

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

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

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N-5197

Property Name: McWhorter House

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The McWhorter House is located on the south side of route 412 approximately miles west of its intersection with route 13 and 1300 feet south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. This nomination only includes that portion of the farmstead containing the yard, house, and outbuildings. The total nominated acreage is 8 acres.

Owner: George Parker Crossland  
R.D.1, Box 272  
St. Georges, Delaware

Description:

Although elements of the McWhorter House may date prior to 1810, the largest portion of the house was raised in the mid 19th century. As it faces the road, the house presents a two-story elevation, three bays across with a shallow hipped roof. The exterior of the house is finished with narrow face milled featheredged board siding and subtle Italianate detailing. The windows possess solid, raised panel shutters on the ground floor and louvered shutters on the second. A two-story, frame kitchen ell extends off the rear elevation of the front block and contains two ground floor rooms as well as upstairs chambers.

On the interior the central stair passage is finished with an octagonal newel post on an open string stair with a baluster visually supported by machine turned balusters. Entry into the passage from the exterior is through a round arched door flanked by sidelights and capped with a plain transom. The kitchen interior is notable for its built in paneled storage cupboards and kitchen dresser as well as its original hardware including thumb latches and cast iron butt hinges. A small pantry off the kitchen retains its first period shelving and storage furniture. Also present in the house are original mid-19th century chairrail, baseboard, and simple wood mantel in the present living room.

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Associated with the house are numerous outbuildings. These include an early 20th century frame privy, a late 19th-century board-and-batten storage shed, hewn frame carriage barn with crossgable over the entry, a two-and-a-half story timber framed crib barn and granary, and an early 19th-century dairy barn raised onto a concrete block ground floor in the 1930s. Also on the property but listed as noncontributing elements are a broiler house, hog house, machine shed, layer house, two feedhouses, and a bunk house. The noncontributing elements were all built by the present owner within the last fifty years.

**Historical Background and Significance:**

Thomas and Rachel McWhorter inherited 160 acres in 1807 located in St. George's Hundred. The population Census of 1810 counted ten members of the family, two Indians and a slave. In the New Castle County Tax Assessment Records of 1816-17, Thomas McWhorter's livestock was valued at \$305 and his person was worth \$150. The 1830 population census numbers only four McWhorters and two slaves. Their numbers had decreased by fifty percent. In 1840, the family remains at four members. The status of all slaves changed to that of free black. There were two females, presumably mother and daughter, and one male. Seven people lived in the house together.

Finally, in the 1850 population census the occupant's names and ages are included. The eldest son of Thomas McWhorter, Thomas S., and his older sister, Mary, now head the household. Three male laborers, and a female servant, all white, range in age from eleven to twenty-two. The agricultural Census of 1850 still lists the elder Thomas as the owner of 184 acres of improved land. The cash value of his farm is \$7000 and the farming implements and machinery are worth \$500. His livestock was valued at \$450. McWhorter's wheat fields reported a yield of 500 bushels in 1849 and in the same year 520 pounds of butter were produced.

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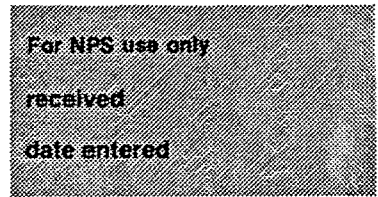
It is possible to compare the above data with computerized information combining a twenty percent share of all the 1850 landowners in St. George's Hundred. One finds that the value of the average farm was \$11,870. Value of machinery for the average farmer was \$265 and the average value of livestock was \$709. The average yield of wheat was 474 bushels and 534 pounds of butter were produced on the average farm. The Tax Assessment Records of 1852-53 show that Thomas McWhorter's poll tax was \$400 and the total amount of his real estate was \$3040. His livestock valued at \$54 raised his total assessment to \$3494 in 1849. In that same year Thomas S. had livestock worth \$218, a poll tax of \$309 and his total assessment valued at \$518.

Thomas S. McWhorter's real estate escalates to \$15,000 in the 1860 population census. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the major addition to the farmhouse was completed. His personal property was valued at \$2000. Thomas S. was 42 years old and had a wife, Emma, 23 years old, who was born in Maryland. Mary, Thomas' sister, still lived there, as well as John T. McWhorter, age 13. Two male farm laborers and a female domestic completed the residential picture in 1860. The Agricultural Census of the same year reads that 175 acres were improved and five acres remained unimproved. The cash value of the farm was \$18,000 and \$400 was appropriated to farming implements and machinery. Livestock was valued at \$800 and T. S. McWhorter owned among other animals, seven milch cows, five horses, and eight swine. In the previous year, 1859, he harvested 700 bushels of wheat, 1000 bushels of Indian corn, 700 bushels of oats, 500 bushels of Irish potatoes and 500 pounds of butter.

The 1870 population census lists four family members residing at home and a George V. Brown aged 10 years. The Agricultural Census of 1870 is a little more informative. We find that 167 acres, down from 175 in 1860, were improved. The cash value of the farm increased to \$25,000. His farming implements and machinery also increased to \$1,000. His livestock was worth the same amount. Though Thomas S. McWhorter's assets seem very large, his bread and butter, so to speak, didn't fare well in 1869. Only 500 bushels of Indian corn, 600 bushels of winter wheat and there was a yield of only 150 bushels of Irish potatoes. Even butter production went down to 300 pounds. Also, oats were missing from the tally.

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The last population census obtainable was the year of 1880. Thomas S., now 64, wife Emma, 45, and George Brown, 20, are all that remain from 1870. Mary, 72, moved into the home of their brother, Leontine, whose home was located a short distance from them. Two laborers and a servant lived there, too. The Agricultural Census lists 160 acres of improved land but still showed a steady incline. The farm owned by Thomas S. was valued at \$16,000, machinery was set at \$400 and livestock was worth \$1,200. The year of 1879 produced 600 bushels of wheat, 300 bushels of oats and 1200 bushels of Indian corn. Total butter production was 1,500 pounds. In that same year, no yield was reported from one acre of apple trees and 40 acres of peach trees.

Nomination by Helen Ross



McDonnell House  
N-567