

## Charlotte Ann Perry Scott (1831-1917)

Charlotte Ann Perry was born on September 18, 1831 in Athens, Tioga County, Pennsylvania. She was one of seven children born to Reverend David I. and Maria (Birdsall) Perry. Her parents were both natives of the state of New York.<sup>1</sup>

When her father was still a young man “he united with the Presbyterian Church at Cambridge, New York” and then began studying to become a minister. After completing his studies he preached for a few years at several different churches in New York, married, and started a family.<sup>2</sup>

When Ann (as she was known to most) was about 10 years old, her father moved their family to Sycamore, Illinois where he was put in charge of a Presbyterian church.<sup>3</sup> He then moved the family to Bloomington in January of 1844 where he had been invited to preach at the Presbyterian Church (which became known as First Presbyterian Church).<sup>4</sup> When they arrived in Bloomington, they first stayed with the family of John W. Ewing who was an elder of the Presbyterian Church in town.<sup>5</sup> After a few days, the Perry family settled at the North-West corner of Prairie and Front Streets.

First Presbyterian Church had been organized in November of 1833 by Mr. Amasa C. Washburn, a young teacher from Vermont. During the early years of the church there was no permanent building. Services were held in various locations including a small room in the McLean County Courthouse. In 1846 construction began on the church’s first building and was completed in 1849.<sup>6</sup> Her father David preached at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church for about 7 years.

When the Perry family first arrived in Bloomington it was a small prairie town of about 800 people. There were several dry goods merchants including William Temple, A.J. Merriman, and William Allin. There were no banks, nor city schools. Ann recalled later in life that Bloomington remained “sidewalkless” for many years after her family arrived and that the mud was so deep that it was almost impossible to get around especially for women. She said that:

*“School children with the proverbial disregard of children of that day as to unpleasant things went on their way to school through deep sticky mud. Business and professional men went about their duties in trousers tucked in the tops of their old fashioned high topped boots. In the muddy season, sociability had to be eliminated from the joys of the inhabitants of the town because the condition of the streets.”<sup>7</sup>*

According to Ann, the deplorable conditions of the streets and lack of sidewalks “grated upon the feelings” of her father and other progressive minded men “who

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<sup>1</sup> Milo Custer. “Recollections of Mrs. Charlotte A. Scott.” (August 30, 1915) McLean County Historical Society Archives. 1

<sup>2</sup> “The Mayors of Bloomington. David I. Perry—1850-1851, Chas. P. Merriman—1851-1852.” *The Daily Pantagraph*, April 21, 1906

<sup>3</sup> John Burnham, George P. Davis, and Ezra Prince. *Transactions of the McLean County Historical Society, Bloomington, Illinois, Volume II: School Record of McLean County with Other Papers.* “Bloomington, Illinois,” by William Bach. (Bloomington, IL: Pantagraph Printing and Stationary Co., 1903) 570

<sup>4</sup> Roy A. Ramseyer. *The First One Hundred Years of Second Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, Illinois.* (Bloomington, Illinois: 1956, Second Presbyterian Church) 16

<sup>5</sup> “The Mayors of Bloomington”

<sup>6</sup> Mary Kimball. “Historical Sketch of the First Presbyterian Church,” *Program of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the First Presbyterian Church November 1933.* 15

<sup>7</sup> Madame Annette. “City’s First Mayor: Annette Interviews the Daughter of the Executive.” *The Daily Bulletin*, May 8, 1900

concluded that as long as Bloomington remained as it was,” it would not grow or prosper. It was determined that Bloomington needed a mayor and aldermen to “look after the interests of progress in other things as well as sidewalks.”<sup>8</sup>

According to one account, Ann’s father David became the first mayor of Bloomington because no one else wanted the job. “He took it because it was forced upon him and it was hard to turn aside his friends who were unanimous in the desire for his acceptance of the office which had” been newly created upon the incorporation of the city of Bloomington on February 19, 1850.<sup>9</sup> In addition to David Perry being elected as the first mayor of Bloomington in April of 1850, the results of that first election included the election of four aldermen (J.N. Ward, B.H. Coffee, William Gillespie, and Dr. E. Thomas)<sup>10</sup> and John M. Scott was elected city clerk and city attorney.<sup>11</sup>

During her father’s one term as mayor (1850-1851), his duties were not very extensive which allowed him to continue to serve as a minister at First Presbyterian Church. His duties as mayor most likely included keeping the “streets of the city in as presentable a condition as possible, regulating the police department, and trying to get some service out of the volunteer fire department.”<sup>12</sup> After his term as mayor ended in 1851, David also retired from being a minister. At some point after this he began working at the McLean County Bank which had opened in 1853. According to the Bloomington City Directory, David worked as a cashier and book keeper at the bank from at least 1854 through 1860.<sup>13</sup> In 1870 he was listed in the U.S. census as being a farmer and living in Normal Township.<sup>14</sup> It was on this farm, which may have been owned by his son-in-law Judge John Scott, which he spent the remaining years of his life until he passed away on May 15, 1876.<sup>15</sup>

Ann may have met her future husband John M. Scott through her father’s work as mayor of Bloomington (as John served as city clerk and attorney during her father’s administration) or because John was a member of First Presbyterian Church where her father was the pastor. John Milton Scott came to Bloomington in 1848 after completing his legal studies and passing the Illinois Bar. John and Ann were married by Reverend Fielding N. Ewing, (the minister at First Presbyterian Church in Bloomington at the time), on April 27, 1853.<sup>16</sup> Their home was located at 312 S. Main Street where they lived all of their married lives.

The Scotts had two children who unfortunately died when they were very young. Their first child was a son named Samuel Perry Scott. He was born on August 29, 1854. Just two days before his first birthday, he passed away on August 27, 1855. The cause of his death is unknown. Two years later, John and Ann had a daughter named Sarah Davis Scott who was born on February 9, 1857. She was possibly named after Sarah Davis (wife of Judge David Davis) as John and Ann knew David and Sarah Davis through his work as a lawyer. Sadly, Sarah Davis Scott died two years later on September 18, 1859. John, Ann, and their children must have been well liked in Bloomington because on the

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<sup>8</sup> Annette, “City’s First Mayor.”

<sup>9</sup> “The Mayors of Bloomington.”

<sup>10</sup> “Things About Town: Election Results,” *The Western Whig*, April 27, 1850

<sup>11</sup> Annette, “City’s First Mayor.”

<sup>12</sup> “The Mayors of Bloomington.”

<sup>13</sup> *Bloomington City Directory 1855-1856 and 1859-1860*

<sup>14</sup> United States Census 1870: McLean County, Illinois, Normal Township

<sup>15</sup> “The Mayors of Bloomington.”

<sup>16</sup> “Married,” *The Bloomington Intelligencer*, May 4, 1853

occasion of the deaths of the children, poems were printed in one of the Bloomington newspapers in honor of Samuel and Sarah. John or Ann saved those poems (along with a lock of hair from one of the children) which were preserved in their family bible.<sup>17</sup> Both children were buried in the City Cemetery in Bloomington. John and Ann did not have any more children after the death of their daughter Sarah.

John and Ann were devout members of the Presbyterian Church. They became members of the Second Presbyterian Church in Bloomington in 1860. Prior to this, they had most likely been members of First Presbyterian Church where Ann's father Rev. David Perry had been a pastor. The cause of them joining Second Presbyterian Church was probably the issue of slavery. John was opposed to the expansion of slavery into new northern states. John and some other members of First Presbyterian church did not agree with the fact that slavery seemed to be supported by other members and also the church itself. In 1850 the church had hired a new minister, a southern man named Fielding Ewing. At a prayer meeting he read an article commending slavery and that did not bode well with some members of the church. So, in 1855 a group of people, mostly members of First Presbyterian Church, formed their own church with a strong foundation against the expansion of slavery. This new church would come to be known as Second Presbyterian Church and still exists today.<sup>18</sup> They remained active members of Second Presbyterian Church for the rest of their lives.

In comparison to John's active and very public political and legal career, Ann maintained a low profile around town. John considered her as his equal and life partner.<sup>19</sup> "Although she lived a quiet life, she ever took an interest in the development and life of the city and was ready to assist every worthy case."<sup>20</sup>

John had a long and distinguished political and legal career. He served as the judge of the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit in Illinois from 1862 to 1870. In 1870 he was elected to the Illinois State Supreme Court, a position which he held until 1888. His most famous ruling during his tenure on the Illinois State Supreme Court came in early 1887 when he overturned the death sentences of the Chicago Haymarket Riot defendants who were convicted of murder. After retiring from the bench he studied history and traveled. He was one of the founders of the McLean County Historical Society in 1892 and served as president of the society until his death in 1898. John also enjoyed teaching and gave lectures about law and history to young children and was also a regular speaker at the Law School at Illinois Wesleyan University.<sup>21</sup>

In December of 1897 John's health began to fail as a result of a malignant carbuncle (tumor-like growth) which had begun to grow on the back of his head. After over a month of suffering from this illness, John Scott died on January 21, 1898. He was buried in an elegant mausoleum in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery.

In his will, John appointed a trustee to make sure that every part of his will was followed to the last detail. However, he gave "absolute and exclusive control" of his entire estate to his wife Ann for as long as she lived.<sup>22</sup> John did however leave specific instructions for her as to how to manage the estate. He also left instructions for Ann to

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<sup>17</sup> John M. Scott family bible, McLean County Historical Society Archives

<sup>18</sup> Guy Fraker. "Early History 1855-1900," *Sharing the Heart of Christ in the Heart of the Community: Second Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, Illinois*. (Bloomington: Illinois Graphics) 9

<sup>19</sup> Laurie Peterson. "Biography of John Milton Scott," 2008

<sup>20</sup> "Widow of Judge J.M. Scott Dies." *The Daily Bulletin*, December 2, 1917

<sup>21</sup> Peterson, "Biography of John Milton Scott."

<sup>22</sup> Will of John M Scott, page 7. John M. Scott Collection, McLean County Historical Society Archives

have a “suitable mausoleum” built for him, their children, and her when she passed away. He wished that their names and the names of their children be inscribed on the mausoleum.<sup>23</sup> The mausoleum cost \$3,000 (which in 2012 would be about \$78,000) and was built of Berea granite and lined with pure white Italian marble.<sup>24</sup> After he was buried, their children Samuel and Sarah were reinterred with him in the mausoleum.

Ann continued to live for another 20 years after John’s death. Her sister Adelaide Perry, niece Francis I. Perry, and great niece, Gladdis M. Pickard, all lived with her at her home on South Main Street between 1900 and 1917 when she passed away.

On December 1, 1917 Charlotte Ann Scott died at her home at the age of 86. The immediate cause of her death was thought to have been acute gastritis (an inflammation of the stomach that develops quickly over a short period of time). While her sudden death took many in town by surprise, she had been ill for some time.<sup>25</sup> In her obituary, she was remembered as one of the most highly esteemed residents in town. She was buried in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in the family mausoleum next to her husband and their two children.

In accordance with her husband’s will, after her death the entire estate was bequeathed to their other heirs which included Charlotte’s sisters Adalaide and Sarah Perry, a niece Frances Perry, and several member’s of John’s family as well. His will also included a provision that their large estate should be used to create the John M. Scott Health Care Trust fund after Charlotte and all other heirs died. This fund would be responsible for creating a new hospital that would not discriminate against its patients and provide treatment to all who needed it regardless of age, sex, race, or economic status. If this was not needed, it was to be used to build an industrial school for girls.<sup>26</sup>

When the last heir died in 1976 there was no longer a need for either a hospital or a girl’s school. Brokaw, Mennonite, and St. Joseph hospitals had an occupation rate of only 70%, and social attitudes no longer required a separate school for girls. This left the question of what to do with the Scott’s \$6.9 million dollar estate up to the Bloomington courts.<sup>27</sup> The case dragged on until October 9, 1981 when it was finally settled. The city of Bloomington received 55% (\$5.4 million) to create a preventative health center which would serve disadvantaged citizens and be named The John Scott Health Resources Center. The Morgan-Washington Home (originally founded as an industrial home for orphaned and needy girls), received 31.67% (\$3.1 million). The home built an additional home for ten emotionally and behaviorally disturbed girls with the funds. The Bloomington School District 87 received 13.3% (\$1.3 million) to fund educational programs at the Morgan-Washington home and improve and expand upon its existing vocational educational programs.<sup>28</sup>

By: Candace Summers, 2012

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<sup>23</sup> Will of John M Scott, page 3

<sup>24</sup> Peterson, “Biography of John Milton Scott.”

<sup>25</sup> “Mrs. J. M. Scott is Dead.” *The Daily Pantagraph*, December 3, 1917

<sup>26</sup> Will of John M. Scott, page 12-13

<sup>27</sup> “Hearing Reveals Scott Estate \$6.9 million.” *The Pantagraph*, July 24, 1978

<sup>28</sup> Bob Holliday. “Scott Estate Accord Given Official Okay,” *The Pantagraph*, November 21, 1981, p. A-3