

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 17 1979
DATE ENTERED	DEC 11 1979

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

James Price McRee House

AND/OR COMMON

McRee Hall

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

181 E. Broad Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Camilla

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second - Dawson Mathis

STATE

Georgia

CODE

013

COUNTY

Mitchell

CODE

205

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___ DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

___ STRUCTURE

___ SITE

___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___ PUBLIC

PRIVATE

___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___ IN PROCESS

___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

___ UNOCCUPIED

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

___ YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE

___ COMMERCIAL

___ EDUCATIONAL

___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

___ PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. George J. Joiner, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

181 E. Broad Street

CITY, TOWN

Camilla

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia 31730

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Superior Court

STREET & NUMBER

Mitchell County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Camilla

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

4

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The James Price McRee House and Grounds

The James Price McRee House is an early-twentieth-century Neoclassical house. Its exterior is virtually intact; the interior was remodeled in the 1930s, but retains its Neoclassical character. The house is located on approximately 3.5 acres of land. The grounds include some formal landscaping near the house, two outbuildings, and part of a pecan orchard.

The McRee House is three bays wide, four bays deep, and two stories high with a truncated hip roof. The main part of the house is essentially symmetric, and the detailing is Neoclassical. Framing the central bay in front is a two-story portico with paired Ionic columns on brick pedestals supporting a massive entablature. (The pedestals were installed c. 1918 after the bases of the original floor-length columns rotted.) The portico cornice is wide and features dentils and modillions. (A balustrade once crowned the portico but it, too, rotted away.) Flanking the portico on either side are one-story porch-like wings with Ionic columns. The front doorway is trabeated; clear, bevel-edged leaded glass fills the side and transom lights. The paired front doors feature single large panes of glass. The west facade is less formal, more picturesque, with a one-story pedimented porte-cochere and a two-story bay window under an attic gable. The east facade shows a partly enclosed porch. The rear elevation is highly irregular and utilitarian, and includes a kitchen ell and entry porch. The roof, originally of pressed metal, is now surfaced with composition shingles.

The interior of the McRee house evidences the original two-over-two-with-central-hall plan. In 1936, after a fire, the interior was remodeled: the original dining and living rooms on the east side of the hall were combined into a new dining room, the service porch to the rear was partitioned into a breakfast room and playroom, the upstairs hall was partitioned with closets and a bathroom, the original main stairway was replaced by a half-turn-with-landing arrangement, and the servants' stairway was replaced with a first-floor bathroom. Stained-glass windows at the landing of the main stairway were damaged by the fire, removed, and stored in the attic. Interior decoration is primarily plaster walls with baseboard moldings and picture rails, although the main hall features paneled wainscot. Doors are paneled throughout. Fireplaces and mantels range from simple brick faces framed by architrave molding or pilasters through full entablatures to elaborate, volute-like framing elements supporting built-in cupboards.

The McRee house is constructed entirely of heart-pine lumber sawed at one of J.P. McRee's sawmills. McRee personally supervised the selection of lumber so that it would be knot-free. The lumber is standard dimension and assembled in a balloon frame with weatherboard siding.

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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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Family History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1907

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Firth Lockwood, Columbus, Georgia

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The James Price McRee House is significant in terms of architectural history as one of the finest of several Neoclassical houses in Camilla, in terms of commercial history for its association with J.P. McRee and his turpentine business, and in terms of family history as a wedding gift that illustrates the often close relationships between family events and significant works of architecture.

James Price McRee (1862-1924) and Turpentine

James Price McRee was born in Oconee County in 1862. After earning a degree from Emory University in 1889, he moved to southwest Georgia and taught school at the Camilla Academy. Education was not to be his career, however; by the turn of the century, he became a leading local entrepreneur, identified most closely with the turpentine business.

McRee's first entrepreneurial venture proved to be the most significant for himself and the region. At the turn of the century, he formed a partnership with Thomas I. McNeil to operate a turpentine still and market naval stores in nearby Branchville. During the first decade of the twentieth century, they purchased more than 15,000 acres of timberland in Mitchell and surrounding counties to support their business. Upon McNeil's death in 1918, McRee bought his interest in the successful enterprise and reorganized it as the J.P. McRee Turpentine Company. By this time, the company's facilities, including the turpentine still, workers' quarters, a mule barn, offices, a commissary, and storage yards and warehouses, had been relocated in Camilla, adjacent to the railroad tracks just one block north of McRee's house (unfortunately, none of these facilities remains at the site). McRee remained in control of this company until his death in 1924.

McRee's turpentine enterprise was a part of the development of an increasingly scientific turpentine industry in Georgia during the early-twentieth century. Although turpentine had been produced earlier in the nineteenth century in Georgia, it was not until North Carolina turpentine producers migrated to Georgia's vast pine forests south of the fall line in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that turpentine became a major industry in the

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Camilla Enterprise, December 26, 1924, obituary.
 The Gravure Illustration Company, Art Work of Southern Central Georgia, 1918, Part 3,
 p. 10.

[continued]

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5 (est.)

QUADRANGLE NAME Camilla, Ga.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 6 7 6, 6 5, 2, 0 3, 4 5, 8 3, 4, 0

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundary is described by a heavy black line on the attached "Property/Sketch Map" of the James Price McRee House.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Amy Pass, student intern
Richard Cloues, architectural historian

ORGANIZATION Historic Preservation Sec., Dept. of Natural Resources

DATE September 1979

STREET & NUMBER 270 Washington Street, S.W.

TELEPHONE (404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN Atlanta

STATE Georgia 30334

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL X

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 Elizabeth A. Lyon
 Elizabeth A. Lyon

TITLE Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 10/4/79

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<u>Sally G. Olden</u>	DATE <u>12/11/79</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	<u>7</u>
ATTEST: <u>[Signature]</u>	DATE <u>12/10/79</u>
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION	<u>acting chief of Regis</u>

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Two outbuildings still stand behind the McRee house. One is an automobile garage, with weatherboard siding, a hipped metal roof, and a semi-circular window over one doorway. The garage was built on the site of a barn. The other outbuilding is a two-story, gable-roofed smokehouse with flanking sheds for storing coal and wood. A servants' house and a chicken coop, now destroyed, once stood in this vicinity as well.

The grounds immediately around the McRee house are landscaped with trees, shrubs, lawns, walks, and driveways. The landscaping is organized around two semi-circular driveways which enter the property at the northwest corner and then split, one crossing in front of the house and the other passing under the porte-cochere to the backyard. The larger trees and shrubs date from the original landscaping, but most of the landscaping is of more recent origin. Even the semi-circular front driveway is not original, although like the rest of the landscaping, it follows closely the original lines (original curb cuts can still be seen along Broad Street).

Behind the McRee house and grounds is part of a pecan grove planted under the supervision of J.P. McRee. This grove was once the site of numerous small rental houses, a mule barn, and a mule-caretaker's house, all associated with McRee's turpentine business. These buildings were razed in the 1960s as part of a municipal-code-enforcement program, and the land around the trees was bulldozed.

Boundaries

Boundaries of this nominated property include the main house, its landscaped grounds, the two surviving outbuildings and sites of known but no longer existing outbuildings, and part of a pecan grove. This property -- almost an entire city block -- constitutes all the land owned by J.P. McRee and his descendants which was directly associated with the main house, with the exception of a small strip of land more recently sold to enlarge the "backyard" of a service station at the northeast corner of the block.

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state. Between 1880 and 1905, Georgia was the leading producer of turpentine in the nation. At the turn of the century, however, traditional turpentine farming and distilling methods were realizing rapidly diminishing returns. In 1900, Dr. Charles Herty, a chemist at the University of Georgia, moved to rectify this problem by implementing and improving upon more scientific methods imported from Europe. Due largely to his efforts, the Georgia turpentine industry regained its position of national predominance by 1923 and has retained it ever since. The McRee turpentine establishment in Camilla was one of many south Georgia firms playing a role in the conversion and comeback of this industry. Although the turpentine establishment itself in Camilla has disappeared, McRee's house remains as a reminder of a prominent figure in this historically significant local industry.

Like many prominent men in early-twentieth-century Georgia towns, James P. McRee had other business interests. Perhaps most significantly, in addition to his own successful turpentine company he owned part interest in the Baker, Morgan, and Leslie turpentine companies. McRee was also vice president of the Georgia Manufacturing Company and the Camilla Ice and Cold Storage Company, and vice president and director of the Georgia Peanut Growers Association. As a director of the Bank of Camilla, he once mortgaged his house to keep the bank solvent. In addition to these positions of responsibility, he owned stock in many local and out-of-town corporations, and he owned two farms where cattle and pecans were raised.

Commensurate with his business interests were McRee's social interests. He served on the Camilla Board of Trustees and the Mitchell County Board of Education. He was an active Mason and Shriner and an ardent Methodist.

The James Price McRee House (1907) and Neoclassicism

The James Price McRee House, built in 1907, is a fine local example of the Neoclassical style of residential architecture popular throughout Georgia at the turn of the century. The house was designed by T. Firth Lockwood, an architect about whom little is known.

The exterior and general arrangement of the McRee house survives virtually intact and exhibits several salient characteristics of the Neoclassical

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style. Most obvious is the two-story front (north) portico with its two sets of paired Ionic columns supporting a massive entablature. Behind the portico is an essentially symmetric three-bay house with a dentilled cornice and a truncated hip roof. On either side of the portico extend one-story porches with their smaller Ionic columns and dentilled cornices. The front doorway is trabeated, and the side and transom lights are filled with clear, beveled-edge leaded glass. The west (side) elevation features a pedimented porte-cochere with one-story paired Ionic columns, and a two-story bay window set under an attic pediment, a holdover from the free massing and planning of the Victorian era that is often incorporated in turn-of-the-century Neoclassical architecture. The rear (south) elevation, consisting of a kitchen wing and porches, is and always was essentially utilitarian.

The interior of the McRee house was damaged by fire in 1936 and largely rebuilt thereafter. Lloyd Greer, a noted Neoclassical architect in Valdosta, Georgia, designed the remodeling. The basic organization and arrangement of the interior was largely respected, although some rooms were opened up (for instance, the original dining and living rooms east of the hall were combined into one large family room) and other rooms were subdivided (for example, the rear service porch became a breakfast room and a playroom). Modern facilities and closets were added, most notably in the upstairs hallway. Original fire-place mantels were retained wherever possible. New detailing is sympathetic with the original. Though not entirely turn-of-the-century, the interior of the McRee house is generally Neoclassical.

Like its interior, the landscaping immediately around the McRee house is appropriate but not entirely original. The larger trees and shrubs date from 1907, but the driveways, walks, lawn, and shrubbery result from a series of subsequent alterations. Evidence of the original semi-circular driveway in front of the house can still be seen in curb cuts at the street. Despite the changes, the current landscaping is compatible with the character and appearance of the house. More important than this formal landscaping, however, is the grove of pecan trees to the sides and rear (south) of the house. These trees were planted under the supervision of J.P. McRee. In addition to being significant landscape features, they symbolize McRee's agricultural and rural interests.

Two significant outbuildings survive on the McRee property, and both are located directly behind the main house. One is a smokehouse with storage

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sheds; the other is an automobile garage. Taken together with the knowledge of outbuildings no longer existing, they help describe the type of support facilities characteristic of such an in-town estate.

Neoclassical houses (with their grounds and outbuildings) like that of J.P. McRee's were built in nearly every community in Georgia at the turn of the century, and almost always they were built by men of means and prestige. Most small towns have at least one, and larger cities have streets and blocks of them. In Camilla, there are three or four such houses; in terms of its architecture, the McRee house is among the finest. Like the antebellum Greek Revival plantation house, the Neoclassical house is a Southern symbol, representing the post-Reconstruction New South.

Family History and the James Price McRee House

The James Price McRee House was built in 1907 by J.P. McRee as a wedding present for his bride, Jeanette Wade, daughter of the Brooks County sheriff. Many houses in Georgia are believed to have been built as wedding presents, either by the parents or the husband-to-be. In this case, this history is well documented. Furthermore, this house has been owned and occupied by members of the McRee family throughout its history. Thus, the McRee house has significance to family history in Georgia, illustrating as it does how family events and important works of architecture are often closely related.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

"McRee Hall," a seven-page family typescript.

Spence, Margaret, and Anna M. Fleming. History of Mitchell County, Georgia, 1976.

Thomas, Kenneth H., Jr. McCranie's Turpentine Still, 1975, pp. 1-15.

James Price McRee House,
Camilla, Mitchell County, Georgia

PROPERTY/SKETCH MAP

boundaries of nominated property ———
north ↑
scale 1" = 100'

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