

From Janet Burkhart e-mail, May 24, 2005 (Janet is descended from Clayton Perry McCain, brother to Adaline Josephine McCain)

## OLIVER PERRY AND GRACE HEATH MCCAIN

A brief sketch of the life of Oliver Perry and Grace Heath McCain as told by their daughter, Emma McCain Voelker.

I do not know a great deal of my father's life previous to the time that I arrived on the scene but to this I truthfully testify, he was one of the finest Christian men I've ever known. If he were living today he would be called an extremist.

Poor. Yes ! But extremely proud, for which, my mother never quite forgave him, for as she often said. " Poverty and pride would not mix."

Oliver Perry McCain, my father and his brother, Lee, being of Scotch-Irish descent, were brought to this country when quite young, by an uncle whom father remembered as very wealthy and who the small boys believed had defrauded them in some way; for as the years passed he became very cruel, punishing them at the least provocation.

I will relate an incident which caused a good neighbor to lay in a complaint and the law took the little boys and placed them in the home of the kind people ( whose names I have forgotten) who treated them as sons, educating them through grade school someplace in Ohio. I can't recall the name of the town.

The incident referred to above is as follows: The two small boys had been given permission by their aunt to go wading in a stream which ran through the pasture and told them to be sure to return before dinner else a punishment would be forthcoming. While the boys were wading, they found a jug of liquor on the creek bank and decided to taste is and must have thought is was pretty good for they kept on tasting of it until they noticed the sun was going down. They knew they must hurry home but found when they tried to walk, they kept falling down, however, they managed to get to a path through a ripened wheat field which was almost as tall as their heads and thought by stooping low they might slip in without being noticed. But, alas, due to their weak knees they fell many times into the wheat. When they finally got near enough to the house they saw their uncle waiting with a rawhide, a whip used to drive oxen. They were whipped with this until great gashes were cut in their backs.

As a result of this the boys were taken from the uncle and given to the good neighbors who informed the officers of the extreme cruelty of their uncle. These people were Baptists and it was their guidance which led my father to study for the ministry.

Just before or soon after entering Hanover College, my father was married. His young wife died in giving birth to a baby girl who was named Matilda. When the baby was a little over a year old and while still in college, he fell in love with Grace Heath, the daughter of Michael and Dorice Heath.

Mother was only sixteen years old at this time and her parents who were very wealthy farmers objected quite strenuously to a marriage, not because of her age but because father was a poor theological student working his way through college.

After Mother was forbade to see father, they were married without her parents consent and she was given twenty acres of ground and told she could never return to the home in which she was raised. She never saw her old home again, but later in life she would often

talk to us and tell us how beautiful and wonderful her home had been, just half way between Hanover and Maticin on the beautiful Ohio river.

Looking back I know she often became very lonely and homesick for father was no farmer but strictly a scholar.

To make a living, he quit college before he could be ordained and sold the small tract of land and moved to Arcola, Illinois where he took up carpentering as a trade. He later moved to Effingham, Illinois, and built a very pretty home but mother never did like it for she always wanted to live in the country.

Eventually they sold the home in Effingham and bought a brick home in Ewington, Illinois, with seventeen acres of fruit trees. We had a large terraced yard surrounded on two sides by immense black locust trees.

This was where I spent the happiest days of my life, and I often thought that surely heaven could be no better.

There were eleven children in our family as follows:

Matilda, by father's first wife

Melvina, died in infancy

Myra, married to Thomas Sloan

Lee, died in infancy

Oliver Cromwell

Clayton Perry

Alice Susan

Adaline

Emma Florence

Idella Grace

Charles Spurgeon

Jonathon David, died in infancy

( Transcribed as written by Janet Lee Coats Burkhart )