

William McDonald

1784 – 9/11/1870

Plot 7 Lot 38

William McDonald was born in New Milford, Connecticut in 1784. At the age of 8, he moved to Queensbury with his mother and brother, living near his uncle David Sandford in the area known as Sandford's Ridge. After returning to Connecticut for a time to be educated, William moved back to Queensbury where he worked as an accountant for his uncle David who owned a mercantile in the area of Oneida's Corners. From 1802-1803, at the tender age of 18, William was the Queensbury Town Clerk.

Moving yet again, William ran a business in Waterford, NY from 1808-1820. While in Waterford, he married Maria Jane Davis on January 16, 1809. William and Jane had 11 children, 5 of them born while in Waterford. Three of the five died at a very young age: Francis Mary who was born in 1812 and died four years later; William, born in 1815 and lived only two weeks; and Mary, born in 1817 only to die just two years later.

In 1820, with their two surviving children, Jane Marie and Richard, the McDonald's returned to the area again where he once again ran the mercantile established by his uncle. He was named the Commissioner of Common Schools in 1820 and was a Justice of the Peace in 1821, the year his son Leonard Gansevoort was born. In 1821, he was elected to the New York State Assembly and reelected in 1822, 1823, and 1829.

In 1823, William purchased the former Wing farm on the corner of Oak and Warren Streets, turning it into an elegant mansion. There, he and Jane raised their family, adding William H., Walter, Julia, Helen and Edward to the brood between 1823 and 1836. A committed public servant, William served as Vestryman and Warden of the Episcopal Church in 1839, was a member of the Masons, and was election inspector and Trustee of the Village of Glens Falls in 1843.

While in the legislature, William is credited with securing the funds for the survey and construction of the Feeder Canal. Although ridiculed by many who scoffed at the idea of a canal system, William persevered in his efforts. As a result, Glens Falls became a prosperous part of the Great American Canal Era.

In 1853, William became President of the Commercial Bank, later to be known as First National Bank of Glens Falls and presently a branch of TD Bank.

William McDonald died in 1870.

Prepared by Evelyn Donahue from a theatrical script written by William Woodward for the Chapman Historical Museums fall Glens Falls Cemetery tour in 2001.

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.



WILLIAM Mc DONALD
Died Sept. 16th 1862
Aged 71 years



MARIA JANE DAVIS
wife of
WILLIAM Mc DONALD
Died Sept. 16th 1862
Aged 71 years