

PASSING OF AN ANCIENT LANDMARK

The McKelvy Storage Warehouse Erected Along the Pennsylvania

Canal Nearly a Century Ago, Removed.

Introduction: *The location of William McKelvy's warehouse was on the north side of the North Branch Canal just west of Market Street along West Ninth Street. He was one of Bloomsburg's early businessmen who opened a general store on the southeast corner of Market Square in 1816. His business became very successful, and over time he acquired considerable property in the town, began the Bloom Iron Furnace in 1854 located on the east side of Bloomsburg near the canal, and was one of the founders of the First National Bank established in 1864. He died on March 14, 1875, at the age of eighty-four. His son, Isaiah W. McKelvy, a business partner, succeeded him in the business. One of his interests was running a freight company using eighteen canal boats that carried cargo the entire length of the canal until it ceased to operate in 1900. The following article is reprinted as it appeared in The Democratic Sentinel, May 10, 1901.*



The McKelvy Warehouse on the north side of the North Branch Canal west of Market Street

The old storage warehouse on Ninth Street, which was torn down last January in order to make room for the dwelling houses erected by J. N. Webb and W. U. Jury, was an ancient landmark. The building was erected by William McKelvy, father of our townsman Isaiah McKelvy, in the early '30s, shortly after the Pennsylvania [North Branch] Canal was completed.

Some of our older residents still remember the time when the canal offered the only means of transportation outside of the public highways, and in those days the merchandise which came to Columbia County was by the old water route which has recently been abandoned. At that time the building mentioned above was used largely as a storage warehouse and was a distributing centre from which the residents of the entire county were supplied with goods, and which were hauled to various points by team, oxen being used extensively by many for that purpose.

With the advent of the steam railroad these methods of transportation have been supplanted by those which were quicker and more up-to-date, and with the building of the D. L. & W. Railroad, which was commenced in September 1857, a noticeable change made itself apparent and marked a point in progressive development which meant the complete abandonment of the famous waterway at no distant date, and in the year 1901 we see its actual occurrence.

The old building for the past ten or twelve years has not been used to any great extent, but its demolition last winter recalls to the minds of a number of the older residents that it meant the removal of one of Bloomsburg's most ancient landmarks.