

Charlotte Ann Perry Scott (1831-1917)

Charlotte Ann Perry was born on September 18, 1831, in Athens, Pennsylvania. She was the youngest of seven children, born to Reverend David I. and Maria (Birdsall) Perry, who were both from New York.

Her father became a minister after joining the Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, New York. After his studies, he worked at various churches in New York, got married, and started a family. When Charlotte (known as Ann) was about 10, her father moved the family to Sycamore, Illinois, where he led a Presbyterian church. In 1844, the family moved again, this time to Bloomington, Illinois, where her father became the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. Bloomington at that time was a small town with only 800 people. There were no sidewalks, and the mud made it difficult to get around. Ann remembered how the streets were so bad that children had to walk to school through deep mud, and businesspeople wore high boots to manage the mess. The poor condition of the streets bothered her father and other people in town, so they decided Bloomington needed a mayor and city leaders to help improve the town.

In 1850, when Bloomington became an official city, Ann's father was elected the first mayor because no one else wanted the job. During his one-year term, he continued to work as a pastor. After his term as mayor, David Perry retired from ministry and later worked at the McLean County Bank. He passed away in 1876.

Ann married John M. Scott on April 27, 1853. John had moved to Bloomington in 1848 and became a lawyer. They had two children, both of whom died young. Their son, Samuel, died at almost one year old, and their daughter, Sarah, died at age 2. The community mourned their losses, and poems were published in their honor.

Ann and John were active members of the Presbyterian Church, later joining the Second Presbyterian Church in 1860 because of disagreements with the church's stance on slavery. John, who was against slavery, helped form the new church, which still exists today. While John had a successful career as a judge and Illinois Supreme Court justice, Ann led a quieter life but was still very involved in the community. John retired in 1888 and later became a historian. He passed away in 1898 after a long illness.

In his will, John gave Ann control of their estate, which included a plan for a mausoleum to be built for him and his family. Ann lived for another 20 years after John's death. She passed away on December 1, 1917, at the age of 86. She was remembered as one of the most respected people in town and was buried beside her husband and children in the family mausoleum.

In her will, Ann left their estate to various family members and set up the John M. Scott Health Care Trust. This fund was meant to build a hospital or an industrial school for girls. However, by the time the last heir passed away in 1976, the need for such a school or hospital had passed. The estate, which was worth \$6.9 million, was used instead to fund health and educational projects in Bloomington. A health center, the John Scott Health Resources Center, was created to help disadvantaged people, and other funds supported an emotional care home for girls and educational programs.