

The American House
Contributed by Donna Brock

The American House was originally located on what is presently the corner of Main and High Streets and



was the town's first tavern.

It was built by David Reynolds as a two room log structure in 1767. After he was convicted of passing counterfeit money to a peddler, Reynolds was hanged in Morristown, leaving his wife to run the business. She sold it to Jacob Sharp in 1823.

Sharp replaced the log structure with a five room stone and wood building he called "The Betsy Sharp Hotel", in honor of his daughter.

The business would change hands several times over the next six decades. Nathan Stiger purchased the business in 1840 and changed its name to "The Musconectong Hotel". In 1851, James A. Hamilton purchased it and ran it until his death in 1854 at which time it was sold to Caleb A. Fairclo. Peter Churchill purchased the building in 1860 and built a new three-story colonial structure he named "The American House."

The business had new ownership in 1871 and in 1875, it was purchased by Colonel Caleb H. Valentine and John Welsh. Captain David Trimmer managed the hotel for the Valentine and Welsh. In 1879 ownership changed hands again when Reuel McCracken, who had learned the hotel business from his father, William McCracken, purchased the establishment. William McCracken had been the proprietor of the Warren House, another hostelry in Hackettstown, for many years. The younger McCracken ran the American House until his death in 1922. When he died, his daughter, Minnie and her husband, Alonzo Herrick took over until 1930 when the hotel was sold for the final time and torn down.