

# McMillian House Summary Report

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The McMillian House is located within the boundaries of Gettysburg National Park. It was constructed in two separate phases with the original home being built in 1840 1841 and the addition being built in the 1890's It is within the area where the Battle of Gettysburg was held yet is privately owned.

## Summary of Findings Regarding the Original Home:

The original home appears to have been a basic 1 1/2 story home constructed on a field stone foundation including a basement fireplace. The siding is german/dutch lap style By all appearances the original home was 'self-designed' and 'self-built' by the original builders. This would have been a common method for homesteading settlers that had just immigrated from overseas.

Our on-site investigation leads us to the conclusion that the original home was built using the "timber frame masonry infill method", with the masonry infill being made up of a single wythe of brick. This was a common way to build in Scotland where it has been reported the McMillan family originated, therefore it would have been natural for them to use their 'known' method of building. It is interesting to note however that in Scotland it was more common to use the "half-timber, masonry filled" method. I would suggest that when the McMillan family found the abundance of timber in the new land they switched to the "full-timber, masonry filled method".

The "full-timber, masonry filled method" used less wood than a stick built house and less masonry than a true brick house. If the house was fully stick built, the framing members would have needed to be closer together than how the McMillan House is apparently constructed, if it had been a brick house the brick would have been two or three wythes thick instead of the single wythe as McMillan house was constructed. Also, the "full-timber masonry filled method" would not have required exterior wood siding to be installed immediately as it would have been just about as weatherproof as a solid brick house.

This home has two interior "full-timber, masonry filled" walls running front to back, parallel with the gable ends forming an approximate 6' 9" wide central hallway in which is included the basement and second floor stairways. There is also a "full-timber, masonry filled" wall running perpendicular to the side walls, although this wall is not centered under the gable. We would suggest that these interior walls were used as a bracing method because a "full-timber, masonry filled" home without proper 'X' bracing in the exterior corners would not have been very structurally sound. Without completing investigation into the exterior wall corners of the home we may find this to be untrue.

It is very unique that the interior brick walls stop at the first floor floor framing and that they do not continue all of the way to the basement. There is no evidence that the brick ever extended into the basement as the interior brick walls are bearing on old hand-hewn timbers. Because the basement walls have been parged using portland cement and the basement floor is concrete, there is no evidence left that would suggest the brick ever extended into the basement. It appears that they were built directly on timbers which kept the basement from being broken up into small rooms.

Although more investigation should be completed on both the home and in various archives to arrive at a solid conclusion, we would suggest that there is a possibility that the brick in-fill was exposed during the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863 and perhaps the siding was added after the battle to help with the repairs incurred to the home during the battle. However, the 'original' wood siding directly under the existing aluminum siding appears to have been unpainted for a long period of time. This is evidenced because of the distinct deep wood grain that is showing thru the paint. In order to make this determination we would suggest that all of the aluminum siding be carefully removed, a thorough inspection of the underlying siding be completed and that several large sections of the wood siding be very carefully removed as to inspect the conditions of the exterior timbers and brick.