

Duncan McGregor

1808 – 3/19/1895

Plot 20 Lot 16

Duncan McGregor (also spelled MacGregor by some) was born in 1808 at the family farm in the Town of Wilton, NY and died on March 19, 1895 in the Village of Glens Falls, NY at the age of 86 the result of an influenza epidemic. His father, James McGregor, Sr., and mother, Elizabeth Louisa Cameron, were both born in Scotland, immigrated to Wilton, NY and purchased a large farm where they raised their family.

When Duncan's father died, he left his property to Duncan. Duncan's brother went to Court trying to get a portion of the farm, but was denied his claim to the land. Duncan spent the next several years working the farm, accumulating wealth and increasing the size of the farm by purchasing land around it. He was able to purchase the mountain just to the west of the farm house from the state for back unpaid taxes. Much of the mountains' slopes were lumbered and eventually Duncan had a road built to the top. At a church picnic held on the mountain top, the Rev. Mr. Adams, declared the mountains name as Mount McGregor in honor of the owner, Duncan McGregor.

Duncan realized the possibilities of the mountain top as a resort area adjacent to Saratoga Springs; so he began the construction of the first restaurant and small hotel in 1874. By 1881 the Saratoga, Mount McGregor and Lake George Railroad Company made an offer for the purchase of the Mountain that was accepted, allowing them the ability to build a narrow gauge railroad to the summit with a completion date of July 17, 1882. The hotel that McGregor built was purchased by Joseph W. Drexel of Philadelphia and moved to a location just off the mountains summit. This is the cottage where former President Grant finished his memories and died on July 23, 1885. The Hotel Balmoral was built on the mountains summit and flourished for fifteen years on the site. We recommend that you pursue the history of the mountain, since it is an interesting one that continues today with the State's closer of the minimum security prison located there.

Duncan and his family moved to Glens Falls and purchased the Sidney Berry home located on the bluff on the west side of Glen Street overlooking the Hudson River. He also owned other properties and a block of stores in the Village. His wife's name was Harriet G. Cornell and they had a son named John. It is believed that Harriet died in 1868 in Wilton and possibly moved to the Bay Street Cemetery. In 1880 Duncan is listed as a widow and John is not listed in the census.

On November 7, 1887 Duncan purchased this cemetery lot. The deed to the lot states that the following are buried on the lot. Helen, daughter of James & Louisa McGregor, who died at age six in 1825, Luella, wife of James McGregor who died in 1834 at age 58, Carrie L., wife of James N. Sprout, who died in 1877 at age 37, are all buried on the lot. Some believe that James, Duncan's brother and his wife Helen are on the plot. There are two unmarked grave that are believed to be Duncan McGregor and his wife Harriet and another unmarked grave that could be his son, John.

Duncan died on March 19, 1895 at the age of 86 in Glens Falls He was a wealthy man at the time of his death owning large tracts of land in Warren and Saratoga Counties. The property where his home was located was used as a carnival grounds for a few years then purchased by W. Irving Griffing who built the building currently owned by J. E. Sawyers. He sold horse harnesses, carriages, buckboards, horse shoes and other related items and operated a livery stable in the basement of the building. Morgan B. Leland was Griffing's business partner for many years.

The McGregor property or McGregor Park was a large parcel of land so he built several commercial buildings including the Post Building at the corner of Glen and Park Streets. This structure is still standing.

Duncan McGregor is another of the notable people buried in Bay Street Cemetery; but, unfortunately, he has no grave stone to prove it.

Prepared by Wayne Wright, Glens Falls City Historian from his research and a theatrical script written by William Woodward for the Chapman Historical Museums fall Glens Falls Cemetery tour in 2003 and 2014.

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.



Duncan McGregor grave site.



The McGregor home on the Glen Street hill overlooking the Hudson River.

Home was built by Sidney Berry.