

John McFarland House  
216 Washington Street  
Saltsburg  
Indiana County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5425

HABS  
PA,  
32-SALT,  
5-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

DR. JOHN McFARLAND HOUSE

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PA,  
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5-

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- Location: 216 Washington St., Saltsburg, Conemaugh Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania.
- Present Owner: Charles D. and Veda Lauffer.
- Present Use: Single-family residence.
- Significance: This modest and somewhat-altered dwelling served as the longtime residence of prominent Saltsburg physician and druggist, Dr. John McFarland.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1842-43, according to tax records that assess the lot at \$150 in 1842, and the "house unfinished" at \$500 a year later.
2. Original and subsequent owners: (Deed references is to the Recorder of Deeds Office, County of Indiana, Pennsylvania.) In 1842 John and Elisabeth White sold the property--historically lot No. 23--to Dr. John McFarland, who owned it until at least 1871 (May 11, 1842, Volume 12, Page 216). The next transaction located is Minnie Carnahan's purchase of the property from the First National Bank of Saltsburg (Deed April 9, 1940, Volume 308, Page 186).
3. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located, although the four-bay, two-story brick dwelling appears somewhat altered.
4. Alterations and additions: The two-story frame unit on the rear was original or was added prior to 1886. The front porch was added at a later time, although it surely replaced an original porch of some type. A second front door, in the second bay from the west, has been removed and the space bricked in.

- B. Historical Context: Dr. John McFarland (1813-89) built the house at 216 Washington St. in 1842-43. Born in western Pennsylvania, the son of Irish immigrants, he attended Jefferson Medical College and founded a practice in Salem Township, Westmoreland County. He moved to nearby Saltsburg in 1833, and exchanged practices with Dr. Benjamin Sterret, the town's first resident physician.

McFarland's illustrious medical career included service as an Army surgeon for several years, and he was elected president of the Indiana County Medical Society for two years. In 1846 he married Sarah Reed, daughter of Reverend John Reed. McFarland was a member of the Saltsburg Borough Council in the 1840s, and a burgess in 1841; in 1845-46 he was the Indiana County delegate to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Later, McFarland served as one of the first directors of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and for several years was a director of the Saltsburg Academy. His son, John Reed McFarland, inherited and expanded the family pharmaceutical business, which operated as McFarland and Sons Druggists (Stephenson, Indiana County 175th Anniversary History, 365).

For additional context, twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg may be consulted, as well as overview histories of the town of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666). See also, Sara Amy Leach, ed., Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg (Washington, DC: Historica American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This four-bay, two-story brick dwelling lacks any outstanding form or ornament, yet it represents typical nineteenth-century vernacular construction.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: About 28' x 42' (Sanborns).

2. Foundation: Stone and brick (rear addition).
  3. Walls: Brick laid in running bond; the addition is vertical-board frame.
  4. Structural system: Load-bearing brick and frame.
  5. Porches: A front-entry porch protects the three western bays; one-story, hipped roof, modern iron supports and balustrade, raised concrete-block foundation.
  6. Chimneys: Interior brick chimney in rear addition.
  7. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: The remaining front door, in the westernmost bay, features a four-light transom and modern aluminum door.
    - b. Windows: The four bays of second-floor fenestration feature two-over-two-light double-hung wood sash. The two bays on the first floor are the same, with one-over-one-light arrangements. All include pronounced sills and lintels, the later adorned with low-relief pedimental woodwork.
  8. Roof:
    - a. Shape: Side-gable with asphalt shingles.
    - b. Cornice: Flush with wall, deep frame.
- C. Site: Sited within a compact block of dwellings, the Dr. John McFarland House is oriented north to Washington Street. Across the street was the second railroad depot, and to the east, other well-developed blocks.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### A. Old Views and maps:

The collection of the Saltsburg Branch, Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County, Stone House Museum, contains numerous historical images.

Beers, F.W. Atlas of Indiana County. New York: F.W. Beers and Co., 1871.

Johnson, George B., and Palmer, Ann. Saltsburg--The Way It Was--An Appreciation. Indiana, Pa.: A.G. Halldin Publishing Co., 1986.

Peelor, David, and Barker, W. "Map of Indiana County, Pennsylvania." North Hector, New York: 1856.

"Saltsburg, Pa." New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co. Ltd., February 1886; New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd., October 1891, January 1897, July 1903; New York: Sanborn Map Company, April 1909, February 1927.

B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Indiana County, Pennsylvania, deed books and tax records.

C. Secondary and published sources:

Arms, C.T., and White, E. 1745-1880, History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania. Newark, Ohio: J. A. Caldwell, 1880.

Berringer, Gloria, ed. Canal Days Sesquicentennial: 1838-1988. No publisher, 1988.

Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Indiana and Armstrong Counties. Philadelphia: John M. Gresham and Co., 1891; reprinted 1982.

Johnson, George. Saltsburg and the Pennsylvania Canal. Historic Saltsburg, 1984.

McCullough, Robert, and Leuba, Walter. The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal. York, Pa.: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1973.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory, "Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal: Indiana and Westmoreland Counties." 1979/82.

Stephenson, Clarence D. Indiana County 175th Anniversary History. Indiana: A.G. Halldin Publishing Co., 1978.

Stewart, J.T. Indiana County, Pennsylvania: Her People, Past and Present. Chicago: F.W. Beers and Co., 1913.

Wallner, Peter A. "Politics and Public Works: A Study of the Pennsylvania Canal System, 1825-1857." Ph.D diss., Pennsylvania State University, June 1973.

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Kristin Belz, University of Virginia. Large-format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg, an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Alexandria (Huntingdon County) and an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).