

Reuben Buckman “Buck” Claflin

Born about 1796 in Massachusetts.¹

Died 19 November 1885, Kensington, London, Middlesex, England.²

Buried 24 November 1885, Highgate Cemetery West, London, Middlesex, England³

Buck was the son of Robert Claflin and Anna Underwood.⁴ No record of his birth has been found but most census enumerations identify Massachusetts as his place of birth and allow for a near calculation of his birth year.⁵ It is known that his grandfather and father had been in Westhampton, in Hampshire County, then they were in the Sandisfield area of what became Berkshire County where some of the family lived out their lives. Buck’s father later moved to Troy, Bedford County, Pennsylvania around 1800. The complex borders between Hampshire, Hampden, and Berkshire Counties in Massachusetts, together with New York’s Columbia County and Connecticut’s Harford County have frustrated genealogists for years. This coupled with the difficulties in this area following the Revolution,⁶ make establishing *genealogical* evidence extremely difficult and time-consuming.

There is no doubt that Buck has the worst reputation of anyone involved in the Woodhull story and has become a grotesque caricature.⁷ There is also no doubt he was a many-faceted individual, often an opportunist, with an entrepreneurial bent. Buck certainly had his faults, but it must be remembered he was the father of, and had a life-long relationship with, two of the most remarkable women of the Gilded Age, Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin.

His modern reputation of a conniving, child abusing, snake-oil-peddling, petty thief, and con man all come from Woodhull’s biography by Theodore Tilton. Tilton’s account was picked up by later biographers as factual. Yet, much of what Woodhull related to Tilton was manufactured to create public sympathy for herself at a time when details of her eccentric family were creating scandals in the press. Woodhull’s later chroniclers, including 19th century newspapers, indulged in a game of ‘telephone,’ using

¹ Charles Henry Wight, *Genealogy of the Claflin Family*, New York: Press of William Green, 1903, p. 63, who says Sandisfield in Berkshire County was the place of birth with no source.

² Victoria Woodhull Martin Papers, Southern Illinois University (hereafter SIU) box 1, folder 8.

³ Burial Register, www.deceasedonline.com 24 November 1885. Available for a fee.

⁴ Wight, op cit., also the Victoria Woodhull Martin Papers, SIU, notes by Buck of his parents. Box2, folders 5-6.

⁵ 1850 US Federal Census of Homer, Licking County, Ohio; 1860 US Federal Census of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio; 1860 US Federal Census of Anderson, Madison County, Indiana. Buck’s two appearances in the 1870 US Federal Census of New York (one dated 29 August, the other 2 December) give his place of birth as Pennsylvania and New York, and his birth year as 1798 and 1790, respectively.

⁶ A financial depression, Shay’s Rebellion, as well as the fact that many of the men who fought in the Revolution from this area returned home to find themselves penniless and their farms foreclosed. More than a few were happier to take the new government’s offer of land than a pension, and as a result many of these men are found in central New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania where their records are more easily deciphered.

⁷ See: Theodore Tilton, *Victoria C. Woodhull. A Biographical Sketch*, New York: The Golden Age, 1871; Emanie N. Sachs, *The Terrible Siren*, New York, Arno Press, 1972 (originally published 1928); Johanna Johnston, *Mrs. Satan: The Incredible Saga of Victoria C. Woodhull*, New York: Putnam, 1967; Neal Katz, *Outrageous: The Victoria Woodhull Saga, Volume One: Rise to Riches*, Top Reads Publishing, 2015; Mary Gabriel, *Notorious Victoria: the life of Victoria Woodhull, Uncensored*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Algonquin Books, 1998.

Tilton's lurid accounts of the family as hard facts. Buck's reputation has thus suffered more than any other family member.

Many of the events related in Tilton's biography can be questioned, especially Victoria's account of her father's physical and suggestions of sexual abuse. It is always dangerous to apply modern cultural beliefs to other eras, and the mid-19th century was a time when it was a generally accepted belief that to "spare the rod, was to spoil the child."⁸ There is no doubt he was stern and a disciplinarian, Buck had been called those things when he was a school teacher in Pennsylvania as a young man.⁹ There is no doubt that, to modern minds, Buck misused his daughter, Tennessee, by making her work for long hours at a young age to generate support for the family. That he did so is little different than the scores of young children in the same era who were put to work in mines, tanneries, and other more dangerous occupations. The allegations of Buck's sexual abuse of his daughter stem from a misreading of Tilton by Emanie Sachs, where she said, "Victoria asserted her father had made her a woman ahead of her time." What Tilton actually wrote (relating the story of Victoria's marriage to Canning Woodhull) was "the parents, as if not unwilling to be rid of a daughter *whose sorrow was ripening her into a woman before her time*, were delighted in the unexpected offer [of marriage]."¹⁰ From Woodhull biographers Emanie Sachs through to Barbara Goldsmith, the suggestive use of sexual innuendo has been picked up and transferred as if fact.

By contrast, Woodhull's own description of her relationship with her father, published in 1895 in her unfinished autobiography describes a much calmer and familial relationship:

During those years of childhood, I was my father's constant companion. He would consult me about things over which he was perplexed, and often would say, "Which shall I do—this or that?" I somehow knew just what he wanted ... The love of study which I early exhibited gave my father intense pleasure, and when he would wish to aid me, I would say: "No, dear father, I have those teaching me who are invisible to you," and then he would talk to me about complex law matters, telling me his hopes or fears of this and that case, always counselling with me. When he was returning home after some law business, I was always the first to meet him, and find out whether victory or defeat had been the result of his labors."¹¹

⁸ Years later, in an encounter in New York, an acquaintance of Victoria's was waiting in an anteroom to see her. "I was in the house and sitting talking to one of V's sisters, which one I have forgotten, when an old man went thru the room. The Sister said in a scornful voice, 'that's the man they said kept will switches in a barrel of water with which he beat his children,' implying that it was utterly absurd and false."

Correspondence of H.J. Woodhouse to Emanie Sachs, Emanie (Nahm) Sachs Arling Phillips Papers, Western Kentucky University, MSS 317, Box 5, Folder 6.

⁹ Clearfield, Pennsylvania, *Republican*, 11 December 1872, p. 1. See also *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 4 November 1871, p. 2, one of the sisters (it is not stated which) denied accusations of cruelty 'preferred against Victoria's parents by Tilton in his extraordinary biography of that female.'

¹⁰ Tilton, Theodore, op cit., p. 14 and Emanie Sachs, "*The Terrible Siren.*" *Victoria Woodhull (1838-1927)*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928, p. 23.

¹¹ Martin, Victoria Woodhull, *Autobiography of Victoria Claflin Woodhull*, 1895, pp. 2-3, in the collections of the Robbins Hunter Museum, Granville, Ohio.

As a young man, Buck lived briefly in Clinton County, Pennsylvania, where, a local paper later wrote of the villagers' reminiscences of Buck once his daughters were famous. He was a school teacher and "considered a rigid disciplinarian and a pretty smart fellow, though somewhat erratic."¹² He then kept a store with one of his brothers, then moved to Sinnemahonig, Pennsylvania, with his brother Abner. There the two kept a tavern and a small store and dealt in lumber. In the time he spent here, the article states, Buck and his brother were "clever fellows: shrewd, yet standing fair with their associates, and, despite having only one eye, Buck was one of the best rifle shots in the valley."¹³

While in the Susquehanna River Valley, Buck became friendly with Capt. John Snyder, the son of Pennsylvania's third governor, Samuel Snyder, and later member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Snyder and Buck both loved horse racing; Snyder kept a private race track at Mahanoy, his estate in Chapman Township.¹⁴ Both were gambling men and enjoyed life in fast society. The men became friends and business associates. Snyder operated a successful paper mill in nearby Selinsgrove

Buck married Roxanna "Anna" Hummel in 1825 by legendarily winning her father's blessing with a scheme involving counterfeit money.¹⁵ Whether true or not, the couple married and soon Margaret Ann, named for her two grandmothers, was born Mary, Malden and two daughters who died in infancy were also all born in Pennsylvania. The family was briefly in the Beech Creek Area of Clinton County where Buck was taxed as a storekeeper in 1829.

Likely with the assistance of John Snyder who had a need for timber at his papermill, in 1830 Buck procured land warrants in Chapman Township, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania.¹⁶ The parcels of undeveloped land were bounded by the Sinnemahonig river. As Buckman Claflin, he appeared in the 1830 US Federal census in the village of Chapman. In the household there was a young daughter (most likely Margaret) and another couple about the same age as Buck and Anna – probably Abner Claflin and his wife, because it is known Abner and Buck were in business together. In December 1833, Buck was the postmaster of his village but by August 1835 the family had moved to Streetsborough, Portage County, Ohio, where Hebern was born.¹⁷

That Snyder and Buck had business dealings is reflected in Snyder's will, written in 1846 and executed in 1850. "I hope all difficulties in settlement of my unsettled accounts with Buckman Claflin, Homer, Licking County, Ohio, will pay more than my

¹² Clearfield, Pennsylvania, *Republican*, 11 December 1872, p.1.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Chapman Township later became Union Township, and Lycoming County later became Snyder Township.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* The story went on to relate that John Hummel did not approve of his daughter marrying Reuben Claflin because he was poor and "he wanted to start his daughter out fairly provided for." To convince his future father-in-law, Buck filled his pockets with counterfeit money and threw himself into a river. When he was miraculously "rescued from a watery grave," he appeared at the Hummel household. Telling them his incredible ordeal of near death, he emptied his pockets of the drenched money. Thus, Anna's father was conned into believing Buck was wealthy, "and so Buck Claflin is said to have won his wife."

¹⁶ C49 (title 19 September 1870) 100 acres, warrant dated 26 July 1830, H:69:165; C52 100 acres, surveyed but no patent recorded; C54 (title 18 May 1839) warrant dated 13 November 1830; and C53 (title 18 March 1839 to John Caldwell) warrant dated 13 November 1830. Records of the Land Office, Warrant Registers, 1733-1957, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17-88WarrantRegisters/LycomingPages/r17-88LycomingPageInterface.htm>

¹⁷ Wight, op cit.

debts. His agreement will show our relations. For the land on the Sinnemahoning, about one thousand acres, I have no deeds. Mr. Claflin is honest and will account for store debts, land and all.”¹⁸ As will be seen later, Snyder and his heirs never recovered the expenditures. However, Buck did receive title to one of the land warrants in 1870.¹⁹

In 1838 Buck purchased property from Crandall Rosecrans²⁰ in Homer, Ohio. The house was noted in the tax records as being on Lot 37 (he bought it for \$50 and mortgaged it for \$25).²¹ His gristmill was on Lot 31; it was purchased for \$3,300 and carried a mortgage of \$1,950.²² Buck evidentially had plans to expand the mill property, and his plans may have been a part of a scheme with John Snyder to take advantage of the canals in the region for shipping purposes. With the ensuing recessions during these years, and the subsequent devaluation of land, Buck often found himself in financial distress, and by 1852 had to get out from under the burden of his debts. Accordingly, he sold his home and remortgaged his mill, and then fled to Mt. Gilead. John Snyder’s 1850 death could not have helped matters.

With the exception of two other daughters who died in infancy, Homer was the birthplace of Buck’s remaining children.²³ For a time, Buck’s brother Amos and his family were also living in the small Homer home. Amos and his family remained in Licking County and are buried there,²⁴ and Buck’s aunt Sarah Claflin Sharpe also lived out her life in Licking County.²⁵ The family remained in Homer until about August 1852, when Buck and Anna paid off their mortgages and quitclaimed their house.²⁶ They moved to Mt. Gilead in Morrow County, Ohio, to live with the couple’s eldest daughter, Margaret. Margaret’s husband Enos Miles was prospecting for gold in Yuba, California at the time,²⁷ making room for the extended Claflin clan.²⁸ That Miles was in California was also convenient for Buck: he owed, and had a judgment against him for the money, some \$700. Most of the family was certainly in Mt. Gilead by the Fourth of July 1853, when 15-year-old Victoria accompanied Dr. Canning Woodhull to the town’s Fourth of July Picnic festivities, after which they eloped.

While Buck certainly experienced some trouble with the law when he was lived in Homer, this was nothing compared to the accusations of post office fraud, insurance fraud, horse thievery and horse sales fraud heaped on his reputation. As a balance to all his accusations, it is important to note that he was never incarcerated. His granddaughter,

¹⁸ Sachs Archives, WKU, Box 5, Folder 3.

¹⁹ C49 100 acres, warrant dated 26 July 1830, H:69:165. Land Office Warrant Registers, op cit. Buck received title on some of the other lands in 1839.

²⁰ The father of the Civil War general William Rosecrans.

²¹ Licking County, Ohio, Hall of Records, GG:285, 66-177-178.

²² Licking County, Ohio, Hall of Records, Deeds 62:446-448.

²³ Victoria California, born 1838, Utica Vantitia, born about 1843; Tennessee Celeste, born 1845; and Odessa Maldiva, born 1849 (died young). The couple had to other daughters, Hester Ann and Delia, both of whom died in infancy.

²⁴ Amos’s daughter, Thankful, traveled with Buck’s family to Cincinnati and remained with them until the family moved to New York.

²⁵ All are buried in the Hartford Cemetery, Croton, Licking County, Ohio. Sarah Sharp died in 1846, Amos Claflin died in 1892.

²⁶ Licking county, Ohio, Hall of Records, Deeds 61:492.

²⁷ Census of the State of California, Yuba County, 3 September 1852, p. 66, line 39. He gave his occupation as “miner.”

²⁸ Malden, by this time had left and was married. Hebern was soon to follow.

Zula Woodhull, by contrast, painted Buck as a wealthy horse trainer and successful businessman, but her account is so wildly exaggerated to the point it cannot be considered a reliable source.²⁹ The truth is most likely to be found in-between.

Between Victoria's 1853 marriage to Canning Woodhull and 1860, Buck moved the family from Mt. Gilead, stopping briefly in Columbus and Williamsport, Pennsylvania, before arriving in Cincinnati by 1859, where the family moved in with his son Malden and his family. Buck and his family, Anna, Utica, Tennessee, and Malden along with his wife and children, were enumerated in the 1860 US census in Cincinnati. In it, Buck was called a "shoe man." On the same date in the same census, Buck was also enumerated as a lawyer in Anderson, Madison Co., Indiana with Annie and Tennie, with both he and Anna each holding \$2000 in real estate.³⁰ All the while in these years, Buck advertised his young daughter Tennessee as "The Wonderful Child" who could heal any complaint under the sun. The business supported not only Buck and Anna, but also Tennessee's sisters and a collection of cousins, aunts and uncles. Cincinnati would be, for the next seven years a home base for the extended family, as Buck took Tennessee on the road to do her clairvoyant healing.

In early 1861, Buck, his wife, and daughters Tennessee and Utica were arrested in Pittsburg, and put on trial for "humbugging" the public. The outcome of the trial is not known, but Buck separated from his wife and daughters for a while, a pattern of behavior he continued for many years afterwards. Anna headed towards her family in Merrill County, Pennsylvania,³¹ while Buck went off on his own. The family did not reunite until early 1862 when Buck was supposed to have stood for Tennessee when she divorced her first husband.³² Tennessee, the family's primary source of income with her clairvoyant healing, had enough after the indictment and ran away, appearing in De Kalb County, Illinois, in the Summer of 1861, where she married a self-described 'sporting man.' She did not rejoin the family until 1863.

Buck had to replace the income, so he proclaimed himself to be a "king of cancers," claiming that he could cure just about any disease with a "mild salve of the Doctor's own make." At the time there was no regulation of medical practitioners. Generally, doctors fell into two broad categories, orthodox physicians who based their practice on the study of anatomy, and what could be called "irregular" physicians who based their practices on a "system" ranging from magnetic healing to homeopathy to 'the water cure.' Neither group was required to attend medical school, nor did either of them understand disease or health – disease pathology would not begin to be understood until many years later. What is important about Buck's claims is that his salve was mild. Orthodox physicians were often distrusted by the public because their treatments often involved blood letting and the use of narcotics and poisons, including mercury and arsenic, as cures. These cures rarely were effective nor were they

²⁹ Victoria Woodhull Martin Papers, SIU, box 1, folder 6.

³⁰ 1860 US Federal Census of Anderson, Madison County, Indiana. The lands were possibly those warrants in Lycoming County, Pennsylvania.

³¹ Her eldest sister's husband had died in March 1861, and her brother John died about May 1861 (letters of administration filed on 23 May 1861).

³² He actually may not have. It is unclear if Tennessee actually divorced Bartle. However, she said many years later that her father stood for her in the divorce. Affidavit of Tennessee Claflin Cook swearing that she had divorced John James Bartle in 1862, John James Bartle Pension Records, Widow's Pension, file # 701316, National Archives and Records Administration.

pleasant.³³ Alternative practitioners often advertised that they spilled no blood and that their curatives were either mild or vegetable based. During the trauma of the Civil War and for many years after, the public flocked to the more comforting alternative doctors,³⁴ making it a lucrative business to have.

It is not clear how Buck arrived at his “salve,” but both he and his son Hebern burst on the scene in 1863 with nearly identical advertisements and claims. A common link between the two men was Victoria Woodhull’s husband, Canning. While Tennessee was on her own, she was briefly in Chicago at 10 Harrison Street. Dr. Canning H. Woodhull, “analytic and magnetic physician” advertised from the same address.³⁵ One of Woodhull’s selling points was his “Turkish Cancer Salve.”

With Tennessee gone, and with Buck’s prodigious imagination for what was possible when it came to earning money from the gullible public, it is no surprise to find Buck in Ottawa, La Salle County, Illinois, by 27 June 1863 advertising himself as “King of Cancers.” Buck’s sister, Corintha Claflin Caulkins, had been living in Ottawa since at least 1850 and it was from his sister’s home that he launched his cancer-cure career:

AMERICAN KING OF CANCERS.—Dr. R. B. Claflin is stopping at Mr. M.D. Calkins,³⁶ in south Ottawa, Ill. He claims to be the King of Cancers, and all kinds of Chronic Diseases. Fever Sores, Bone Diseases, Scrofula, Piles, Sore Eyes in the worst stages; Heart and Liver Complaints, Female Weakness, Consumption, Salt Rheum, Tetters, Inflammatory Rheumatism, Asthma, Neuralgia, Sick Headache, Dropsy in the Chest, and Fits in various forms.

The Doctor also guarantees a cure, in all cases, where patients live up to the directions. The poor dealt with liberally.

Cancers killed and extracted root and branch, in from 10 to 48 hours, without instruments, pain, or the use of chloroform, simply by applying a mild Salve of the Doctor’s own make.

And further, all his syrups and medicines, for the named diseases, are purely vegetable, made and prepared at great expense by his own hands.³⁷

He was successful enough that the family eventually took rooms at the Geiger House in Ottawa. Tennessee was back in the fold in 1863, and she and Buck were in Ottawa through June 7, 1864, when the family had to flee prosecution after one of Tennessee’s patients died.³⁸ Buck and Anna may have gone to Chicago, where Malden, whom Anna

³³ Ann Braude, “Mediums and Medicine Men,” *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, p. 143ff. See also Wendy Heyden, *Unlikely Rhetorical Allies: How Science Warranted U.S. Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century Discourses of Sexuality*, PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 2007.

³⁴ Medical schools started springing up offering M.D.’s in water-cure therapies, homeopathy and other alternative medicines. The doctorate was considered, at the time, as legitimate as an orthodox degree. So-called ‘eclectic’ medical schools also opened, offering a blending of the disciplines. See Braude, op cit.

³⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, 7 February 1863.

³⁶ M. D. Caulkins was Moses Dewey Caulkins, who had married Buck’s sister, Corintha. See Wight, *The Claflin Genealogy*, p. 126.

³⁷ *Ottawa Free Trader*, 27 June 1863

³⁸ On 6 June 1864 Rebecca Howe, died, and Tennessee was indicted shortly thereafter on charges of manslaughter. She fled to her brother Hebern in Quincy, Illinois. It is not known where Buck and Anna went. However, there was a reference in the *Ottawa Free Trader* of 5 September 1863 which stated Anna

had been caring for in Ottawa, died late in the year.³⁹ By 1866, Buck was back in Cincinnati⁴⁰ no longer in the cancer cure business, and he disappears from record until he stood for Victoria in her divorce from James. H. Blood in Chicago in 1868.⁴¹

Buck and Anna arrived in New York City in 1868 and moved in with Victoria, Col. Blood, and Tennessee at the Great Jones Street “Magnetic Healing Institute.” The rest of the extended Claflin clan joined them later that year.⁴² Throughout the tumultuous relationships Victoria and Tennessee had with their sisters Utica Brooker and Mary Sparr as well as their mother in the Great Jones house and the mansion on Murray Hill, Buck lived with the sisters in relative peace. He was not a part of the infamous lawsuit brought by Anna and the Sparrs against Col. Blood and Buck remained with his daughters when Annie, Mary, and her family were evicted by Woodhull and Tennessee. At the time he insisted that his “wife had nothing to complain of but much to be thankful for.”⁴³

His attachment to his daughters—especially Victoria, Tennessee and Utica—was genuine. At the death of Utica in July 1873, it was Buck who was overcome while sitting at the head of the casket, when his “grief was almost uncontrollable.”⁴⁴ At the cemetery, it was Victoria and Buck who “broke down, and their mother tried to comfort them but in vain.”⁴⁵ He followed Victoria and Tennessee to England in 1878 where he lived with his daughter Victoria in London until his death in November 1885. Despite the character sketch that has come down through the decades of Buck as a child abuser and petty criminal, he was close to Victoria, witnessing her marriage to John Biddulph Martin and writing her touching letters and essays that demonstrate an affectionate relationship between them.

Vicky my dear child that I love as dear as life itself, if I have said or
Done anything to hurt your kind and tender feelings, do forgive me
For all that I have said and done I meant it for good and hope that
God will Bless you and your dear Husband in all time to come this is
From your dear Father
R.B.Claflin
Jun the 12/83⁴⁶

And, with his obvious pride showing through, an essay from his personal papers:

I presume it is not generally known by the American people that they have lost from there political platform the finest female oriter and public speaker they ever had whose name while here was Victoria Claflin Woodhall, who was nominated a candidate for President of the United States in 1872. But according to the

was “caring for her sick son.” Because we know where Hebern was, and because we know he detested his father, this son had to have been Malden. Malden died in late 1864, so it is probable he had tuberculosis.

³⁹ Spring Hill Cemetery Records, Cincinnati, Hamilton, Ohio. His body had been transported from Chicago for burial in Spring Hill in March 1865 by Tennessee, suggesting Buck and Anna were with her at the time.

⁴⁰ William’s Cincinnati Directory, 1866. Williams & Co. p. 112.

⁴¹ “Recorder’s Court,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 February 1868, p. 4, col. 3.

⁴² “Female Financiers Feuds,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 8 May 1871, p. 10.

⁴³ “Woodhull, Claflin & Co. A Serious Charge Against Blood,” *New York Clipper*, 13 May 1871, p. 4.

⁴⁴ *The Sun* 14 July 1873, p. 1, col. 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Victoria Woodhull Martin Papers, SIU, box 1, folder 8.

constitution of the United States was to young in years to accept and stand the nomination although her great mind talent and ability were duly appreciated by the people. She then entered the lecture field . . . and traveled some four or five years through the United States lecturing in all the important cities and towns in the States in which she traveled with great success and honor to themselves, and satisfaction to the people laying before them her golden principles of love truth and righteousness with great force and clearness until her strength began to fail, she that she needed a time of rest and quietness she then left her native land and went to Europe with her sister Tennessee Claflin and stopped in the city of London the capital of the world where those great talents minds and ability was soon discovered by the leading busy men there with whom they soon became acquainted, & she soon began to recover and her great mind became restless for the want of liberty again and she gave notice and delivered a series of 10 lectures in St James Hall in the city of London in the month of December 1877 and January and February 1878 with great success, the audiences that assembled to hear her was very large and many times all could not be admitted into the hall. Her lectures were truly interesting and listened to with marked attention by the people many of whom were of the high aristocracy of the city of London during which time a gentleman by the name of John Biddulph Martin an English Banker on Lombard Street found an acquaintance with them and at a proper time took Victoria by the hand and married her.⁴⁷

Reuben Buckman Claflin passed away of old age on 19 November 1885 in the home of his daughter Victoria Woodhull Martin. His wife survived him for four years and died at the home of their daughter Tennessee Claflin Cook in 1889. Both were buried in Highgrove Cemetery West.

When Buck died, Victoria wrote her mother-in-law, Mary Biddulph Martin:

God has taken from our home circle the most noble of fathers, that wisest of counsellors . . . My sainted mother is left but oh what a vacuum is in our once joyous home.⁴⁸

These are not the comments of a daughter who hated or feared her father.

⁴⁷ Victoria Woodhull Martin Papers, SIU, box 1, folder 8.

⁴⁸ Victoria Woodhull Martin Papers, SIU, box 1, folder 8.