

McGee Home  
1833 Highway 131  
Baker Hill, Barbour County, Alabama 36027

Owner:

Mac Reeder  
1833 Highway 131  
Baker Hill, Alabama 36027  
334-687-8334

SUMMARY:

The McGee Home is a 1-story frame building dating from 1873 and currently maintaining a "bungalowoid" appearance derived from a wide projecting front-gabled porch. Facing a generally westward direction, the house possibly originated as a Victorian L-shaped cottage with early-20th century porch alterations and rear additions, but the owner feels that the current plan and type are original. An historic photograph from the early 1900s documents bungalow-style battered piers supporting the porch roof, but no earlier photos are available. Alterations made in 1971 include the widening of the front steps and the replacement of rotted porch piers with slender posts, the alteration of the front entrance, the reconstruction of the rock end chimney with brick, the addition of a den and garage on the south side of the rear, and the installation of sheet rock ceilings and walls on the interior. Vinyl siding was added to the exterior in 1996. In spite of these alterations, there is some degree of original fabric intact: 1/1 sash windows and surrounds, two original mantels, original interior doors with hardware and surrounds, some early furnishings including a roll-top desk purchased by L.L. McGee, and three light fixtures and a bath tub dating from the Wallace occupancy from 1918-22.

With the exception of the occupancy by Dr. G.O. Wallace from 1918-22, the McGee Home has been maintained continuously by descendants of Alpheus R. Chestnutt family. Chestnutt, who constructed the house in 1873, owned and operated a Dry Goods Mercantile on his property during the 1870s and 1880s in what was once known as Chestnuttville. (It became Baker Hill during the mid-1800s). The Dry Goods Mercantile burned in 1885.

Upon the death of Chestnutt in 1913, the property was deeded to Clarkie Chestnutt McGee (daughter of ARC) and her husband L.L. McGee. They lived in the house from Nov 11, 1913-Aug 12, 1918, when Dr. G.O. Wallace moved to the community. McGee had agreed to sell the house to Wallace in exchange for his willingness to practice medicine in the Baker Hill community for five years. In order to attract his medical practice, the McGee Home was equipped with the latest modern conveniences. These included an electric generator, indoor plumbing, and a private telephone line, each of these being a first in Baker Hill.

During the residency of Dr. Wallace, he was frequently visited by his grandson, former Alabama governor George C. Wallace. Dr. Wallace left Baker Hill in 1922, to open a practice in the more populous community of Clayton, the seat of Barbour County.

Following Wallace's removal to Clayton, L.L. McGee repurchased the home and resided there

until his death in Nov 1941. McGee was a notable citizen of the community, serving as a deacon at the County Line Primitive Baptist Church and as a dedicated Mason. He placed a strong emphasis on the value of an education, donating two pieces of property to the community with the vision of educating its youth. Saint Luke's Church and the Baker Hill Elementary School are located on these lots. McGee also provided his own two children with a college education during the Depression years.

Upon McGee's death in 1941, the house became the property of his daughter Anne McGee Reeder. It remained vacant between 1941 and 1971, until Mrs. Reeder retired and returned to Baker Hill to live. When she returned, the house was deteriorated and covered with kudzu. She returned it to a livable condition and resided there until her death in 1990, when it became the property of her son Clarence Mac Reeder.

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The McGee Home is eligible for listing on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage under Criterion A in the area social history. It remains as the residence of one of the most notable families in the Baker Hill community, and its significance is highlighted by the fact that the modern conveniences of the house played a role in attracting a physician to the community in 1918. With the exception of the five years during which Dr. G.O. Wallace was in residence, it has been maintained continuously by descendants of the original owner. The family has been a leader in the community, providing a retail establishment during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and being a benefactor of the community during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

RECEIVED

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUN 19 1997

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

*Added to Alabama Register*  
*10-1-97*  
Ala. Historical Commission

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name McGee Home  
other names/site number Reeder's Home

### 2. Location

street & number 1833 Hwy. 131  not for publication  
city, town Baker Hill  vicinity  
state Alabama code \_\_\_\_\_ county Barbour code \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 36027

### 3. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		_____	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Home and Doctors office of  
Dr. G. O. Wallace (8/12/18-6/27/22)  
First home in Baker Hill with  
private telephone, indoor plumbing  
and generator for electricity

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Home of Clarence Mac Reeder

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

other: I - house

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Field stones/cement

walls 1" X 12" heart pine

roof Fiberglass singles

other Wood porch

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SEE ATTACHED

### Present and Historic Physical Appearance

One story frame house with columned front porch. The house was constructed from 12 inch heart-of-pine boards obtained from the property back in 1873. Square pegged nails are found throughout the house. There are three original brick, wood burning fireplaces with original oak mantles with inlaid cut glass mirrors. There is one stone fire place with a 4 inch heart-of-pine mantle piece.

The house has 12 foot ceilings with fabric wall paper in the living room which was replaced with sheet rock in 1971. There is saw tooth molding in the living room and there are enamel door knobs with original wood doors in the living room.

There are two original hand painted electric light fixtures in the study and the master bedroom. The house has original 6 foot single panned glass windows with weighted pulls throughout. There are several pieces of original furniture that was purchased by L. L. McGee for the home. One significant furnishing is a solid oak roll top desk that was used by Mr. McGee for sorting mail prior to delivery.

There is a fiberglass shingled roof that was built over the original V-crimped tin roof. The original roof that was built in 1873 and is still intact and protected by the current roof.

### Alteration/Additions

A den and garage was added to the rear of the house in 1971. Sheet rock ceilings and walls have been installed for insulation purposes. Alterations to the exterior include widening of the front steps and changing the original square columns to round ones.

? Vinyl siding - yes 1996  
posts changed 1971

L. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to our history. The house was the

office of DR. G.O. Wallace's medical practice. Former AL. governor George Wallace spent his summers here as a child. House was the first to have indoor plumbing & electric generator and private telephone.

Significant Person

Dr. G. O. Wallace

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

A. R. (Alpheus) Chestnutt

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SEE ATTACHED

## 8. Statement of Significance

The house was built in 1873 by A. R. (Alpheus) Chestnutt. Mr. Chestnutt owned and operated a Dry Goods Mercantile in front of the house during the 1870's and 1880's in what was then known as Chestnutville. Mr. Chestnutt resided in the house until November 11, 1913 when at that time, the house and the surrounding property was deeded to their daughter Clarkie Chestnutt McGee and her husband L. L. McGee. The Dry Goods Mercantile was destroyed in 1885 by fire and was never reopened.

Chestnutville was renamed Baker Hill in the mid 1800's for two old maids (the Baker sisters). The sisters lived at the top of a steep hill that was often impassable by horse and buggy during rainy weather. People traveling would often get stuck in the thick red mud and would be stranded at the Baker's house. Thus the name Baker Hill.

The McGee's resided in the house from November 11, 1913 until August 12, 1918. L. L. McGee agreed to sell their house to Dr. G. O. Wallace in exchange for Dr. Wallace to reside and practice medicine in the community. Dr. Wallace practiced medicine in Baker Hill for five years. During this time the former governor of Alabama, George C. Wallace visited his grand-father Dr. G. O. Wallace on numerous occasions and spent many of his childhood days in Baker Hill.

Dr. G. O. Wallace agreed to practice medicine in Baker Hill because the house was equipped with many modern conveniences. These included and electric generator, indoor plumbing and a private telephone line. All which were a first in Baker Hill.

Dr. G. O. Wallace resided in the house until June 27, 1922. Dr. Wallace was elected at that time as the probate judge for Clayton, Alabama. Dr. Wallace decided to move his practice to Clayton in order to be closer to the courthouse and a larger patient population.

L. L. McGee bought the house back from Dr. Wallace on June 27, 1922 and resided in the house until his death on November 1941. L. L. McGee was a dedicated Mason and was a deacon at the County Line Primitive Baptist Church. Mr. McGee valued the importance of an education and believed that everyone should have equal access to an education. Mr. McGee donated two pieces of property to help fulfill his vision of educating the youth of Baker Hill. Saint Lukes Church and the Baker Hill elementary school are both built on the property that was donated by L. L. McGee. Mr. McGee also put his own two children through college during the depression years. Mitchell McGee became a veterinarian and practiced in Oklahoma. Anne McGee Reeder became a school teacher and taught throughout Barbour County before marrying and relocating in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Upon Mr. L. L. McGee's death in 1941 the house was left to his daughter Anne McGee Reeder. The house was vacant from 1941 until 1971. Mrs. Reeder retired and returned to Baker Hill to restore the house. The house was in ill repair and was over run with Kudzoo.

Mrs. Reeder spent the next three years repairing the house and returning it to its' preexisting condition as she remembered it as a child. Mrs. Reeder lived in the house until 1990. Upon her



death, the house was left to her son and current resident  
Clarence Mac Reeder.

Bibliography

Stephen, L. (1994). George Wallace, american populist.  
Reading, MA.

Conversations with: Jack Wallace

Johnny Seaborn

Kathleen Shirley

Anne Reeder

Carter, D. Politics of rage.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 4.08 acres

UTM References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Tract of land situated in Se 4 of Se 4 sec.2; tp 9; R 27.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mac Reeder - owner C. Mac Reeder  
 organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 4-7-97  
 street & number 1833 Hwy. 131 telephone (334) 687-8334  
 city or town Baker Hill state Alabama zip code 36037