

## McKownville: News And Comment

By FRED B. ABELE

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84031267/1981-05-15/ed-1/seq-7/>

Once more looking back to the founding family of our hamlet, the McKowns, the researcher becomes confused by the repetition of first names. As the family spread out in the area and beyond we find a proliferation of the names John, William, and to a lesser extent, James. It soon becomes evident that these are spread out over a number of generations.

Thus we find the progenitor John (1721-1809) who brought the family name to America in 1767, had a son William (1763-1843) who ran the tavern on the Great Western Turnpike at Fuller Road and was Guilderland's seventh supervisor. Of William's seven children, four survived to adulthood.

The oldest of these children was John A. McKown, born April 16, 1787 at the old Five Mile House at the "Kyl" on the King's Highway to Schenectady. This was the second John in the area in the third generation of McKowns in the area. He was six years old when the family moved to the new home in the clearing, later the Four Mile House on the Great Western Turnpike, the Inn of "Billy" McKown. He was 13 when the turnpike was opened in 1800.

On Dec. 17, 1810, at the First Presbyterian Church in Albany he was married to Catherine Hilton, born May 25, 1790, daughter of Peter W. Hilton and wife Elizabeth. They had four children, William (1811-1879) James French (1818-1880), Catherine (1829-1873) and Elizabeth, born 1823, date of death unknown.

John A. and Catherine built a large Georgian-style house on McKown Road near the bend in the road beyond where Short St. now intersects. It was built somewhere between 1810 and 1820. It seems safe to assume that the land on which it was located was given to the newly married couple as a wedding present by genial old "Billy" McKown carved out of his own Tavern Stand holdings.

The old house, second McKown house in the area, and its land passed to the Knowles family after the death of ~~John A. McKown~~. William and Margaret Knowles lived in the house for many years. It was sold during the 1960s to people whose only interest was land development. It was demolished in the summer of 1970. The writer visited the house after it had been somewhat vandalized during its unoccupied period. It had a fireplace in every room, much original hardware, and a large kitchen fireplace in the basement complete with a large crane.

In front of the house stood a huge spruce tree, probably well over a century old and visible for a long distance. However, it, too has now become a victim of demolition and nothing remains to mark John A. McKown except his headstone in Prospect Hill Cemetery where his remains were moved from the old McKown family plot.

\*a mistake - should be William McKown (d.1924) sale to Knowles in 1926