**McCAIN HOUSE STORY**

The current building was built in two stages. Robert E. Brown, a local entrepreneur, businessman, and land owner, purchased the property from the Armstrong County Commissioners and started to build his house, the front portion of the current building, in 1842.

Before the house was completed, Brown sold it to Thomas McConnell and his wife, Olive Robinson McConnell, in 1842. Mr. McConnell was a banker, businessman, and investor in oil. It is not known when the original, modest two-story brick house was completed. The original house most likely extended back to the beginning of the existing gathering room and was quite plain. It had no shutters, grand porch, wrought iron fence, or sweeping lawn to the street.

Reverend H. L. Chapman, while serving in the Kittanning area from 1853-1854, described the McConnell home as follows: “a large brick house with ample grounds surrounded by fruit and shade trees and other indications of wealth and refinement.”

Mrs. McConnell was the daughter of Elisha Esq. of Parkers Landing. The McConnell’s had five children – Thomas McConnell, Elisha Robinson McConnell, William H. McConnell, Olive McConnell, and Elizabeth R. McConnell.

After the death of Thomas McConnell in 1888, the property was handed down to his daughters, Olive and Elizabeth, with each holding one-half interest in ownership. Olive McConnell married Oliver W. Gilpin and their daughter, Adele McConnell Gilpin, married Samuel McCain and here enters the McCain family name. After the deaths of Olive McConnell Gilpin and Elizabeth McConnell, Adele Gilpin McCain and her husband Samuel McCain became joint owners with Oliver W. Gilpin. The McCains held one-half interest and Gilpin held the other half. Upon the death of Oliver W. Gilpin, his interest was willed to his daughter Adele Gilpin McCain, who was also the granddaughter of Thomas McConnell. She then conveyed one-half interest to a group of trustees: Henry E. Moesta, Calvin E. Dunmire, and Calvin E. Miller. These trustees were designated as the judgement lien creditors of the deceased Oliver W. Gilpin.

The original house was enlarged during the late 1800s or early 1900s when the existing gathering room, kitchen, pantry, hallway, back stairs, grand porches, and porte-cochere were added. The modest two-story house was transformed into an elegant “mansion” with manicured lawns and wrought iron fencing. The addition more than doubled the size of the house.

In the past, there was another house located at the rear of the original property. That portion was sold to the Atlantic Richfield Company, who built a gas station there. The former gas station is now an automobile repair shop.

At one time, a bar was located in another building on the original property near the existing carriage house. Benefactors of the Society purchased that property and had the building torn down.

Adele Gilpin McCain, her husband Samuel, and trustees Henry E. Moesta, Calvin E. Dunmire, and Calvin Miller sold the property to the Kittanning borough school district in 1944 for the sum of $27,500. The McCain family, who were residing in the house at the time it was sold, may have had financial issues since the contents of the house were sold at auction at the same as the property was sold.

There is only one stained-glass window left in the building and it is located on the landing to the second floor (part of the original house).

The Armstrong School District sold the property to the Armstrong County Historical Museum and Genealogical Society on May 17, 1984. From 1971 to the date of purchase, the Society occupied the former elegant “mansion” under a rental agreement for $1.00 a year.