

# JAMES MCKENNA, FORMER CHIEF OF POLICE, DEAD

Last of the Allen Guard, Charter Member of Rockwell Post Had Creditable War Record Under Several Enlistments—(Three Governors Appointed Him Justice of the Peace—A Life of Varied Activity.

James McKenna, 82 years, a former chief of police, died the Civil war, last of the Allen in this region, a charter member of the Rockwell Grand Army post, died evening at 8:30 o'clock at Boylston memorial hospital where he had been for the last three years. His death may be described as a combination of the maladies that beset old age.

Mr. McKenna had been gradually failing in recent months. He was much for publication in his later years, in a letter which he sent The Eagle several weeks ago he sent a note that the communication might be his last. He was tall and stout and sturdy and bearded, a strong figure as he walked these streets in those years of his active life. He had of wide reading, exceptional memory and a remarkable gift of expression. Nothing was beyond the range of his interest. He wrote with illumination upon any theme whether religious, industrial or political. His mind was wonderfully well stored on all manner of subjects.

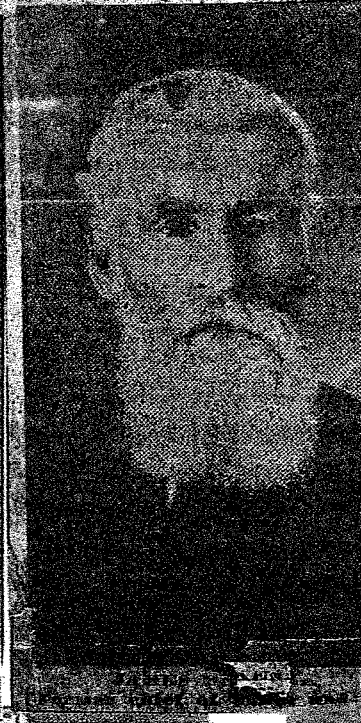
These are the survivors of the

COUSIN OF  
WILLIAM MCKENNA

James McKenna, sister Mary Keenan of the Holy Father convent in Springfield, Miss Eleanor G. McKenna, a nurse, and Miss Rosetta McKenna, a teacher at the Tucker school in this city, and a son, James of 82 Circular avenue, where the body of Mr. McKenna resides. There are five grand children. The funeral will be held at St. Charles church Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock, with a solemn high mass of requiem, and burial will be in St. Joseph's cemetery.

Born in Vermont Mr. McKenna's father, a native of Clonbulloge, Kings county, Ireland, landed in New York in June, 1834. The first work he did in the new world was on the Croton water works, the wages were 13 shillings, \$1.50 a day, with a refreshment allowance. From New York he went to Middlebury, Vt. Mrs. McKenna came to America in 1841. James McKenna was born in North Bennington, Vt., September 1, 1842. His parents moved shortly after his birth to Troy, N. Y., where they resided four years. They moved, in 1847, from Troy to Pittsfield, where they spent the remainder of their lives with the exception of two years in Lee. At that time, 1847, Pittsfield was a good-sized village. The coming of the railroad, now the Boston and Albany, in 1842, caused a healthy growth in Pittsfield, which has continued to the present day.

Mr. McKenna's first schooling was at a little brick schoolhouse which stood on the south side of West St., nearly opposite the present Briggs school. The family lived then in a little house known as "The Bush Tavern," which stood on the east side of the highway, south of the railroad, at the crossing where the underpass on Jason street now is. Mr. McKenna later, after the family had moved into town, attended a school on Penn St.



JAMES MCKENNA (Former chief of police and veteran of the Civil war, died by death.)

an hour for dinner. In winter Gay's work began at 5:30 a. m. and ended at 8 p. m. Saturdays the work finished about 3 p. m. The family moved to Lee in the spring of 1850 and there Mr. McKenna worked in a woolen mill. Upon returning to Pittsfield in June, 1856, he went to work for S. N. & C. Russell in the stone mill on Waboonah street near Pittsfield cemetery gate.

Satinettes—a wool filling on cotton warp—were made at the mill. McKenna learned to spin there. After three years he went to the Taconic mill. Bel Air was known as Bobbin in those days. Subsequently Mr. McKenna was with D. and H. Stearns in Stearnsville. In June 1860 he entered the employ of Logan, Joyner & Company as an apprentice to learn the trade of marble cutting. The works were located on the corner of North and Clough street, now Madison avenue.

Served in Civil War In April, 1861, the Civil war broke out. Mr. McKenna enlisted for three months in the Allen guard which came company K in the 8th Massachusetts volunteers. He was honorably discharged September 1, 1861, returned to the marble works. In the spring of 1862 Mr. Joyner sold out his partners and started in the stone line in Pierce's block on North street. Mr. McKenna went with Mr. Joyner who discontinued in the fall of 1862. Mr. McKenna was married to Ann Frances Callan, a daughter of Patrick James and Elizabeth T. (Kelly) Callan of Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland, September 1, 1862. Twelve children—nine daughters and three sons—were born to them. Mr. and Mrs. McKenna had just started housekeeping. With the discontinuance of business by

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The next school Mr. McKenna attended was in a small dwelling house taken for school purposes. It stood on the east side of North street nearly opposite what is now known as Madison avenue. A Miss Wright was the teacher and Mr. McKenna once remarked that she was the first woman he ever knew to wear rubber boots. The family moved to Barkerville and Mr. McKenna attended school there and also a public school started by the Rev. Cuddihy, in the rear of St. Joseph's church, in a room formerly occupied by the sexton. The last school Mr. McKenna attended was located at the west end of Silver lake. It had been only recently built at that time. A teacher was Miss Guild, daughter of Gerry Guild, well known and remembered as the pioneer iron man and coal dealer in Pittsfield. Pupils of the public schools at that time and for several years later, to purchase their own school books. The town furnished only the ink for writing.

**Went to Work in Mill**  
In 1853 Mr. McKenna left school to go to work in a cotton mill on Beaver street, now East street, run by J. L. Peck in the making of shop twine. Here he was paid \$2.50 a week. The hours of work were from 5 a. m. to 7:30 p. m., five days a week.

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He continued there until the St. Joseph's church edifice was begun in 1864 when he engaged in cutting stone there. In July he went to work cutting stone for Thomas Colt's new house on Wendell avenue now owned by former Mayor Allen H. Bagg. He enlisted for a year in Company 61st Massachusetts volunteers in August, 1864, and was discharged June 4, 1865, by reason of "services no longer required." In his war days he served under General Butler in the Gulf campaign. He went to work for J. L. Peck's woolen mill, for there was nothing to do then at his trade. In September, 1865, he entered the employ of S. N. & C. Russell where he remained two years.

In the fall of 1863 he went to work at the mill, cutting stone, and for the next two years worked on that building and the court house. The buttresses at the main entrance of the court house were cut by Gilbert M. Ligan of Alford and Mr. McKenna. The stones weighed over six tons each, the rough and it took the two men four weeks to dress them. They were paid \$4 a day.

In 1871 Mr. McKenna went to

marble business with John Devan on West street. In 1873 Mr. Devan sold his business interest to Mr. McKenna who continued it until 1878 a panic year, when business was generally affected. Thereafter he took small monumental contracts in granite and marble for three years. He then went to work for the Chester Granite company at Chester and remained with the company until 1881. He was appointed a policeman in the latter year and began his duties May 1, 1881. Thomas A. Oman, Frank E. Keenochan and John E. Merrall, all now dead, were selectmen in that year.

#### Was Chief of Police.

In the month of June following he was appointed by the board chief of police and served until October 1881. Of this experience Mr. McKenna once said:

"I didn't expect the appointment, but did finally accept and have always regretted the acceptance of that office because the police were not under civil service rules, the police question entered into politics, the annual election and the constant agitation and uncertainty and finding were very wearing on eye one at all sensitive and my head failed."

Mr. McKenna reorganized the police force, making it efficient so far as lay in his power. He had all members in uniform, overcoats and all. Previous to 1881 each man purchased his clothes when and where he pleased—no two were dressed alike—all wore blue, but of different shades and styles, and in winter wore different styles of overcoats and caps. They were of a nondescript character.

COTTON MILL ON BEAVER  
RUD BY J. L. PECK

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**A STATESMAN-TRANSLATOR**  
**War Poems and Other Translations**  
 by Lord Curzon of Kedleston  
 "Translation of the poetry of one country into the language and meter of another is an amiable hobby to which many persons—and, it would seem, 'public men' in particular—are prone," says Lord Curzon of Kedleston in the preface of "War Poems and Other Translations" (John Lane company; \$1.50). Where this is true—and it undoubtedly is true in England, though hardly in the United States—it is an indication that one of the composer of 'Home, Sweet Home,' a ballad that has taken a lasting place among the national songs of England, must be accorded a prominent place in our estimation of Bishop.

"It is curious, and a little disappointing, to find that the author of these universally familiar words was not an Englishman but an American, John Howard Payne. The song appeared in the opera 'Clari, the Maid of Milan,' and was first sung by Miss Maria Tree, who is said to have created quite a furore by her rendering of it. The published music, the tune can be traced as a Sicilian air, but there is no doubt that it is Bishop's own. Mr Fitzgerald in his book explains this by saying that Bishop was asked to edit a collection of national melodies, and having no Sicilian air wrote 'Home, Sweet Home,' and dubbed it Sicilian. Whether this is so or not, it seems quite certain that Bishop was the composer.

"The song, of which over 300,000 copies were said to have been sold in the first year alone, has always been a favorite item in the repertoire of many famous singers. Jenny Lind used to sing it frequently as an encore. Once, when singing in America, she was told that Payne was among the audience. The scene was the National hall at Washington, and Philadelphia Record, as quoted by Fitzgerald, in describing the occasion, says: 'When she had charmed the audience by her singing, she turned her face to where Payne was sitting and sang 'Home, Sweet Home,' at the close of which a whirl of excitement and enthusiasm swept the vast audience.'

"This was in 1850, when Jenny was engaged by Barnum to make a tour of the United States, where she remained nearly two years. She was accompanied by Sir Julius (then Mr) Benedict, and her tour is said to have realized a profit of \$20,000, the whole of which she afterwards devoted to founding and endowing art scholarships in Sweden and to various charities in this country.

"Antoinette Sterling was another whose singing of 'Home, Sweet Home' lingers gratefully in the memory of those who had the privilege of hearing her. She herself has related how in the days when she was singing at Henry Ward Beecher's church in America, one of the congregation, an old gentleman of 70, once waited behind to speak to her after the service, and said that he had something which he thought would interest her. He then told her that he had been an intimate friend of John Howard Payne, the author of 'Home, Sweet Home,' from whom he had received the words of two extra verses, which had been added to the song later, and had never been published. He then handed her a copy of the verses, which ran as follows:—

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,  
 And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile;  
 Let others delight in new pleasures and roam,  
 I'll return overburdened with care—  
 My best solace will smile on me  
 As I roam.

**WAR VETERAN TELLS OF DEVENS' BRAVERY**



**JAMES M'KENNA,**  
 Civil war veteran and former chief of police of Pittsfield, who recently observed his 75th birthday.

James McKenna, veteran of the Civil war and former chief of police of Pittsfield, recently observed his 75th birthday, and fittingly entertained his friends and neighbors with first-hand stories of gallantry and bravery of his commander, General Devens, for whom the new Ayer camp for the draft army is named.

During the bloody battle of Balls Bluff, which raged for two days, Mr. McKenna says, General Devens, after receiving a wound in the thigh, plunged into the river and swam the entire distance to the other shore with other men of his command. Mr. McKenna was born in Bennington, Vt., in 1842, is married, and raised a family of 12 children, of whom only five are living.

the Civil war, last of the Allen gun in this region, a charter member of Rockwell Grand Army post, died evening at 8:30 o'clock at Boyland Memorial hospital where he had been for the last three years. The cause of death may be described as a combination of the maladies that attend old age.

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