Washington Saloon (a.k.a. McPhee's Place)

William H. "Bill" McPhee, Proprietor

SW Corner 1st Ave. and Lacey Street

1904 – 1917

Bill McPhee

1850 - 1934

McPhee owned a saloon at the town of Forty Mile, Yukon Territory, in 1896. His saloon was where George Carmack brought news of his gold strike on the Klondike River. McPhee owned the Pioneer Saloon in Dawson City, moved to Nome in 1899, and then to Fairbanks in 1904.

CONTRACTOR BUILT BLOCK THREE TIMES

One of the best known contractors in Fairbanks, Angus McDonald, will go to Chena today and remain there until the next boat bound down stream, when he will leave for the outside. He will probably be best known as the man who built the Washington block on the corner of Lacey and Front street, three different times. The first building was a two-story structure and was burned down in the latter part of the winter of 1905. Bill McPhee, the owner, had been outside, and had gotten a short distance this side of Valdez, when he learned that the Washington block was on fire. The second building was a one-story structure similar to the one now standing on the old site, and was destroyed in the big fire of May 22nd, 1906. Mrs. Robert Hutcheon, who had occupied the store on the corner of Lacey and Second street the fall before, but left during the winter to purchase her next season's stock of millinery goods, arranged with Mr. McPhee for the same store on a given date in the spring. She wired from Dawson that she would be in Fairbanks to open on a certain date, and the telegram was received while the building was burning. McPhee, not to disappoint her, contracted with McDonald to start to rebuild as soon as possible, and while the ruins were smoking on the Front street end of the lot, work was started on the Second avenue side, and Mrs. Hutcheon was enabled to open her store on the date her lease called for.

History of the "Washington Block."

Fairbanks Daily Times 09-24-1908

Ceramic whiskey flask made in Germany.

Pete Buchholz, Bill McPhee, James Wickersham. UAF-1968-69-1945

Pet moose ate stale bread and drank beer in the Washington Saloon.

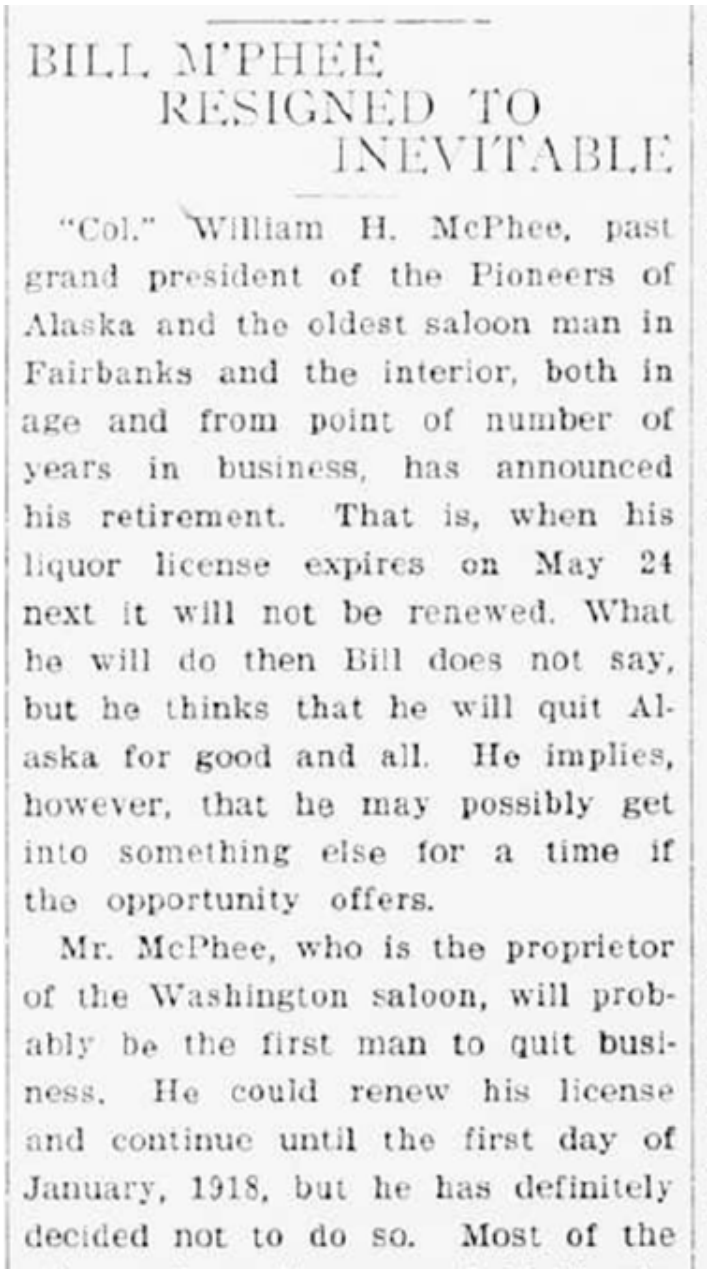
MADAME SQUIRREL IS LAID AT REST

Friends Attended Obsequies of Washington Saloon Pet Yesterday.

After working hard all winter to entertain the guests of the house, Madame Squirrel, the popular pet of the Washington saloon, died late Monday evening, and was buried yes-

Fairbanks Daily Times

03/18/1914



BILL M'PHEE
RESIGNED TO
INEVITABLE

"Col." William H. McPhee, past grand president of the Pioneers of Alaska and the oldest saloon man in Fairbanks and the interior, both in age and from point of number of years in business, has announced his retirement. That is, when his liquor license expires on May 24 next it will not be renewed. What he will do then Bill does not say, but he thinks that he will quit Alaska for good and all. He implies, however, that he may possibly get into something else for a time if the opportunity offers.

Mr. McPhee, who is the proprietor of the Washington saloon, will probably be the first man to quit business. He could renew his license and continue until the first day of January, 1918, but he has definitely decided not to do so. Most of the

McPhee closes the Washington Saloon because of the coming prohibition.

Fairbanks Alaska Citizen 01/29/1917

In 1921, McPhee was considered for the Chief Ranger job at Mt. McKinley National Park. Harry Karstens was appointed.

McPhee moved to San Francisco in 1921 and died there in 1934.

In 1927, the McPhee building was converted into garage. The Fairbanks Ice Museum now occupies the location.