office of Historic Preservation; Des Moines.
Summer 1984.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee; A Field Guide to American Houses; Alfred A Knopf; New York;
1984.

ORAL HISTORY/MATERIAL CULTURE:

Informant Interview: Irma Glattly; Oskaloosa, IA. Autumn 1984. Octogenarian and local
historian.

Informant Interview: Mary David Jones and Earl R. Jones; Oskaloosa, IA. Autumn 1984.
Mrs. Jones was reared in the Major McMullin House.

House Inspection: W C Page; 13 May 1984; 13 December 1984.

Real Photo Post Card; Photo album collection Mary David Jones. Pictures house with
original porch circa 1918.