

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received 11/10/82

date entered
JUN 17 1982

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

1. Name

historic McNeil Homestead

and/or common McNeil's Cove

2. Location

Lake Champlain off VT 15

street & number N/A

N/A not for publication

city, town Charlotte

N/A vicinity of

~~Congressional District~~

state Vermont

code 50

county Chittenden

code 007

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name ISA Associates

street & number P.O. Box 831

city, town Montpelier

N/A vicinity of

state Vermont

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Town Clerk

street & number N/A

city, town Charlotte

state Vermont

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures
title Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976

federal state county local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier

state Vermont

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The McNeil Homestead consists of a c.1800 Federal house, a c.1830 Greek Revival style inn, and a c.1850 barn. The well preserved complex retains its rural setting on the shores of Lake Champlain.

The Homestead is located in Charlotte, Vermont on a prominent jut of land overlooking Lake Champlain. The property affords a sweeping view of the Lake and of the distant Adirondack Mountains on the opposite New York shore. The McNeil property is one of the largest tracks of land in private ownership on the lakeshore, and has an interesting shoreline with the jutting peninsula forming a protected cove along the southern shoreline. It was this cove, known as McNeil's Cove, which proved to be an excellent embarkation point for a ferry boat shuttle, beginning around 1790, which linked Charlotte and Essex, New York.

Three buildings, the main house, an old inn, and a large barn, testify to the commercial success of the ferry operation. John McNeil, who settled this land and began the ferry operation, built the house around 1800. The inn was probably constructed around 1830, an indication that McNeil's transportation service was thriving. The third building, the barn, c.1850, may have been built after the railroad had begun to usurp business from the ferry trade, and McNeil's son and successor, Charles, decided to concentrate on farming. But the early success of the ferryboat venture is particularly apparent by examining the main house, the most sophisticated and commanding of the three structures.

The McNeil-Hill House faces south overlooking the cove and presents its finished face to the Lake while its extended ell protrudes north. The clapboarded house is of the Federal style and is two-and-one-half stories with five by three bays. There is a generous amount of architectural detail, most of which is logically concentrated on the facade. The first floor of the facade is dominated by the tripartite central entrance while a Palladian window draws attention to the center of the second story. The main entrance surround is composed of four fluted, tapered, Doric pilasters supporting a full entablature. The three-quarter length sidelights (now with 1/1 sash) and doorway are separated by two of the pilasters. Resting on plinths, the pilasters support the entablature which has a molded architrave, denticulated frieze, and a denticulated cornice molding.

The Palladian window repeats much of the entrance detail. Four fluted Doric pilasters divide the central window (now with 2/2 sash) and the side windows (now with 1/1 sash), and each pilaster supports the full broken entablature which is distinguished by a Torus molding and a denticulated cornice. Springing from each entablature section is the raised molding which enframes the round-headed transom panel of the central window. This section of the Palladian window has retained its lancet tracery.

Other detail on the facade is simpler and more restrained. The symmetrically grouped windows have cornices and quarter-round molded surrounds. The sash is now 2/2 and the windows are flanked by shutters. Panelled corner boards support the cornice which returns at the gable ends. The gable peaks on each end of the house have semi-elliptical louvered openings.

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The east side of the house is particularly noteworthy for the entrance in the left bay. The pedimented door surround is finely detailed: tapered Doric pilasters flank the six-panel door and support a full entablature which culminates in a pediment enhanced by small modillions. Also on this east side are two small windows with leaded, diamond-shaped panes. These windows have been centrally located on each floor level and were added to light modern bathrooms.

The extended gabled ell on the north side is comprised of two parts. The first section is a one-and-one-half story addition while the second section is a modern, one-room addition. The latter is the more interesting of the two. The large, 10/15 sash windows which light the room were taken from an old Vermont Baptist church. The east entrance is also original to Vermont but not to the house; it is a fine Federal style doorway with a modillioned pediment, supported by fluted Doric pilasters, and surmounted by a keystone semi-elliptical window.

The interior of the McNeil House is laid out on a Georgian floor plan with two large rooms on either side of the wide central hallway. There are two interior chimneys, each serving two rooms. The original fireplace mantels remain with the most elaborate Federal mantel found in the parlor, befitting for the most public room in the house. Chair rail moldings have also been retained in all of the rooms.

East of the McNeil House and approximately 150 feet away is the old inn, a large two-and-one-half story, three by seven bay, gable-roofed structure measuring approximately 60 feet by 30 feet. Unlike the house, the inn does not display a profusion of delicate detail; however, this is partly due to its utilitarian purpose and its Greek Revival style. The gable peaks of the inn are its most obvious Greek Revival style elements and have heavily molded cornices and raking friezes with triangular-shaped attic windows containing diamond-paned sash. The gable ends are further articulated by cornice returns which are supported by plain corner boards.

Throughout the years, the inn has been altered or repaired, somewhat obfuscating the original appearance. The siding at the first story level is vertical board; however, the original clapboard siding remains at the second-story level and in the gable peaks. The windows have either 2/2 sash or modern, paired, multi-paned replacements. There are three entrances, one on each side except for the east side. The interior has also been altered although the arrangement of the guest rooms lining the second floor hallway remains intact. Altogether, the inn is an interesting and significant structure deserving sympathetic restoration.

Behind the house and inn is the barn. This post and beam, clapboarded structure is composed of three parts: the original one-and-one-half story (plus basement level), gable section and two, two-story sections attached as ells. The original barn has a steeply pitched, slate-clad, gabled roof and is particularly noteworthy for its two rammed drive-in entries on the east side. There are now two overhead garage door entries on the south side at basement level. The date of construction of the barn is uncertain but it appears to have been built some time around 1850.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates c. 1800, c. 1830, c. 1850 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

McNeil's Cove is significant for two reasons: it is the site of one of the earliest commercial transportation ventures in Vermont, and the buildings located on this property are good examples of early nineteenth century architectural styles as interpreted in a rural Vermont setting. The main house is the most sophisticated of the three buildings and displays many fine architectural details of the Federal style. The inn is one of a dwindling number remaining in Vermont and, although somewhat altered, shows the broad, heavy elements characteristic of the Greek Revival style. The older portion of the barn is representative of a vernacular building tradition and is particularly noteworthy for its two drive-in entries. Altogether the buildings comprising this estate show an interesting variety of styles and functions.

McNeil's Cove was settled by John McNeil around 1786 or 1787. McNeil, a native of Litchfield, Connecticut, moved to Charlotte from Tinmouth, Vermont after reputedly losing his land in Tinmouth during the Revolution because of his Loyalist sympathies. Yet the ostracism McNeil encountered in Tinmouth never surfaced in Charlotte. In 1787, he was elected the first Town Clerk of Charlotte and a year later became the first Town Representative. These positions were followed by McNeil serving as a probate judge in 1789 and as a member of the State constitutional conventions. It seems certain that McNeil was a man respected even though his opinions sometimes went against the grain.

After spending several years establishing his farm, McNeil launched a ferryboat operation in 1790 that linked Charlotte to Essex, New York, a distance of three miles across Lake Champlain. The ferrying business was probably far more lucrative for McNeil than farming because by linking the growing trade routes of the northern regions of these states, he tapped a profitable commercial vein. In effect, McNeil's ferrying operation quickly became a major transportation route between Vermont and northern New York and remained so until the railroad redirected freight and passenger traffic to alternate routes. The ferry not only transported people but a variety of livestock and supplies. Cattle were particularly important to McNeil's business: livestock in New York was driven to Essex, New York, ferried across Lake Champlain by McNeil, and then sent to Simonds Slaughteryards in Shoreham.

McNeil was succeeded in the business by his eldest son, Charles. In 1821, Charles and H. H. Ross of Essex, New York received an official charter from the Vermont Legislature for the ferry route and their boats which were propelled by horse power. The business, as it continued to flourish, prompted Charles to build the large Greek Revival style inn located on the property, perhaps around 1830. However, like many towns and businesses, McNeil's ferry was eventually doomed by the arrival of the railroad and, when the competition proved too much, McNeil shifted his attention to full-time farming.

McNeil's ferry contributed greatly to the settlement and growth of the region. Although no physical evidence of the ferry business remains today, the McNeil house and inn testify to the commercial success of the business as well as to the architectural quality that could be achieved during the early years of Vermont's settlement.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 7 acres

Quadrangle name Willsboro, NY - VT

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

1	8	6	3	5	5	0	0	4	9	0	6	7	5	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

See Continuation Sheet.

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

N/A

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margaret N. DeLaittre, Architectural Historian

organization Preservation Consultant

date February, 1981

street & number 271 Elm Street

telephone 802-229-0135

city or town Montpelier

state Vermont 05602

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

William B. Pinney

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5-10-82

For NPS use only

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

Melores Byers
for Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 6/17/82

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

CHIT 110, 2013-2013
EXP. 12/31/2013

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Child, Hamilton. Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chittenden County, Vermont for 1882-1883, Syracuse, New York 1882.

Hemenway, Abby Maria. The Vermont Historical Gazetteer, Vol. 1, Burlington, 1867.

Rann, William S. History of Chittenden County, Syracuse, 1886.

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey, Town of Charlotte, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Montpelier, 1976.

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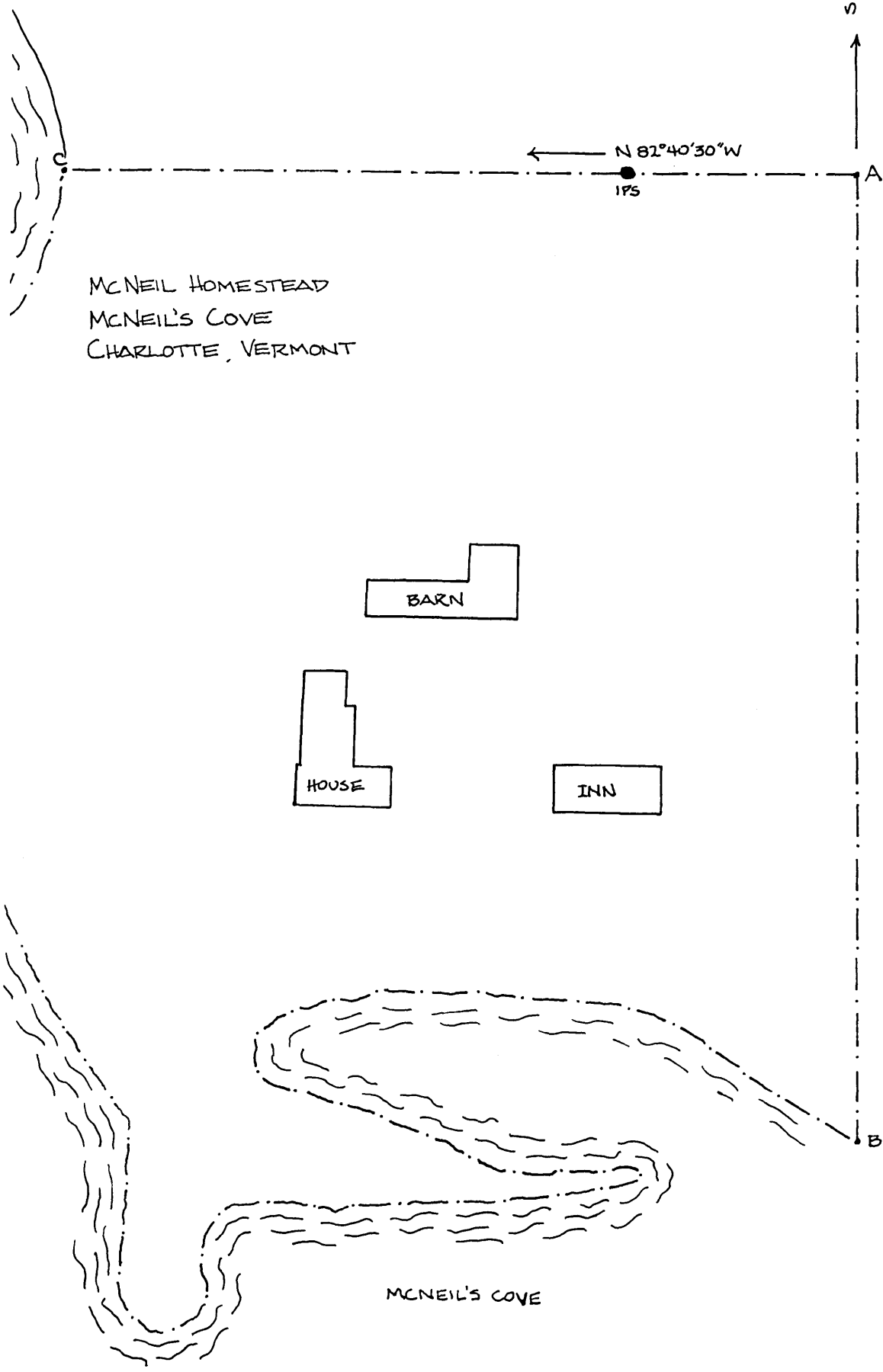
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Based upon a survey map drawn on 21 May 1980 by Ronald L. LaRose, LaRose Surveys, Inc., Bristol, Vermont, the boundary of the McNeil-Hill Homestead is described as follows:

The boundary begins at Point A, a point located 166' east of a iron pipe set which has a compass bearing of N 82° 40' 30" W, and 331' south of the edge of right-of-way of Town Highway 41. From Point A, the boundary proceeds in a southerly direction along a line which has a compass bearing of S 07° 34' W until it reaches the southern shoreline of the property on Lake Champlain, Point B. From Point B, the boundary line proceeds in a westerly direction following the shoreline, proceeding around the cove's protruding jut, and then heading in a northerly direction along the western shoreline of the property until it meets Point C, a point which meets a westerly extension of the line on which Point A is located, said line having a said compass bearing of N 82° 40' 30" W. From Point C, the boundary thence proceeds along said extension approximately 35' and continuing along said line 535.46' to Point A, the point of beginning.

The boundary of the McNeil Homestead encompasses that portion of the boundary which is immediately associated with the three buildings named in the nomination: the main house, the inn, and the barn. East of the eastern boundary line is extraneous land which serves as a buffer from a house located on another property. North of the northern property line is a house built in 1981 which has no historical association with the McNeil Homestead.



- · - · - BOUNDARY
 IPS IRON PIPE SET

0 100 200
 1" = 100 FEET
 BUILDINGS NOT DRAWN TO SCALE