

12-04-0021



## HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION FORM

This form only pertains to Historic Architecture and Landscapes for this project. It is not valid for Archaeological Resources. You must consult separately with the Archaeology Group.

### PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Project No:</b>		<b>County:</b>	Hoke
<b>WBS No.:</b>	17BP.8.R.16	<b>Document Type:</b>	
<b>Fed. Aid No:</b>		<b>Funding:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Federal
<b>Federal Permits</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Permit(s) Type:</b>	
<b>Project Description:</b> Replace Bridge no. 97 over McNeills Mill Creek on SR 1552 (McNeill Lake Rd) in Hoke County. Right-of-way will remain the same at 60 feet.			

### SUMMARY OF HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES REVIEW

- There are no National Register-listed or Study Listed properties within the project's area of potential effects.
- The following properties within the area of potential effects have been evaluated for eligibility in the attached documentation: William C. McNeill House

### SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

- Map(s)    Previous Survey Info.    Photos    Correspondence    Report

### EVALUATION BY NCDOT ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

<b>Property Name:</b>	William C. McNeill House	<b>Evaluation:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Not Eligible
<b>Survey Site No.:</b>	HK 0041	<b>Criterion:</b>	C

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NCDOT Architectural Historian

Date

**REVIEW BY STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**

*Renee Medhill-Easley*

*1-3-13*

HPO Representative

Date

*HPO Comments:*

*We do not believe the McNeill House is eligible under Criterion C due to the application of vinyl siding. The complex of outbuildings will lack the significance to overcome the impact of the siding on the house*

*Reviewed by Jessica Dockery 1/3/13*

# Determination of Eligibility for William C. McNeill House

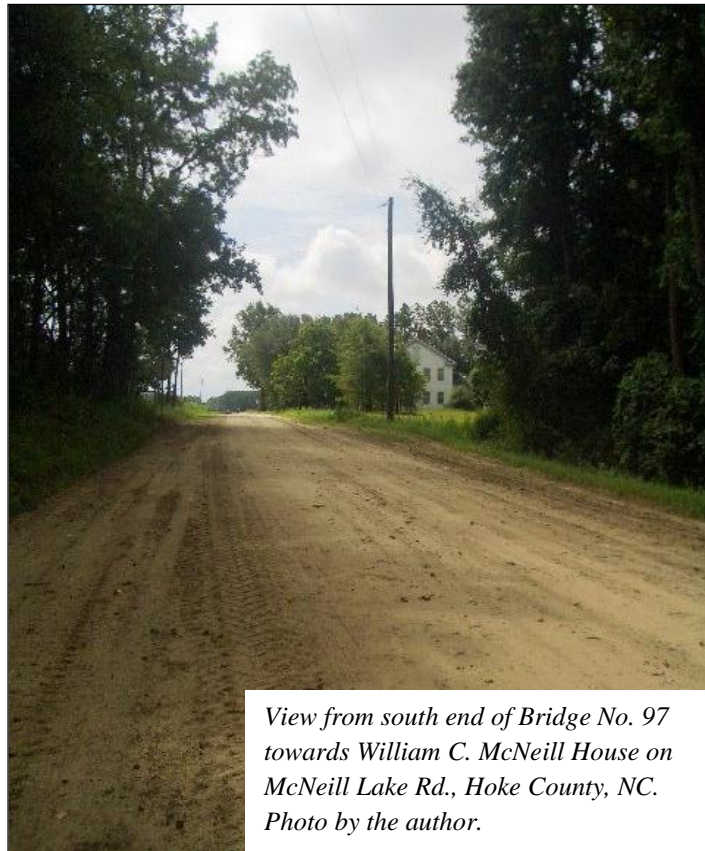


**12-04-0021**

**WBS# 17BP.8.R.16**

**Hoke County**

**October 2012**




*View from south end of Bridge No. 97  
towards William C. McNeill House on  
McNeill Lake Rd., Hoke County, NC.  
Photo by the author.*

Prepared by Megan Privett

Architectural Historian, NCDOT

**Determination of Eligibility for William C. McNeill House**

	NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH
<b>HOKE COUNTY</b>	
<b>12-04-0021, REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 97 ON SR 1452 (MCNEILL LAKE RD) OVER MCNEILL'S CREEK</b>	

**12-04-0021**

**WBS#17BP.8.R.16**

**Hoke County**

**October 2012**

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Cultural Resources Specialist date  
North Carolina Department of Transportation

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Supervisor, Historic Architecture Section date  
North Carolina Department of Transportation



## Management Summary and Methodology

NCDOT proposes to replace Bridge No. 97 on McNeill's Lake Road over McNeill's Creek in Hoke County. During the screening process for nearby cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effects (APE), it was discovered that the parcel on which was located a ca. 1825 dwelling with outbuildings fell within the APE. The APE was thus adjusted along McNeill's Lake Road to include the dwelling and outbuildings considering the historical connection between the bridge site and the house site. The complex of buildings identified had not previously been surveyed in any type of formal county-wide architectural survey.



During the field survey the property was evaluated and found to be a farm complex including the ca. 1825 two-story frame house, detached kitchen, log barns and corn cribs, tobacco storage house, family cemetery, former sawmill ruins and millpond. Additionally, a grist mill with machinery intact, known as McNeill's Mill (HK0016) was located at the opposite end of the mill pond as the McNeill House on Balfour Road, which was also documented. The





McNeill Family, who originally constructed and still retain ownership of the property, likely owned slaves at the time of the house's construction but it is unknown whether former slave quarters existed and if so the locations of the quarters. After research and evaluation, NCDOT Historic Architecture determined the William C. McNeill House complex to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architecture. This determination along with a map of the historic boundaries for the resource is discussed in more detail on pages 11-12 of this report.



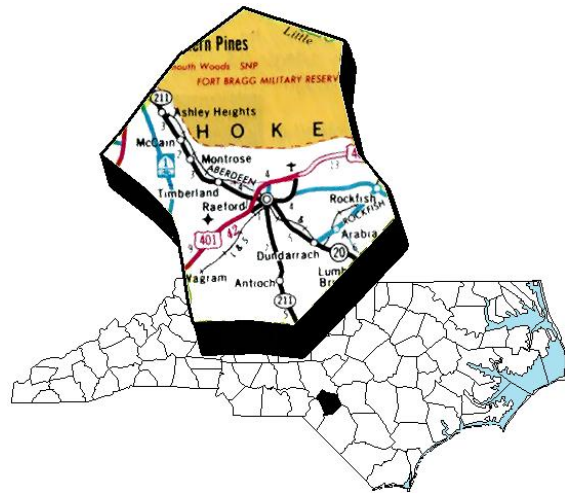
*Above: Aerial maps (courtesy of NC HPO GIS webpage) showing distance between the William C. McNeill House and the ca. 1868 McNeill's Mill (HK0016).*

Methods and research tools utilized for this project include the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office (NC HPO) GIS webpage, aerial maps via Google Maps, and NC HPO survey files. After the initial screening, additional research was conducted at the Robeson County Library's genealogy room, the State Library of North Carolina, genealogical websites such as ancestry.com and capefearclans.com, and the North Carolina State Archives. The survey methodology consisted of a field survey and historical

background research of the project area. On August 6, 2012, NCDOT Historic Architecture staff conducted the field survey. All structures over fifty years of age were photographed and keyed to a U.S.G.S. quadrangle map. NCDOT Historic Architecture staff spoke with and interviewed property owners regarding the history of the house on this date as well. NCDOT conducted the survey and prepared this report in accordance with the provisions of FHWA Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources by NCDOT.

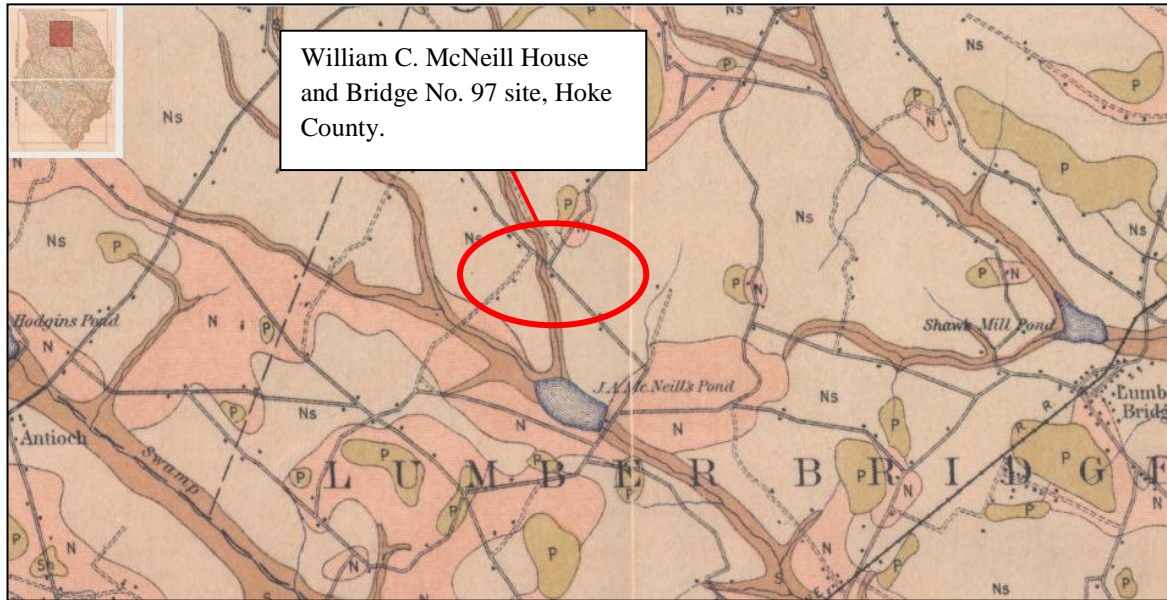
## Physical Setting, Historical Background and Resource Description and Evaluation

Hoke County is among the North Carolina counties that make up the “Sandhills” region of the state and part of the Cape Fear River Basin, geographically located in the south-central portion of North Carolina. This region is characterized by sandy soil with sub-par fertility for growing crops and by the long-leaf pine ecosystem, allowing the hardy tree species to dominate much of the forested regions within the area. Formerly inhabited by Native Americans including the Choctaw, Tuscarora, and the Lumbee tribes and later by Highland Scots immigrating during the eighteenth century, Hoke County is relatively young, being formed in 1911 from Cumberland and Robeson counties. Sitting in the center of Hoke County is its largest town, Raeford, and the northern third of the county



consists of federal lands owned by the United States Department of Defense, specifically occupied by Fort Bragg Military Reservation. Most early inhabitants of the small, rural county consisted of farmers or workers involved in the naval stores or timber industries. The local geographic area surrounding the William C. McNeill House site, located approximately 3.4 miles west of the town of Lumber Bridge and in the southern portion of the county, generally consists of farmland and forested areas, dotted with marshy swamplands. The site is situated just northeast of a former mill pond known as McNeill’s Pond and within the general pathway of Big Marsh Swamp. An unpaved dirt road leads to the McNeill House complex from Balfour Road. Cleared farmland surrounds the McNeill House and outbuildings, which is dotted with large old growth live oaks and ornamental plantings. The complex is positioned to the north of the former mill pond, which is surrounded with wooded forest land.





*Clip of Robeson County Soil Map, 1908, UNC Maps Collection online. The notation on the map to "J.A. McNeill's Pond" is in reference to James A. McNeill, the son of William C. McNeill and grandson of Archibald McNeill, the latter being the original land owner and recipient of a land grant during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

Constructed in 1825, the William C. McNeill House was built by Billy "Ghar" McNeill (1802-1875) for his family farm. The two-story, timber frame double-pile house features a five-bay façade with central entrance on the first story and a full-height porch supported by four large wooden posts. Interior brick chimneys pierce the side-gabled roofline. The house rests on a brick pier foundation that is now filled in. The brick and mosaic tile porch appears to be a later (20<sup>th</sup> century) update. Original double-hung, wood nine-over-six-sash windows pierce the home's elevations. The side elevations of the McNeill House (north and south) feature four bays on each story and a large diamond vent in the gables highlighted by cornice returns. At the rear of the home is a former detached kitchen and smokehouse combination: a one-story, wood frame, gable-roofed building with engaged porch supported by turned posts resting on a brick foundation. The building has a gabled side ell featuring a mini-pediment and



*William C. McNeill House, north elevation, Hoke County. Photo by the author.*



is pierced on its west elevation by one window bay. The kitchen retains its original weatherboard, corner boards and fascia and contains a large exterior end chimney on its south elevation. It is difficult to tell an accurate date for when the kitchen may have been built, as it appears to have been modified over the years with a more recent foundation and other architectural alterations. The interior of the William C. McNeill



House follows a center hall plan with impressive wide plank floors of heart pine milled from the property, hand-planed boards forming the ceilings, and original mantelpieces and simple flat-paneled wainscoting with chair rail in most of the rooms. The northwest room on the first floor, the most finely finished room, features a handsome mantel with raised, molded panels sheltered by a mantel shelf supported by molded pilasters.

*William C. McNeill House, east and south elevations, Hoke County, Photo by the author.*

The interior underwent major renovations during the early 1970s when the home received electricity and running water, during which the plaster was removed and sheetrock installed above the wainscoting. Several changes have occurred since its original construction: the interior has been altered to include modern updates and a kitchen in the main block; the exterior weatherboard, columns, window surrounds and other trim have been covered with vinyl siding; and a rear partially open, partially enclosed addition was constructed in 1974. Behind the house and detached kitchen are two modern utility sheds.



*William C. McNeill House, detached kitchen, west elevation, Hoke County. Photo by the author.*

Across the road (McNeill's Lake Road) from the William C. McNeill House to the north are three outbuildings that served the family farm. The first is a double-crib barn with central passageway of log construction that served the purpose of animal or livestock housing. It features diamond notching, original board-and-batten doors and hardware, and a metal roof. It recently suffered damage to the roof and structure from harsh storms. The second outbuilding is a log barn or corn crib used for grain storage. This barn features a front gable roof with a large engaged, gabled overhang/porch supported by two posts and a side shed pen on the west elevation. It, too, features original board-and-batten doors and hardware as well as an elevated wood plank floor. The third outbuilding is a two-story, wood frame tobacco ordering barn or pack house.

Window bays pierce its north and south elevations as well as the one-story shed addition on its west elevation. A portion of its interior floor is sunken for the storage of tobacco. The current owner of the



*McNeill House outbuildings, double-pen log barn and log corncrib, Hoke County. Photo by the author.*



*and-batten door, Hoke County. Photo by the author.*

property, Margaret Selby, noted that the outbuildings had served as a stage coach stop at one time during the nineteenth century along the route from Fayetteville to South Carolina.

Like many early settlers of what was then Robeson County, the McNeills were farmers and later ventured into milling. They cultivated the acreage around their home in addition to other holdings and also owned the mill pond to the south and west. The McNeill family was among some of the earliest Highland Scots who immigrated in droves to America, fleeing Scotland in the harsh aftermath of the Battle of Culloden in 1746 and settling in the upper Cape Fear Valley. This ethnic group adapted to North Carolina quickly and readily adopted building practices and architectural styles common to the mid-Atlantic seaboard and the North Carolina backcountry. Most Scottish Highlanders were familiar with farming methods and the cultivation of livestock, making setting in the backcountry of North Carolina ideal.<sup>1</sup>

The McNeill family likely worked the land producing corn, tobacco, timber, and other cash crops as well as animal products. Horses, mules, cattle, sheep and hogs were raised at the McNeill Farm according to the will of William C. McNeill, dated 1871.<sup>2</sup> Descendant Margaret Selby claims that the family also grew rice in the swampy area behind the bridge to the east of the family home. The William C. McNeill family attended Philadelphus Presbyterian Church

along with other McNeill kin, and an 1831 entry from the Philadelphus Church Records Book I states that “Whereas Mr. William McNeill at the time a Church Register was first to be formed represented himself as well as his spouse as communing members of this church and whereas this session has not recognized

<sup>1</sup> Powell, William S. *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 1989, pp. 106-109.

<sup>2</sup> Robeson County Wills, Vol. III, Book 3, pp. 108-110, pp. 114-115. Robeson County Public Library Genealogy Room, Lumberton, NC.



him as a communing member of this church for many years past it was ordered that the Clerk register his name not as a member in full but as a baptized member.”<sup>3</sup> Most of the earliest churches in the area were of the Presbyterian denomination, and often church services were delivered in the traditional Gaelic well into the twentieth century, as this was the language spoken by Scottish Highlanders who had recently settled in the Sandhills region.

According to local legend and family members, the William C. McNeill House was one of the few in the area spared by Sherman’s army during the Civil War. On the other hand, the corresponding sawmill at the current Bridge No. 97 location and creek from which the home’s lumber was sawn burned during the conflict. Only small pieces of the sawmill’s remains can be seen today when the water is low. It was not uncommon in Hoke County for both a sawmill and a grist mill to be located on the same mill pond and operated by one family. A second mill known as “McNeill’s Mill” was built ca. 1868 on the same mill pond but farther south adjacent to Balfour Road. This mill was owned by both the McNeill and McEachern families after the two families were connected by the marriage



*View from Bridge No. 97, facing northwest, general location of former McNeill saw mill.*



*McNeill's Mill, Balfour Road, Hoke County. Photo by the author.*

of Mary Ann McNeill and John Henry McEachern in 1860. One of the last mills to operate in the area, McNeill’s Mill sold food staples in the store in addition to grinding corn until 1968. Southwest of the house in the woods is the McNeill family cemetery, where William C. and his wife, Flora (McNeill) McNeill (1805-1875), are buried. William C. McNeill was the son of Archibald McNeill (“Archie Ghar”), who immigrated from Scotland ca. 1760 as one of twenty-two receiving a land grant in this region of North Carolina. Archibald McNeill married Barbara Patterson, his second wife, to whom William was born along with other children. William and Flora had four children: James (1837-1915), Mary, Margaret and Caroline. Also living with them at the time of the 1850 federal census was Malcom McDougald and Jane McNeill, William McNeill’s half-sister and daughter of Archibald’s first wife, Rebecca Cameron McNeill. Flora McNeill was the granddaughter of Hector McNeill, who was born in Scotland around 1725 and

<sup>3</sup> Philadelphia Church Records, Book I, accessed through [www.capefearclans.com](http://www.capefearclans.com) on 14 May 2012.



emigrated to America ca. 1750-1760, traveling from Wilmington up the Cape Fear River to near present-day Fayetteville. Hector's son Angus married Margaret McEachern in 1799 and the couple settled near their parents on Drowning Creek in Richmond County. Angus and Margaret had six children, among them Flora McNeill.<sup>4</sup>

William McNeill seems to have been a successful farmer and miller, having willed most of his property at his death to his wife and son as well as one hundred acres of land to be sold and divided among his daughters. Furthermore, Flora McNeill wills each of her daughters four-hundred dollars and to "...each one bid its necessary furniture..." To her son, James, her will bequest "...All other property consisting of stock of horses, mules, cows, hogs, sheep—also all notes, accounts and cash—all other property not mentioned above." In the 1870 federal census the daughters of William McNeill are no longer listed (perhaps having married and moved off the family farm), however, James McNeill is still listed with his parents as a "farm manager." By 1900 James McNeill is found married to Miriam A. McNeill and they have four daughters as well as a boarder/preacher and a domestic servant living with them. The current owner of the property, Margaret Selby, is the great-granddaughter of James McNeill. This branch of the McNeill family who emigrated from Scotland in the eighteenth century is well-known locally and retains many of its descendants in the Hoke, Cumberland, and Robeson County areas.<sup>5</sup>

Other surveyed sites in Hoke County comparable to the William C. McNeill House complex include the McLauchlin-McFadyan House, a ca. 1853 two-story frame Greek Revival dwelling, the Rev. Hector McNeill House, another two-story frame Greek Revival house dating to the second or third quarter of the nineteenth century, and Mill Prong, a National Register-Listed two-story frame Federal style house supposedly built in ca. 1795 by John Gilchrist (1740-1802). The Rev. Hector McNeill House is comparable to the McNeill House, particularly on the interior, where the two buildings share similarly crafted architectural trim, wainscoting, and mantel pieces. The Rev. Hector McNeill House, however, retains a higher degree of integrity than the William C. McNeill House, and a more impressive execution of mid-nineteenth century craftsmanship. Still, the William C. McNeill House is one of the very few known examples of a substantial Antebellum Era home in Hoke County, though not elaborate in architectural detail, retaining its original setting and period outbuildings.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Lumber Bridge," 1976 publication by the Lumber Bridge Bicentennial History Committee, pp. 54-55. Provided by Margaret Selby. Bible Records of William C. McNeill and wife Flora McNeill, Robeson County Public Library Genealogy Room, Lumberton, NC. Cemetery, genealogy, and deed records of the McNeill Family accessed through [www.capefearclans.com](http://www.capefearclans.com) on 14 May 2012.

<sup>5</sup> 1820 Federal Census of North Carolina, Robeson County Vol. XLV (compiled by Dorothy Williams Potter, 1973), Robeson County Public Library Genealogy Room, Lumberton, NC. 1850 Federal Census of Robeson County, North Carolina. (Compiled by Elaine Davis Harmon, 1980), Robeson County Public Library Genealogy Room, Lumberton, NC. 1870 U.S. Federal Census, accessed through [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) 1900 U.S. Federal Census, accessed through [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) Robeson County Wills, Vol. III, Book 3, pp. 108-110, p. 114-115. Robeson County Public Library Genealogy Room, Lumberton, NC.

<sup>6</sup> Hoke County survey files, survey file room, NC Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC. "History of Mill Prong House," <http://millpronghouse.com/history.html>

## NRHP-Eligibility Evaluation

In order for a property to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under any of the criteria, that property must first possess integrity, which the National Park Service divides into seven core aspects including: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The William C. McNeill House retains its integrity of location, setting, feeling and association, however, its integrity of design, materials and workmanship have been somewhat compromised with the application of vinyl siding and trim, as well as some modifications to the interior of the house. The interior alterations occurred mainly during the 1970s when the home underwent an interior renovation to receive electricity and plumbing for running water, and consisted primarily of the removal of the plaster walls and later on the replacement of features such as the stairway's newel post and the home's front door. Technically, most of the original materials of the main house are still present, although now obscured with the vinyl siding treatment. The outbuildings retain a high degree of integrity with very minor if any alterations since their original construction, with the exception of the detached kitchen, which likely received updates during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

NCDOT finds the William C. McNeill House eligible under Criterion C for architecture as a locally-significant example of an intact antebellum farm complex with ca. 1825 dwelling, extant kitchen, log and frame outbuildings, family cemetery and various mill sites. The main house exhibits a scaled-down, semi-vernacular expression of the Greek Revival style, with elements such as symmetrical window fenestrations, prominent cornice returns, a commodious porch and center hall plan supporting this theory. For possessing a construction date as early as 1825, the house is quite large with its sizeable center hall plan of two rooms deep on each story. The size of the dwelling alone for its early construction date is an unusual architectural instance for Hoke County that merits significance under Criterion C for architecture. Lacking a comprehensive architectural survey, Hoke County does not possess many known examples of an intact farm complex dating from the antebellum period as early as 1825, considering that many were burned or destroyed during the Civil War. What is especially significant with the William C. McNeill House complex is its retention of its original rural setting of farm and swamp lands on an unpaved dirt road, which has remained largely unchanged. Although the applied vinyl siding and other alterations do negatively affect the house's integrity, the original weatherboard remains preserved underneath for the possibility of future restoration efforts. The interiors of the house and outbuildings are mostly intact, with original windows and doors. NCDOT finds the William C. McNeill House complex eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The William C. McNeill House is not eligible under Criterion A. To be considered Eligible under Criterion A, a property or district must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American history, or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to agriculture and social history. The property or district must have existed at the time of the period of significance.<sup>7</sup> Although the William C. McNeill House complex provides an example of the rural agriculture and milling industries in Hoke County, there is nothing exceptional related to either of these two contexts in the McNeill House complex that qualifies it for Criterion A eligibility. There is no specific event nor a distinctive representation of a pattern of events or historic trends associated with the William C. McNeill House.

The William C. McNeill House is not eligible under Criterion B. To be considered eligible for significance under Criterion B, it must retain integrity and possess an association with the lives of persons

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<sup>7</sup> *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, DC, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1991), p. 12.

significant in our past either in a local, state, or national context.<sup>8</sup> While the McNeill family is an older family line in Hoke County dating to the eighteenth century when Archibald “Archie Ghar” McNeill emigrated from Scotland, there is no particular significant person identified for which the William C. McNeill House is associated to justify eligibility under Criterion B.

The William C. McNeill House is not eligible under Criterion D. For a property to be considered eligible for significance under Criterion D, it must contribute to our understanding of human history or prehistory, and the information must be considered important.<sup>9</sup> The William C. McNeill House is not known at this time to have the potential to yield significant information such as architectural and building technology. Therefore, it is not recommended eligible under Criterion D.



### **NRHP- Eligible Historic Boundaries**

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 14-16.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 21-24.



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