

Dr. James Ferguson

6/28/1818 – 10/27/1892

Plot 7 Lot 1

Dr. James Ferguson was born in Kortright, N.Y. (Delaware County) on June 28th, 1818. The son of John Ferguson and Margaret (Skelly) Ferguson. His father John, also a doctor, lived to be 85 years old (quite old for the times) and his mother Margaret lived to be 61. Dr. Ferguson died on October 27, 1892 in Glens Falls at the age of 74. In 1843 he married Miss Cornelia Hager. They had two children, Walter and Margaret.

He read medicine in Davenport, N.Y. with Dr. John Ferguson and at Bovina, N.Y. with Drs. Green and Ferguson. He attended courses at Fairfield, N.Y. Medical College and graduated from the Academy of Medicine in Castleton, Vermont in 1841. After college, James set up a practice in the small town of North Blenheim in Schoharie County. In 1852, he packed up his family and moved to Glens Falls. They moved into 50 Warren Street and were immediately accepted and he began a lucrative business as a physician at 5 Culvert Street. He had an esteemed reputation and wielded influence as a public spirited citizen of strong willpower and positive ideas. He became Assistant Superintendent at Glens Falls Hospital and a member of Masonic Lodge 121 in 1859 and Master of the Lodge from 1862-1865.

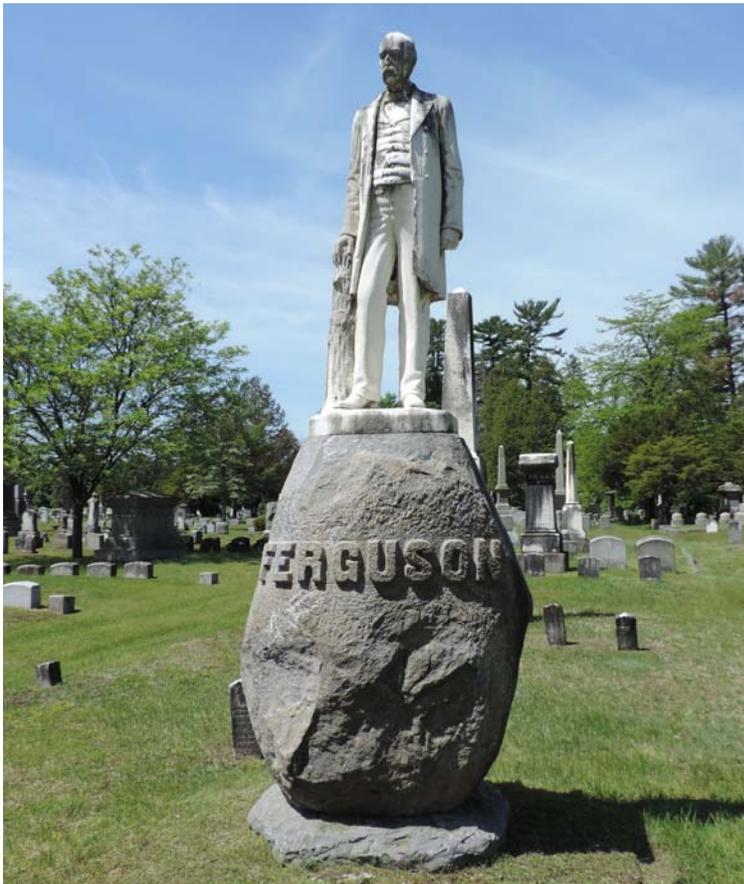
James retired from his practice after his father's death in 1873, and he decided to investigate his dream of owning a Lake George property. He had the opportunity to purchase the top of Prospect Mountain in 1877 and began building a hotel there. At this time, it was known as Mount Ferguson. Building a carriage road to the summit was also required. They experienced 3 fine seasons until a forest fire destroyed the Hotel and all its buildings. He rebuilt the Hotel as a Health Sanitarium for treatment of TB and the like, which opened in 1881. It is said that the "tonic air seems to give unaccustomed vigor during the day and you would only need half of the sleep". This undertaking ran successfully even after his death in 1892. It proved to be a special place of healing and serenity.

Dr. Ferguson died October 27, 1892 of Paralysis. He left directions to his family to erect a memorial fitting his station. His likeness is represented on the top of the headstone in the Bay Street Cemetery. Research shows that Dr. Ferguson went to New York City and posed for E.F. Piatti, a well-known New York sculptor. A model was made of plaster of Paris and then used on a 3 ton block of marble from Rutland, Vt. McHugh Brothers, Monument Makers were awarded the contract for the marble. Every measurement of the life size statue is correct even to his height of 5'10" with his hand on a stump of an oak tree symbolizing his love for nature.

Dr. Ferguson's son, Walter died at age 49 only a few years after his father; his Mother, Cornelia grieved very hard. Cornelia lived until 1911, dying at the age of 92. Their daughter, Margaret lived into her 70's. They are all buried in the family plot together.

Dr. Ferguson's Office at 5 Culvert Street, Glens Falls was designated as a Historic site in 1984 and placed on the National and State Registries of historic places. It was built in 1870 as a small square 1 ½ story "Second Empire" style building with a slate Mansard Roof and single center dormer.

Prepared by Mrs. Kyle Graves from a theatrical script written by William Woodward for the Chapman Historical Museums fall Glens Falls Cemetery tour in 2003. Questions and comments should be directed to the Glens Falls City Historian at: City Hall 42 Ridge St. Glens Falls, NY historian@cityofglensfalls.com 518-761-3871.



Dr. James Ferguson's life sized monument at the Bay Street Cemetery.