

Where there's no progression, there is certainly regression!

OC McLoed links back to early days of Browns Valley

By Karen Zach, Around the County

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Oliver Charles McLoed was a Progressive, both in politics and his personal life. His philosophy most certainly was that "where there is no progression, there is certainly regression," because the world never stands still; life never stops. Something else he wholeheartedly believed in was, "If you discover you're on the wrong road, then lose no time getting off it," and get yourself on the right track. What great ways to view life!

On the 2nd day of 1859, O.C. as he was familiarly known came into this world on the McLoed homeplace near Browns Valley, born to Oliver and Charlotte (Penn) McLoed. The families came from Bourbon County, Kentucky and prior to that, the Penns came from Ann Arundel County, Maryland. O.C. had three brothers and five sisters, most staying in the area. They married into some of the Brown Township famous early families: Boyd, Graham, Davis, Jones and others.

In Oliver's first years, he remained home, aiding his father on the farm while finishing up high school which for that time was an impressive feat. For a short time, he also taught school, receiving a license July 26, 1879 for six months. His scores for the teacher's license exam were Orthography: 85; Reading 80; Writing 75; Arithmetic 80; Geography 60; English Grammar 65; US History 55; Physiology 75; Theory 70; Neatness of Manuscript 80; with a general average of 71.78. Not all that great but probably about the scores I'd have gotten only higher in English, lower in Arithmetic.

When 26 years old, he married Mary Myers (born White County, Indiana 8 July 1859) and they would go on to rear five children: Elizabeth, Charlotte, Mary, Oliver and Sue. Desiring a different view in life, he worked for a few years as a druggist at Crawfordsville, then back to the area of his birth where he opened a combination drug and hardware store.

His great grandson Marty McLoed was generous enough to send me his handwritten (perfect handwriting, by the way) "cures" he used when in Browns Valley: one for cleaning, McDud's Prescription for ?; a blood purifier (sic), Itch ointment, along with liniment, one for harness blacking, loved this one of hair restoration and then red and white fire (medicinal alcohol?). Certainly, I'd never drink red fire as it had gum shellac in it – yikes and his note at the bottom of the recipe said, "to mix with hands for fear of combustion." White fire was about as bad.

Not sure what condition powders would be but perhaps change of life or nerves, it being but five ingredients including ginger, black Sulphur, salt petre and Rosia. One T. every 24-48 hours "according to disease," but again he could add two other noted ingredients, "if necessary." Oh and yuck even one for gonorrhea with injections 2-3 times a day. He had two cough syrup recipes, one completely from scratch and the other beginning with squills Company Syrup and a couple of items added.

In an ad while at the Browns Valley store, he promised to stick strictly to physicians' prescriptions and that he carried "pure wines and liquors for medicinal use." He also was quite proud of being a "dealer in Dr. Harter's celebrated family medicines."

His druggist medal spelled the town's name differently than I've ever seen it: Browns.valley with a period between Browns and Valley. I had to laugh at that one! As per his advice above, when you're on the wrong road, get off of it and start elsewhere as did O.C. and family when he decided not only a move of careers but one to a different place would be fruitful so it was off to Anderson where he got into real estate which he followed several years then returned back home improving a 261 acre farm (130 timberland), enjoying his family and friends and involved in the Knights of Pythias and Tribe of Ben Hur. He was a well respected farmer and man plus spent several years raising and selling impressive stock.

Many family members made much of their lives, but one in particular put a bit of flair in almost everyone who went to Waveland High School in the 50s and 60s, that was O.C.'s nephew, Leroy Oliver who went back to the original spelling of the name, with a Scottish flair, MacLeod. He was born in Anderson, Indiana the son of Leslie McLoed Oct 20, 1893. He received his bachelor's from DePauw and worked in the newspaper business in various publications throughout the West. Later, he joined an advertising agency in a large California firm, and eventually began writing poetry and then on to books. As a WHS senior in College Prep class under one fabulous teacher, Waveland HS and Wabash College grad, Ralph Williams, we were required to read the first of his books, Three Steeples that was basically centered on MacLeod's hometown of Browns Valley where he grew-up. On a personal note, it was the talk of our family's evening meal for several weeks as I'd read a part of it and either my mom or dad was say, "Oh, that's ___ or I remember her," type things. It was a lot of fun, and they both read the whole thing after me.

Daughter Charlotte Blanche McLoed was a teacher and married late in life to LeRoy Franklin Pooler. They lived in Kalamazoo, Michigan where he is buried but she returned home after his death. No children. Elizabeth Sophronia McLoed did the same, married late in life to Otis Charles Allee, who had been in major trouble even down to an involvement in a murder trial. Why she married him remains to be seen but they were married in August of 1954. He died in July of 1979 she in October the next year. Buried Oak Hill. Susan Laura McLoed married Kenelan Williams in Crawfordsville 31 July 1916. Married young enough, but no children. Mary "May" McLoed married Paul Couger, who fought in WWI, returned home, and while they were happy and living on the farm, she took sick and passed away at the age of 29. Again, no children. Their youngest, Oliver L. McLoed and wife Etelka Cox stayed in the area. They had two children, Richard Neil and Carolyn. I can imagine the excitement O.C. had enjoying those two. Carolyn produced two girls and Richard made up for the rest totaling four sons and two daughters.

Mary, O.C.'s beloved wife passed away at a young age on 7 Nov 1906. He remained a widower until his death on May 7, 1947. They are buried in the Crawfordsville Masonic Cemetery ...

Karen Zach is the editor of Montgomery Memories, our monthly magazine all about Montgomery County. Her column, Around the County, appears each Thursday in The Paper of Montgomery County.

