

William McFadden House (Morrison House)
½ Mile West of State Highway No. 260 ↖ Wayne National Forest
Sycamore Valley Vicinity
Monroe County
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2418

HABS
OHIO
56-SYCVAV,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Great Lakes Support Office
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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WILLIAM MCFADDEN HOUSE (MORRISON HOUSE), ~~MONROE COUNTY, OHIO~~

HABS No. OH-2418

Location:

Wayne National Forest
1/2 Mile West of State Route 260
Sycamore Valley Vicinity
Monroe County, Ohio
USGS Stafford Quadrangle
17 478270 4389420

Significance:

The house on the William McFadden (Ray Morrison) property is an excellent example of a 1-1/2 story log house that dates to the 1850s and reflects a high-level of craftsmanship. The hewn logs have been finished on the exterior and interior and the ends are carefully tapered to interlock with each other at the corners. The wood siding under the gables is of the hand-split variety and appears to be original to the house. The similar siding that covers the kitchen addition to the rear suggests that the addition was added not too long after the log portion of the house was built. The interior also retains its original layout. The integrity of design and materials and the fine craftsmanship exhibited in its construction makes the William McFadden house distinctively characteristic of type, period, and method of construction.

Description:

The McFadden Property consists of a single log home set back about .3 miles from State Route 260, west of Clear Fork. The house sits in the valley of a small runoff tributary of a larger creek. The area is a series of thickly wooded sloping hills. There are no surviving outbuildings except for the remains of a shed about halfway between the road and the house.

The McFadden Residence is a small 1-1/2-story log house, ten logs high, with hewn and squared logs 14 to 16 inches in diameter. The logs are hand-hewn with adze marks and have steeple notch connections at the corners. The tapered ends of the steeple notches fit securely at the corners, chinked with mud and using wooden members used as fill. A side facing gable roof is covered with a metal standing seam panels.

The front elevation has three bays, consisting of a front door flanked by two six-over-six, double-hung windows. A shed roof addition is attached to the rear of the structure. The log structure is set on a stone foundation with piers at the four corners. At one time, the entire house was clad with horizontal wood siding. This siding is only apparent under the gables on each side elevation, but three vertical nailers are still present on the front of the structure and window and door trim extends over 3 inches from the face of the logs. The ends of the second floor joists are visible on the front elevation.

Continuing the pitch of the original roof, the rear addition is wood frame with rough sawn 2" x 5" studs placed 24" on center. The west corner of the addition is clad with weatherboard siding and the east corner of the addition is clad with board-and-batten siding. Due to the slope of this roof, the rear addition has a small attic crawl space that is lighted on the gable ends by small rectangular windows. On the northwest elevation there is a four-panel rear door with a large center rail. This door was painted yellow but is severely weathered. There is a smaller two panel door directly above this side door providing access to the attic above the addition.

The central front door has a three-light transom and a 5'-6" opening leading into a 17'-0" x 14'-0" living room with a west corner stair to the second floor. The interior walls in the house are covered with vertical boards and finished with wallpaper. The fireplace in the living room has been removed. Ceilings are wood plank painted blue. To the east of the living room, occupying the rest of the first floor, is a 17'-0" x 11'-0" room. This room is accessed through a central interior door with a two-light operable transom window. The interior wall is framed with wood studs 28" on center. The addition to the rear runs the entire length of the house, accessed through doors in both first floor rooms. It consisted of a kitchen and a smaller storage room to the east side. The door and window trim have a continuous double-grooved detail.

History:

The property is located within the Marietta Unit of the Wayne National Forest in Monroe County, Bethel Township, Ohio. Monroe County was one of several Ohio counties divided from Washington County, the first organized county North of the Ohio River comprising approximately half the territory now included in the State of Ohio. Established on July 26, 1788, Washington County area lawmakers did not divide the area into townships until 1790. The first organized townships of Marietta, Belpre, and Waterford sat along the river with continued organization of the hinterland through 1861.

The first settlement in Monroe County was made in Jackson Township. The township, formed in 1815, was one of the four large original townships of Monroe County. As early as 1791, Philip Witten and his family had settled in the area on the Ohio River, opposite of what later became known as Williamson's Island. The area became an attractive settlement, and more families arrived between 1801 and 1812. Its earliest town, Cochranville, was laid out in 1846.

Bethel Township, the site of the McFadden property, was organized in 1832 in the southwestern section of Monroe County. Local history claims that Jacob Miller built the first cabin in the area in 1817. Some of the original families to settle the area along the Clear Fork bottoms were the Lindemoods, Dearths, Hupps, McVays, Martins, Couners, and Davies. The town of Lebanon established the first post office. Later, Sycamore Valley became the third post office organized for the northern part of the township along the Clear fork. The township continued to grow from its meager beginnings, boasting a population of 1,156 people by 1880.

The William McFadden property is located in the center of Section 4, in the north-central part of Bethel Township in Monroe County. As a result, it is impossible to follow any one chain of title to identify an original owner since the land around the center of the section was owned by three different individuals as far back as 1869. The house, a hand-hewn log structure with hand-split wood siding, appears to date to at least this time. The 1869 atlas indicates that Jacob Lindamood owned the land to the northeast, William McFadden owned the land to the northwest, and James Parks owned land to the southwest. The 79 acres owned by William McFadden sat divided by an estuary of the Clear Fork, bordered on the southeast by 40 additional acres owned by George McFadden.

George and Emily McFadden purchased the site in 1857 for \$650.00 from Benjamin and Elizabeth Matson. George McFadden was born in 1812 in Maryland; his wife Emily was born in 1827 in Pennsylvania. By 1850, George's second wife Emily took care of three children aged 12 to 16 from the previous marriage. The eldest son was named William. Emily also had three children of her own, aged 5 months to 4 years. By this time, George had developed a net worth of \$300.00 in real estate.

In contrast, the Lindamoods, one of the original families to settle the area, had a net worth listed at \$8,000.00 in real estate in 1850. Born in Virginia in 1787, Jacob listed his profession as a gunsmith. Jacob lived with his wife Christina, also born in Virginia in 1796. As they constantly improved their position, the Lindamoods increased their value to \$10,000.00 in real estate alone by 1870. Their age, comfortable financial situation, social status as a founding family, and layout of their property provides a clear picture of the differences in late 19th century Ohio Valley pioneers.

James Parks was born in 1813 and his wife Elizabeth in 1830. In 1850, they were worth \$225.00 in real estate, but by 1860 their net worth had grown to \$700.00. Their fortunes apparently continued to grow since by 1869, James Parks owned several tracts in the Clear Fork area. Other members of the Park family owned local land as well.

It is likely, as a small farmer and land holder, that George McFadden bought the land and built the house for his oldest son and family. In 1857, when George purchased the 79 acres, William turned 23. By 1865, George and his wife had passed on and William owned the family acreage plus an additional 40 acres purchased from James Parks. In 1870, William and his wife Louisa had seven children. When William McFadden died, his heirs deeded the property to Lonnie Hines and Ray Morrison in 1947, who later sold it to the U.S. government during the early 1970's.

Sources:

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Historian:

Hardlines: Design & Delineation
Columbus, Ohio
May 1997

