

Margaret Ann (Claflin) (Miles) O'Halloran

Born 2 February 1827 in Troy, Bradford County, Pennsylvania.¹

Died 11 May 1904 onboard the SS Cedric, bound from Liverpool to New York.²

Buried in Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York.³

Margaret, or Maggie, as she was called by the family, was the eldest and least unconventional of all of Buck and Anna's daughters. She was regarded as the plainest of the of their five daughters and could be described as the most level-headed. She rarely made public waves, and when she did it was with provocation and usually involved her sisters or daughters. She held no illusions about her sisters and would bluntly and shrewdly comment when the situation warranted.

Mrs. Miles said that herself and all her sisters were doctors, but stated that she would not have her mother die in the house for \$50,000; that if she did get sick there she intended to send her to either the house of Mrs. Brooker or Mrs. Sparr, as in that event they could not charge her with poisoning the old lady.⁴

"There is no language that can describe the rascality of Victoria Martin. She lived with me for awhile at 142 West Seventieth Street several years ago, and tried to clear me out, just as she has now cleared out my daughter. Neither she nor her daughter has a friend in the family, while my other sister, Lady Cook, formerly Tennie Claflin, is honored and loved for her charitable work in London and Portugal."⁵

Maggie went into the Claflin family business to support her family after her husband went blind in 1863. She practiced first in Cincinnati, then for a time with Canning Woodhull in Chicago and New York until his death in 1872. After Woodhull's death, she advertised her daughter Ella Celeste as "A Wonderful Child," much as Maggie's sister Tennessee had been advertised by their father.⁶

Maggie's first husband, Enos Miles, was the son of an enterprising and well-to-do pioneer founder of Chesterville, Ohio.⁷ The couple married in Newark, Ohio, on the 4th of July 1844.⁸ Miles had a number of occupations in their Mt. Gilead home. He sold patent

¹ Charles Henry Wight, *The Genealogy of the Claflin Family*, New York, Press of William Green, 1903, p. 124.

² "Claflin Sister Dies on Ship," *The Sun* (New York), 14 May 1904; "Mrs. O'Halloran Dies," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 14 May 1904.

³ Green-Wood Cemetery records, https://www.green-wood.com/burial_search/

⁴ "Excitement in the Woodhull Mansion," *New York Herald*, 9 April 1872, p. 8, col. 5

⁵ "Again Victoria Woodhull," *The New York Times*, 16 June 1895.

⁶ *New York Tribune*, 5 September 1883, p. 8, col. 1.

⁷ Pat Ebersole, ed., *Early Settlers of Chester Township*, www.selover.lib.oh.us/history-of-chesterville 1995. The house his father built is still standing in Chesterville, and is a Greek Revival historic landmark.

⁸ Wight, op cit, p. 255.

medicine as a ‘druggist,’⁹ ran a hotel, was a grocer,¹⁰ and was, for a time, a school teacher.¹¹ He was also a forty-niner, going to California in 1848¹² and again in 1852.¹³

In his capacity as a druggist that Miles brought a young Canning Woodhull into the practice as a doctor. Woodhull, of course, had no medical degree or training; he was as much into the laying on of the hands as any of the Claflin “physicians.” However, it was Miles’ decision to do this that led to the introduction of Woodhull to the 15-year-old Victoria Claflin and their elopement shortly after.

While Victoria Woodhull’s biographers occasionally paint stories of Maggie being unfaithful to her husband or other marital discord, there is no evidence of this. Rather the opposite, the couple were the longest married of all the Claflin daughters (only son Hebern remained married longer). Their divorce occurred in Chicago on 24 June 1867,¹⁴ right before Margaret joined her sisters in New York to work in their Magnetic Healing Institute. Though the divorce cited ‘extreme cruelty,’ it goes without saying that the reasons on a divorce filing at the time bore little truth as to the real reason. People, especially women, used what excuses would secure a divorce.

Miles went blind in 1863,¹⁵ and for a time, the Claflins, particularly Tennessee, did support him and assist him – even moving their infirmary to his hotel when he became the proprietor of the Fox River House in Ottawa, Illinois.¹⁶ Despite his efforts advertising catering, rooms, fine dining and the like, his business was most likely compromised by his blindness and the presence of Tennessee as the “wonderful healer” and Buck as the cancer specialist.

After the divorce, Miles returned to Ohio and set up a business in Mansfield, Ohio, as a book agent. Well regarded in the community; he died 28 April 1887.¹⁷ The couple’s eldest son, John Euclid, usually known as J. Euclid, had quickly realized his fortunes were not with his Claflin kin in New York. He joined his father in Mansfield. J. Euclid wended his way westward from there, first as a train engineer then establishing a successful real estate business in Pueblo, Colorado. From there he moved to Santa Monica, California, where he became a well-known and prosperous citizen.

⁹ Luther A. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll’s Century History, Santa Monica Bay Cities*, 1908.

¹⁰ 1850 US Federal Census of Mt. Gilead, Ohio.

¹¹ 1860 US Federal Census of Mt. Gilead, Ohio.

¹² James Miller Quinn, *A History of California and an Extended History of its Southern Coast Counties, also Containing Biographies of Well-Known Citizens of the Past and Present*, V. 2, Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1907, pp. 1578-9. J. Euclid Miles. The real-estate interests of Santa Monica have an able representative in the above-named gentleman, who, although he has been a resident only since 1902, is a prominent factor in the material upbuilding of the city. He is a native of Ohio, his birth having occurred in Morrow county. His father, Enos Miles, was born in Chesterville, that county, where he carried on a grocery. In 1849 he crossed the plains with ox-teams and came to California, locating in Marysville, Yuba County, where he engaged in placer mining, and was also one of the builders of the Yuba river dam. Having returned to the east in the mean time, in 1853 he made a trip to the coast by way of the Isthmus, and located once more in Marysville. Subsequently, he returned once more to Ohio, and in Mansfield, that state, his death occurred in 1888. His wife was in maidenhood Margaret A. Claflin.

¹³ 1852 Census of the State of California, Yuba County.

¹⁴ *Chicago Republican*, 24 June 1867, p. 7.

¹⁵ “The Claflin Clan,” *New York Herald*, 8 June 1871, p. 6, col. 4.

¹⁶ *Ottawa Free Trader*, 27 February 1864, p. 2, col. 5.

¹⁷ Obituary, *Richland Shield and Banner*, 30 April 1887

Maggie, meanwhile, continued her practice on her own in New York where she made the occasional angry splash when one of her daughters was in trouble.¹⁸ Usually, it was Ella Celeste, her second youngest, who was the trouble maker. In 1879 Ella married Francis W. Elkington, purported to be a Captain of Her Majesty's Foot, but who actually was a two-time bigamist in England and forger and embezzler in the United States. Maggie chased Elkington through the courts of New York and, when satisfied that he was safely in jail, secured a divorce and married Ella off to Dr. Charles Stuart Welles, a respectable medical doctor of a good family.¹⁹

Both of Maggie's daughters were close to their cousin Zula Maud Woodhull. In 1892, the family entered into an agreement whereby Ella would run a salon for intellectual discussion, similar to what Victoria had done in the early 1870s, and Dr. Welles would manage the American affairs of Woodhull's newest publication, *The Humanitarian*.²⁰ The agreement did not last long. Zula broke a long-standing promise to her mother that she would never marry and became engaged.²¹ Her enraged mother soon arrived in New York to put a stop to things. In her fit of anger, she tried to evict the Welles family from the home she had set up for them. She burned the furnishings – and the women's clothing and children's toys – because they were (depending on the source) “cursed” or “not up to standard.” Lawsuits ensued, and Victoria was arrested. She posted bail of \$1000 in cash, had her court appearance and sailed for England immediately after. She never returned to the United States.²²

Maggie remained close to Tennie, who had married Sir Francis Cook. Tennie took Maggie's children under her wing. Ella and her husband went to live in England, and Tennie also saw to the education of Ella's children and introduced them to society. Ella's daughter, Utica Caroline Celestia, married the man who would become the famous conductor, Sir Thomas Beecham. He also happened to hail from a fabulously wealthy family, but the marriage, though lasting for years, was never a happy one. Maggie's daughter, Carrie Zula, married in the States, and while Tennie disapproved of her choice of a husband, Carrie remained by Tennie's side she died.

Maggie remarried William D. O'Halloran in 1889. Their home at 127 West 121st Street in what was then fashionable Harlem was owned by Lady Cook. Their lives were

¹⁸ In August 1871 there are accounts in the press of Stephen Pearl Andrews “accosting one of Mrs. Miles daughters” and that charges had been filed. Counter-charges claimed that the fuss was an attempt to extort money from Woodhull, Tennessee and Blood. Nothing came of the matter, nor was the daughter ever named. See: “The Andrews Outrage,” *Daily Milwaukee News*, 16 August 1871, p. 1 and “Stephen Pearl Andrews,” *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, 23 August 1871, p. 3.

¹⁹ “Too Much Mother-In-Law,” *The New York Times*, 10 March 1880; “Arrest of Capt. Frank Elkington,” *The New York Times*, 3 March 1879; “‘Capt.’ Elkington Held,” *The New York Times*, 5 March 1879; “Elkington Again in Court,” *The New York Times*, 13 June 1879; “Victoria Woodhull's Niece,” *The New York Times*, 9 May 1880; “Mrs. Elkington and Her Husband,” *The New York Times*, 25 September 1880; “Mrs. Woodhull's Niece's Marriage,” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 11 August 1881; and *New York Tribune*, 5 September 1883, p. 8, col. 1.

²⁰ “War at the Woodhull's,” *The Sun* (New York), 15 June 1895; “No Pistols in This,” *New York World*, 15 June 1895; “All for a Photograph,” *Waterbury (CT) Evening Democrat*, 15 June 18895 “Again Victoria Woodhull,” *The New York Times*, 16 June 1895;

²¹ “Again Victoria Woodhull,” *The New York Times*, 16 June 1895.

²² “Again, Victoria Woodhull,” *The New York Times*, op cit; “No Pistols In This,” *New York World*, p. 8, col. 6; “War at the Woodhulls,” *New York Sun*, 15 June 1895, p 1, col. 3; “All for a Photograph,” *Waterbury Evening Democrat*, 15 June 1895, p. 1, col. 6; “Mrs. Martin Arrested,” *New York World*, 13 July 1895; and “She Gives Bail and Sails Away,” *The New York Times*, 13 July 1895.

uneventful and quiet. It was on the return trip from one of her frequent visits to England that Maggie died on 11 May 1904, on board the SS Cedric as it neared its harbor in New York. She as buried in Green-lawn Cemetery with her son Canning D. Miles, her sister Utica V. (Claflin) Brooker, and Victoria's first husband Dr. Canning Woodhull.