

## **William McEchron**

**8/3/1831 - 9/2/1906**

### **Plot 4 Lots 32 & 33**

William McEchron was born on August 3, 1831 in Saratoga, NY (now Schuylerville) to David and Hannah Selfridge McEchron and died on September 2, 1906 at the age of seventy five years. In 1858 he married Sarah Elisabeth Carswell who was born November 15, 1836 the daughter of Daniel S. and Margaret Elisabeth Lytle Carswell and died on September 13, 1920 at the age of eighty three years. They both died at the family home located at 59 Ridge Street (now 65 Ridge) in Glens Falls. William, Sarah and many family members are buried in the family plot at the Glens Falls Cemetery.

William started his working career as a tow boy on the Champlain Canal in his early teens and he spent many years working as a lumberjack in the Adirondack forest before coming to Glens Falls in 1863. Their first home was a brick house on Elm Street where they stayed until purchasing the Lewis Arms house on corner of Ridge and Maple Street. The home was built by Arunah Adsit and had one of the first bathrooms in the Village. Mrs. McEchron loved the gardens on the property of the Ridge St home and turned them into a show place. In 1889 William and Sarah commissioned the construction of a home as a gift to their daughter, Margaret, upon her marriage to Hugh Bowden. This house was built along Maple Street in the back gardens of the family home and was later to become a convent for St. Mary's School nuns. William was so taken with the modern conveniences that were installed in the home that he decided to build a new home for the rest of the family. The new home was completed in 1891 and served the family well until Sarah's death in 1920.

In a deed dated July 12, 1921 the daughters of Mr. and Mrs. McEchron transferred the house to the City of Glens Falls to be used for as a Health Center and offices for organizations that provide charitable services to the residents of the Glens Falls area. The City Health Department moved from the second floor of City Hall to the house in November of 1921 with the City providing basic maintenance for the property until it was sold in 2012. It's currently (2015) Morgan & Co Restaurant.

When Sarah and William moved to Glens Falls he was offered a partnership with James Morgan in the company Cheney & Arms, which operated limestone quarries in South Glens Falls, and loading facilities on the canal and lumber mills along the river. For a short time, the firm was called Morgan & McEchron. Following Mr. Morgan's death, William became head of the Morgan Lumber Company and Glens Falls Paper Company in South Glens Falls. Eventually, he sold these companies to the International Paper Company.

Mr. McEchron served in many volunteer capacities during his lifetime including membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church, a charter member of YMCA, First National Bank Board of Directors from 1868 and as President for last six years of his life. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Glens Falls Insurance Company from 1886 until his death and a Village Trustee from March 1871 through March 1874 with the second year as Village President. His main achievement during that time being the startup of the Village water supply that is still in use today. In 1874 he served as President of the Village Fire Department. He was also a member of Glens Falls Academy board from 1895 – 1899. The last project that he was involved in was the construction of Christ Church, however he didn't live to see it completed. His wife and daughters donated

money for the completion in his name. The addition to the YMCA building on Glen Street that housed the pool and gym among other things were a gift from Sarah and their daughters after his death as well.

One of the largest projects that William undertook to provide a better life for Glens Falls residents was the construction of the Glens Falls Home for Aged Women on Warren Street. In 1899 the Glens Falls Home was established on the William McDonald homestead with the assistance of Mary Conkling the owner of the home at that time. In 1903 the new building was dedicated with a brass plaque being mounted on the wall on the front porch thanking William McEchron for his generosity in providing the new building. He was very upset and asked that the plaque be taken down so it was placed in storage until after his death then placed on the wall. This is one example of the McEchron family's generosity towards the community that they called home.

The book "Homely Recollections" was written about William and Sarah McEchron's life and times, by their granddaughter Katherine Bowden Cunningham in 1962. Her memoirs tell the story of the role the McEchron's played in this community, such as the YMCA, the Glens Falls Home, First National Bank of Glens Falls and the Glens Falls Water Works. The City Historians Office has copies of this book available for sale.

Prepared by Wayne Wright, Glens Falls City Historian from information in the historians files.



**The McEchron family grave stone at the Glens Falls Cemetery  
Photo by Wayne Wright, Glens Falls City Historian**