

A Step Back in Time By Bobbie Sue Shelton-Lonas

In the late 1800's, Eagleville was described as; "a beautiful little village nestled at the foot of what are called the Harpeth Hills, which rise to considerable height and covered with beautiful blue grass sod. These hills form a lovely background on the west of the little town. On the east of the village the land stretches away in fine, fertile level fields".

One can only imagine how the village of Eagleville looked in those days. But for those of us who call Eagleville "Home", we can certainly be proud that we still have reminders of that early village of Eagleville.

Two beautiful restored old homes that were standing in those days, still stand proud on each end of our hometown; the Chesley Williams Home on the south end of town and the McCord Home on the north end.

The McCord Home was built by William Harrison McCord, the son of Allen Nichols and Jane Jordan McCord. William Harrison, born in 1838, studied at Union University in Murfreesboro, graduating from the University of Louisiana. His graduate work was completed at the College of Surgeons in Philadelphia, a very prestigious school at that time. During the Civil War, he served in General Nathan Bedford Forrest's Company as a surgeon in the 13th Regiment Tennessee Cavalry.

On December 18, 1868 he married his first cousin, Sarah Macon Williams, (b.1845 d. 1890), the daughter of Chesley and Elizabeth Jordan Williams. Sarah was educated at Mary Sharp College in Winchester, Tennessee. She was a writer of short stories and poems and several were published.

For a wedding present, Chesley Williams gave his daughter, Sarah and her new husband, 196.5 acres or land, a worth of about \$5940 in 1868. This was a customary practice for Chesley and Elizabeth, giving all of their children parcels of land as wedding presents.

Five children were born to Dr. McCord and his wife Sarah; Elizabeth J. (b. 1870 d.1870), William Edward (b. 1871 d. 1944), John Harrison (Tip) (b. 1871 d. 1962), Emmett Allen (b. 1875 d. 1960), and Annie V. (b. 1880 d. 1931).

Immediately after the war, Dr. William H. McCord began his practice in Eagleville. Dr. and Mrs. McCord were prominent Eagleville citizens during the period of its greatest growth. From the close of the Civil War through the early 1900's, Eagleville had several tobacco factories, a tiling factory, saw mills (one of which Dr. McCord owned), two or three blacksmith shops, funeral home, various trade shops, six churches and four schools.

McCord served on the board of the Eagleville School, a co-educational preparatory school and chartered four-year college. The school offered Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees and a curriculum including Latin, Greek, Hebrew, astronomy, philosophy, and music.

Education is important to the parents of a growing family, and so is housing. The last of the McCord's four surviving children was born in 1880. A new house was needed that would not only provide ample space for his family, but also reflect Dr. McCord's position in the town as physician, businessman, and community leader. In 1882, the family moved into their newly constructed two-

story white house, three-tenths of a mile north from the center of Eagleville on Highway 41 A N (now Main Street). It faces east, prominently situated on a knoll, overlooking the surrounding area.

Sarah McCord died on June 4, 1890, seven days before her forty-fifth birthday. Dr. McCord died six years later at fifty-five years of age. John Harrison, the McCord's second son, owned and lived in the house until his death in 1962.

In 1984, the Department of History at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tn. was given permission, by William P. McCord, to use the McCord Home as a Historic Preservation Program project.

As stated in the report; "The McCord House has been a familiar part of Eagleville's history and landscape for over a hundred years. Even though it is currently home to a family of raccoons and time and weather have not been kind, the house still maintains an air of majesty from its high vantage point. At the beginning of this project, the team was unsure as to what course to follow in that each of them was attracted to the house for various reasons. After much thought and an inspection of the house, they decided that they would first record the house as accurately as possible in the time allowed them and, second, in spite of its deteriorating condition, nominate the house for a listing on the National Register of Historic Sites for its architectural significance. The team has spent many hours taking measurements and photographs of the house, and researching background information.

According to the Structure Report prepared by the project group, the McCord House has many features that set it apart from similar houses built in the area in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The clapboarded, two-story building is constructed in a T-shape. The base of the "T" is formed by twin, two-story projecting bays, running north and south with cross-gable roofs. Two interior brick chimneys pierce the asphalt-shingled roof.

The MCCORD HOUSE Eagleville, Tn



"First Family of the McCord House" - Dr. William H. McCord & Children: Annie & John H. "Tip", Back Row: William Edward & Emmett Allen

There was originally a detached kitchen with a breezeway, which was enclosed. Outbuildings around the house included a root cellar, a chicken house and various feed and storage sheds. A "Delco" house was relocated behind the barn from its original position near the highway. Built in 1919, it housed a generator which supplied electricity to the McCord house and two others located directly across the road. These were the first electrified houses in the community.

The first floor porch, which continues around the southeast corner, was extended and lengthened in the 1920's to the wall of the south wing projection. The rear area of the porch was later enclosed to accommodate a bathroom. These are the only alterations to the main house and limited to the exterior. The structure of the house has not been changed.

The walnut handrail and turned balusters on the central stairway are reputed to have been crafted by Tom B. Wilson, a local cabinet and furniture maker whose work can still be found in Eagleville homes.

When the project work was completed, a very thorough report prepared by Linda P. Center, Anne Fottrell, Russ A. Kahn and Dorothy W. King. Their report and a nomination form were filed with the National Register of Historic Places and on December 20, 1984, the McCord Home and six acres of land was placed in the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior.

For the last thirteen years, this beautiful restored historical home has been the residence of Don and Ray Anne McCord, the great grandson of Dr. and Mrs. McCord. In the mid 1990's Don, Ray Anne and family started the enormous task of clearing the debris from the structure and the grounds. The house had remained empty for approximately 30 years except for the raccoon families that had occupied the home. Even with all the work the McCord's had completed on their own, it took more than another year working with contractors before the home was restored and ready for occupancy.

(Statement from the 1984 Historic Structure Report) "We hope we have been successful in documenting the house as it stands now and have hopes that some day it can be restored to its former glory."

AND IT WAS!

The Eagleville Community is very fortunate to have the Department of History from Middle Tennessee State University to select the McCord Home as one of their projects of the Historic Preservation Program. Their report and pictures provide very important historical material on early structures.



The McCord House c. 1900 - (L-R): "Aunt" Patsy, Mary Magdelene Puckett, Annie V. McCord, Laura Green McCord, John Harrison McCord



The McCord House c. 1984



The McCord House 2012