

Sylvester McCall was born in Clarion County, Pennsylvania May 3rd 1843. He married Margaret Dougherty in 1869 at the bride's home. They moved to Nebraska.

To this union four children were born, Roy, Alvin, Elvina, and Elmina.

Sylvester volunteered for infantry service in the army in the Civil War. He spent nine months in the Andersonville prison. He bore a scar of a bullet which passed through his neck.

While in prison he still had his gold watch that he cherished very much. Every day he would polish and shine his watch until it became almost like a mirror.

One day while the guards were marching by and the sun was shining bright, Sylvester decided he would reflect the reflection of the watch into the guard's eyes. Soon the guard stopped by to talk with him and wanted to know what he had in his possession.

Sylvester told him, I just have my gold watch and he showed it to him. The guard was impressed by the watch it looked so new. So Sylvester said if you will get me out of prison, I'll give you my watch. After looking the watch all over the guard decided to go along with him and Sylvester just had a few minutes to get over the wall.

Then here came the howling and barking bloodhounds. Sylvester climbed high in a tree and the hounds went by. Sylvester would travel mostly by night but had very little food to eat.

Thirteen weeks had gone by. He had good luck traveling. He just had 1/4 mile to go to be a free man. Soon Sylvester came to a road with a fork in it. He paused and tried to remember which road to take but could not. A fellow was near by so Sylvester asked him which road he should take. The colored fellow told him the wrong road to take. He was taken back to prison.

Sylvester spent four years in the army. He was discharged from the army in 1865. He was a highly respected citizen. He died April 16, 1897.

by Helen (McCall) Bachman

James Henderson Medaris family was the fifth generation to come to America. He was born in Owens County Indiana November 7th, 1851. He married Samilda Dorcas Davis, May 20, 1875.

They built a store in Catarack, Indiana and Dr. Jones had an office in the store building and this doctor got James interested in the field of medicine.

Dr. Jones' medical books were read over and over by James. In 1885 ill health caused James and Samilda to move to Bross, Kansas by train with their children, where Dr. Medaris practiced medicine.

Two years later Kansas passed legislation requiring medical school for his licensing. So Dr. Medaris and family moved to Kansas City so he could attend medical college.

In 1893 the Cherokee Strip opened and Dr. Medaris made the run. He made the claim in Enid on the lot that presently has the Mayer Shoe store. Later, to be year relatives, they moved to Helena Oklahoma.

To this union eight children were born, Laura, May, Gertrude Bell, Ada Ellen, Metta Agnes, Vernon, and Una Clare, she died when she was four years of diphtheria. Two children were deceased at birth.

The doctors were far and few between. Dr. Medaris practiced with a horse and buggy. Some days it would take all day to see one patient. He had trained his horse to take him home while he slept. Whenever the horse stopped, Dr. Medaris knew he was home. He fed his horse, ate his breakfast, and walked up to his office for another day.

Dr. Medaris bought the first automobile in the community. It was a white Buick, very striking in those days. People would come to see it, also wanting to take a ride in it. Dr. Medaris could see so many more patients in a day now.

There was a sad side to it, though, when horse and buggy would meet the automobile some of the horses would rare straight up and others would just run away with the buggy, hurting people. Finally when the cars were so numerous the buggies gradually disappeared.

Dr. Medaris expected people that was able to pay for his service, but if they could not it was alright, too. Many a time he would come home with a dozen eggs or a chicken, maybe a peck of potatoes. Dr. Medaris was a devout Christian man. He started the Church of Christ in Helena.

by Helen (McCall) Bachman

Alvin McCall was born in Nebraska November 23rd, 1875. He married Gertrude Bell Medaris December 3rd, 1901. They lived on eighty acres which her father had given her. It was southeast of Helena, Oklahoma.

To this union three children were born, Helene Altrude, Harold Evens, and Dortha Ada.

Alvin had an idea that if the initials of the children's names spelled a word, they would have money during their lifetime. Helene's spelled ham, Harold's spelled hem, and Dortha's spelled dam.

Alvin was a good provider and farmer. In the summertime he run a threshing machine far and near from home threshing wheat. In the wintertime he bought and sold cattle. He shipped them by carload to Oklahoma City.

One day Alvin drove a new Ford car home. The family was so excited and decided to go to church that night in the new car. Alvin drove the car as fast as it would go. That was twenty-five miles an hour. That seemed awfully fast when all your life you had always gone places with the horse and buggy.

After we came home from church, Alvin tried to drive the car in the garage. He was going so fast and could not make it, so he turned and made a big circle. By that time my mother wanted out of the car, so she and the girls got out of the car. Alvin thought sure he could hit the door this time, but he missed again. So he slowed down and made his circle then drove into the garage.

There were five in the family and before Alvin bought the car the family rode in a one seated buggy. Alvin and Gertrude sat in the seat with Dortha. Alvin made a little board that fit across the buggy in front of the dash board. Harold and Helene sat on that board.

In the summertime when it was so hot the flies would get on old Prince. That was the name of the horse that was pulling the buggy. He would swish his tail back and forth so hard that it would sting Harold and Helene's neck and sometimes their cheeks. That was the only way they had to travel until Alvin bought the Ford.

Alvin was very good hearted. If someone needed a shirt he would give his shirt off of his back. Alvin told his children over and over, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" and I want you to remember that. (Prov. 22-1) He died February 11th, 1959.

by Helen (McCall) Bachman

Gertrude Bell Medaris was born August 18, 1878 in Owens County, Indiana. In 1885 she moved with her family to Bross, Kansas and later to Helena, Oklahoma.

The Medaris family loved music. Each one of the sisters and Vernon all played different instruments. The young fold looked to visit them.

Gertrude was dating Fred Johnson and they were engaged to be married. Fred took real sick T.B. [tuberculosis], and in those days they had no antibiotics so Fred died.

Gertrude mourned for several months, so Dr. Medaris, her father, talked her into going to medical college in Kansas City, MO. She finally decided to go to school. She had to go several years before she could become a doctor.

One time when she came home on vacation she met a new fellow. His name was Alvin McCall. They corresponded for several years.

Finally it was time for Gertrude to come home and do her practicing with her medicine case. It was quite different for her with the buggy. After a few months she did not care for that type of life.

There is no telling how many babies she brought into the world. When people would call for her to come for the sick, she would tell them if they would come after her and bring her home she would be glad to come. She practiced several years that way.

When Alvin and Gertrude were living on a farm northeast of Helena, Harold was born. In that day the woman had to stay in bed fourteen days after childbirth.

One day while Gertrude was in bed she noticed something moving by the window. She set up in bed and noticed it was a large rattlesnake.

In those days they did not let a rattlesnake get away. So she got up and went to the kitchen and got the rifle from the rack and shot the snake, then went back to bed.

Gertrude had quite a reputation for he angel cakes. Gertrude was a lovely seamstress. She knitted a tablecloth and two bed spreads. She also knit Helene a dress, here two granddaughters beautiful suits apiece. Beside that she knit so many, many sweaters for the Red Cross.

Gertrude never sat down by what she had her knitting in her hands -- until her last year. She died January 19, 1960.

by Helen (McCall) Bachman