

Rev. Thomas S. McNeil: The Rest of the Story

Thomas Sudden McNeil was born March 21, 1814, to William L. and Mary (Lee) McNeil in Washington County VA. Washington County, also the birthplace of Thomas' father, is in extreme southwestern Virginia, adjacent to the city of Bristol VA/TN. By 1816 the family had moved to Montgomery County OH, in the southwestern part of that state. This would become the family's permanent home, and the final resting place of Thomas' parents – in the Rehoboth Methodist Cemetery, near Centerville.

Important to this story is the fact Montgomery County is in the Miami River Valley, a center of United Brethren activity and home to the Miami Conference – which was founded in 1810 as the denomination's then westernmost conference. In addition, the county seat and leading city of Montgomery County is Dayton OH, later the denomination's official headquarters and home to its seminary¹ and publishing house.² While the details of his spiritual upbringing and early life have not survived, except that he always gave his age at conversion as 13, his church involvement beginning soon after his 31st birthday strongly suggest that this United Brethren influence was not lost on young Thomas.

In April 1845, McNeil presented himself to the annual session of the Wabash Conference, at that time the denomination's westernmost conference (which included appointments in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa), and was assigned as a pastor on trial to the Jefferson circuit in western Indiana. At the General Conference of May 1845, the rapidly expanding United Brethren denomination split off the St. Joseph, Illinois and Iowa Conferences from the large Wabash Conference. When the reduced and re-organized Wabash Conference met in September 1845, McNeil was elected conference secretary and assigned to the Concord circuit. At the September 1846 annual session of the Wabash Conference, he was ordained.

McNeil then returned to his family home within the area of the Miami Conference, to which he formally transferred in 1847. An 1847 article by McNeil in the denomination's biweekly *Religious Telescope* gives his location as Centerville OH.

¹ The seminary was founded in Dayton in 1871 by Bishop Milton Wright (father of the Wright brothers Orville and Wilbur) as Union Biblical Seminary. The school was known as Bonebrake Theological Seminary from 1909 to 1954. In 1954 the Evangelical School of Theology in Reading PA (former Evangelical) merged with Bonebrake (former United Brethren) to become the EUB denomination's United Theological Seminary. The institution continues today as United Theological Seminary of the United Methodist Church, re-located since 2005 to a new campus in the Dayton suburb of Trotwood.

² The publishing house relocated to Dayton in 1853 from nearby Circleville OH, where it had been first established in 1833.

Beginning in 1852, Thomas S. McNeil is the assigned pastor to four consecutive locations in the Pennsylvania Conference. Considering that it was to Shippensburg PA that he ultimately retired, the four years in the Pennsylvania Conference appear to have established some lasting relationships. For each of these Pennsylvania Conference assignments, McNeil is listed as serving “under the presiding elder” – a designation for those who are not ministerial members of the conference, but who are serving out of need and availability. While McNeil was officially a member of the Miami Conference, for some reason – possibly the promotion of his medicine – he was residing in central Pennsylvania. Those four locations are as follows.

1852-53 – Hershe’s Station circuit. This circuit was established in 1843 and at one point consisted of 11 Cumberland County appointments – among which are the present United Methodist appointments at Boiling Springs Otterbein, Middlesex, Mt. Victory, Mt. Zion (South Middleton), and Youngs. The conference journal reports there were six preaching appointments and six organized classes on the circuit when McNeil served there, but it does not give their individual names. In 1853 the name was changed to Carlisle circuit.

1853-54 – York Springs circuit. For this year, the conference journal reports 14 preaching appointments and 5 organized classes on the circuit – with McNeil being the junior preacher to James M. Bishop. Included on this circuit would have been the present Dillsburg Calvary UMC.

1854-55 – York Springs circuit. According to the conference journal, McNeil was serving again this year on the large York Springs circuit – this time as the junior preacher to William Humberger. Local church records, however, suggest the work was divided and McNeil was given the southern portion of this expansive circuit. For the UB churches in Hanover PA and Taneytown MD, for example, McNeil is listed as their only pastor for 1854-55.

1855-56 – Path Valley circuit. The journal states there were 8 appointments on the circuit that year, but the report is incomplete. McNeal returned to the Miami Conference at the end of this conference year.

In 1856 McNeil returned to the area of the Miami Conference. In 1859, he formally transferred from the Miami Conference to the Virginia Conference. While he regularly attended the annual sessions of the Virginia Conference, he was not given an appointment. In the 1860’s he removed to Shippensburg PA while retaining his membership in the Virginia Conference.

McNeil’s service record appears in the data bases on the website of the Susquehanna Conference archives, under *United Brethren preachers*, as follows.

MCNEIL, THOMAS SUDDEN

Born: 3-21-1814 Washington County VA

married:

Died: 3-12-1874 Gallipolis OH

obit:

1846 ordained, Wabash Conference

Interment: Shippensburg PA [reportedly]

Obit: [*The Religious Telescope* 2/24/1875]

1845 Jefferson circuit [spring conference]

1845-46 Concord circuit [moved to fall conference]
transfer to Miami Conference

1852-53 Hershe's Station , Pennsylvania Conference

1853-55 York Springs circuit, Pennsylvania Conference

1855-56 Path Valley circuit, Pennsylvania Conference

1859 transfer to Virginia Conference
living in Shippensburg PA as a local preacher

Note: A poster of individual Virginia Conference pastors identifies him as Dr. T.S. McNeil. He attended the Virginia Conference sessions, but was not given an assignment and has no conference obituary listed because in 1875 the Virginia Conference had not yet begun printing their journal. The reference is to *The Religious Telescope's* printing of the obituary that was read at the 1875 annual conference. Conference records state that he "drowned in Ohio while on his way to the Parkersburg Conference."

By the mid 1860's, McNeil was living in Shippensburg PA – as a member of the Virginia Conference, and the maker and seller of his medicinal tonic. When local preacher John M. Smiley from Perry County, who had moved to Shippensburg and opened a store there in 1864, wanted to begin a United Brethren congregation in Shippensburg, McNeil gave his full support. Meetings began in Smiley's store in 1866, and Smiley and McNeil are credited with being the founders of Shippensburg's Messiah United Methodist Church.

The congregation dedicated its first church building on June 20, 1869, and McNeil's part in the process cannot be overstated. Bishop J.J. Glosbrenner, who presided at the dedication, submitted the following article to the August 25, 1869, issue of *The Religious Telescope*.

SHIPPENSBURG CHURCH, PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE

The Shippensburg Church was dedicated to God several weeks ago, but I have seen no notice of it in the *Telescope*. I think the enterprise in Shippensburg is well worthy of notice and commendation. Our membership in this place is small, and no doubt would continue so unless a comfortable house of worship was erected. So our brethren, though small in number, and not rich in this world's goods, with Dr. McNeil at their head with words of cheer and a very handsome subscription, concluded that the United Brethren in Christ must have a house of worship.

So the work was commenced and persevered in until the house was finished and ready to be given to the Lord of Hosts. The house is of brick, excellently built, and well finished and furnished. In connection with Brother Dickson, I attended the dedicatory services. We had a very pleasant and successful day. The sum to be secured on the day of dedication was considerable – the exact amount I have forgotten – yet before we left the amount was secured. All did well, yet I feel like making honorable mention of Dr. McNeil,

who came to the rescue with \$400.00 in addition to what he so liberally subscribed when the work was commenced.



North Penn Street - first (1869) United Brethren church building in Shippensburg financed by Thomas S. McNeil

McNeil served as a trustee for the church from the beginning until his death in 1874. As noted in the previous article that concentrated on his medical career, McNeil spent much time traveling around promoting his Pain Exterminator – and, indeed, that was likely a large part of the motivation behind his fateful 1874 trip to attend the annual sessions of the Parkersburg Conference. While we may never know the full extent of his travels, his demise was widely covered throughout the country. Consider, for example this Galveston TX notice³ that implies his travels had taken him to that state.

Through a private letter, information is received that Rev. T.S. McNeil, of Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, and who is well known in this community, was drowned a few days ago while crossing the Ohio River to attend a conference in West Virginia. Dr. McNeil was an able and popular divine of the Moravian [sic] Church.

The misinformation about McNeil's denomination and the statement that he was in the act of crossing the Ohio when he drowned are indicative of the limited

³ *The Galveston Daily News*, 3/21/1874, page 3

communications of the 1870's and the necessity to fact check. Compare, for example, the facts concerning the drowning as given in the previous article with the following front-page article that appeared in Baltimore four days after the incident.⁴

MINISTER DROWNED

The Harrisburg (Pa.) Telegraph of Saturday says: "Dr. T.S. McNeil of Shippensburg, Pa., was drowned on Thursday last while in a boat crossing the Ohio River at Gallipolis, Ohio. Dr. McNeil was a United Brethren clergyman on his way to a conference in West Virginia. He was known in Harrisburg and surrounding country as the manufacturer of a pain exterminator and other medicines. Several other persons were also drowned with the doctor. We are informed that Bishop Edwards, Rev. Flickinger, and others were to accompany Rev McNeil on his trip to the conference in West Virginia. Whether they, too, were lost is not known here up to the present time."

A 1913 reference to McNeil in an article⁵ by United Brethren Rev. John E. Hott⁶ suggests that the reason McNeil had left Virginia for Shippensburg was to relocate in a free state. Coincidentally, the article also provides interesting comments about both the previously mentioned Bishop J.J. Glossbrenner and McNeil's Pain Exterminator. In part, the article reads as follows.

At the beginning of the civil war the church was thrown into great confusion. Bishop Markwood, T. Brashear, H. B. Winton, L. Hess, G. W. Statten, I. Baltzell, W. T. Lower and others went north, while Bishop Glossbrenner, G. B. Kimmel, H. A. Bovey, H. Tallhelm, J. W. Howe, J. K. Nelson and a few others remained. G. Huffman, J. K. Nelson, W. W. Knipple and perhaps a few others were arrested by the confederates and imprisoned. Knipple escaped from prison at Staunton, Huffman and Nelson were afterwards released. Dr. T.S. McNeil with some difficulty made his way through the line to Pennsylvania. All who escaped to the federal lines were union men, as were those who were imprisoned, and most of those who remained. A United Brethren who was disloyal was an anomaly if not a contradiction.

Bishop Glossbrenner's loyalty is a matter of doubt with those who knew him best unto this day. I have often heard Rev. J. W. Howe say that the emancipation proclamation set the bishop's slave Negro free. I know that he had one, and heard his daughter Josie say that she experimented on him with McNeil's medicine to see if it would intoxicate. One of his daughters married a captain in the rebel army and the bishop smuggled his wedding suit through the lines from the north. His family habitually and constantly talked in favor of the southern confederacy and sang rebel songs, and that without rebuke or protest from the bishop.

⁴ *The Baltimore Sun*, 3/16/1874, page 1.

⁵ *The Christian Conservator*, 7/23/1913, page 2. *The Christian Conservator* is a publication of the United Brethren Church, Old Constitution. The casual 1913 references to McNeil and his medicine – across denomination lines and almost 40 years after his death – are indicative of his enduring reputation.

⁶ John Elkanah Hott (1846-1919) came from a solidly United Brethren family. He was one of four Virginia brothers to enter the UB ministry (including Bishop James W. Hott). A fifth brother, David Otterbein Hott) died while so preparing, and a sister married a UB pastor.

Strangely, little is known about McNeil's wife and children. The 1966 centennial history book⁷ for The Shippensburg church states that he was 44 years when the building was dedicated and had a wife named Susannah and a daughter, but there appears to be no record of such in the church's membership records or the available secular and/or court records.⁸ The records that are available suggest that McNeil had no family at the time of his death, as two brief notices in the local paper state the following.⁹

The sale of the personal effects of Dr. T.S. McNeil, deceased, will take place on Tuesday next, at his late residence on Penn Street.

On Tuesday, March 31, at the late residence of Dr. T.S. McNeil, Penn Street, Shippensburg, will be sold household furniture, piano, peddler's wagon, &c. John Miller, auctioneer.

The remainder of this article examines two of the persons who would later assume controlling interests in McNeil's medical business. Like McNeil, each of these men would have a United Brethren connection, would reap financial rewards from the business, would use their means for benevolent purposes, and would actively involve themselves in their local churches.

Rev. John X. Quigley (1844-1908)

John Quigley was pastor of Messiah church 1871-1874. After McNeil's death, he trade-marked his former parishioner's visage and signature, formed the McNeil Medical Company¹⁰ and moved the operation to Harrisburg – where he manufactured and advertised McNeil's Pain Exterminator with a greater passion than its founder. Rev. Quigley did not serve another pulpit under appointment.

John X. Quigley was born near West Fairview, Cumberland County PA, one of eleven children in a strong United Brethren family. An older brother William (1839-1917) was also a United Brethren preacher, as was the great-grandson of a younger brother Jacob (1846-1904). That great-grandson, Rev. Alex A. Quigley (1933-2006), had the benefit of five generations of active United Brethren heritage.

⁷ Rev. D. Homer Kendall, *The History of Messiah Evangelical United Brethren Church 1866-1966*, page 42.

⁸ This information claims to have been "gleaned from the Federal Census." There is no Thomas McNeil in Shippensburg in the 1870 census, but there is a "Thomas McNeal" in "Schippensburg" who was born in PA in 1825 – along with his wife Susannah McNeal born in PA in 1836. Since even the age does mesh with McNeil's known 1814 birth year, it is very possible this information refers to another person. Thomas S. McNeal [sic] appears in the 1860 VA census with no mention of a wife. The next section on Rev. John Quigley refers to "our young friend Dr. W.S. McNeil" who may likely be a son, but no other such documentation has been uncovered.

⁹ *The Shippensburg News*, 3/28/1874, page 3.

¹⁰ This is not to be confused with the contemporary Philadelphia-based McNeil Laboratories, the original makers of Tylenol, which became part of Johnson & Johnson in 1959. That company was founded by pharmacist Robert McNeil (1856-1933), no relation, in 1879.

Even after he left the active ministry, Quigley kept his ministerial standing and continued as an active member of Harrisburg’s Memorial [First] United Brethren Church. He transferred to the East Pennsylvania Conference in 1878 and died on Christmas Day 1908 while unpacking and arranging presents from his children and grandchildren. His conference obituary includes the following statements.¹¹

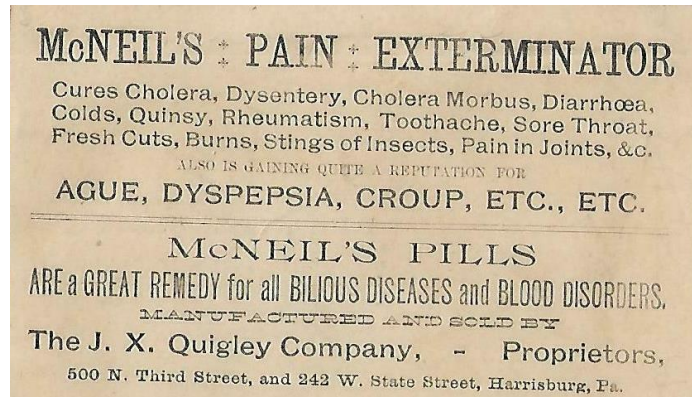
In this Conference he did not serve any charge as a regular pastor, but as a man of God ready to serve whenever he was needed, and he found a large field. There are few ministers of this Conference who have not called upon him as a supply or as one to assist in the duties of the charge.

He aided the poor and was always ready to defend the wrong. Brother Quigley was a faithful member of the Memorial UB Church. As such, there was nothing to which the church called him to which he did not willingly respond. As a teacher of a Sunday School class and as a member of the officary, he was always in his place doing faithful, efficient service.

In his home he was an ideal husband and father. He was kind, gentle and true, leaving to his family and friends a blessed memory of one who was a Christian father and a faithful friend.

The details of Quigley’s entrance into McNeil’s medical business are given in the following article.¹² At this point, the exact identity of W.S. McNeil has not been determined.

Rev. J.X. Quigley, having purchased W.S. McNeil’s interest in the manufacture and sale of Dr. T.S. McNeil’s Pain Exterminator and Vegetable Pills, will continue the business as heretofore. Our young friend Dr. W.S. McNeil for some times past engaged in the manufacture of Dr. McNeil’s medicine having disposed of his business interest therein, a few days since left for Springfield, Illinois, where he will reside and resume business.



It was Quigley who changed McNeil’s medical remedies from a widely-know “Mom and Pop” operation into a well-organized business – originally operating, as illustrated by the above trade card, as the J.X. Quigley Company.

¹¹ Journal of the *East Pennsylvania Conference of the United Brethren in Christ Church*, 1909, page 35.

¹² *Shippensburg News*, 8/1/1874.

McNEIL MEDICINE COMPANY,
 — PROPRIETORS OF —
McNEIL'S PAIN EXTERMINTOR,
 (ESTABLISHED 1848.)
 THE GREAT FAMILY REMEDY.

*Cures Cholera, Cramps, Cholera-Morbus, Dysentery, Diarrhœa,
 Colds, Quinsy, Sore Throat, Rheumatism, Toothache, Cuts,
 Burns, Sting of Insects, Pains in the Back
 and Joints, &c., &c., &c.*

APPLY EXTERNALLY WITH FRICTION; INTERNALLY, TAKE IT IN SWEETENED WARM WATER.

IT IS GAINING QUITE A REPUTATION FOR CURING AGUE.

DIRECTIONS FOR AGUE:

When you feel the chills coming on, take three full doses at intervals of fifteen minutes. It has never failed to cure when properly taken.

THERE IS NOTHING BETTER IN THE MARKET.

Dr. T. S. McNEIL'S
LIVER and BLOOD PURIFYING PILLS
 For all Bilious Diseases and Blood Disorders.

**ARE YOU BILIOUS? ARE YOU DYSPEPTIC? HAVE YOU PAINS IN THE
 HEAD? HAVE YOU PAINS IN THE BACK?**

ARE you neither sick enough to be bed-fast, nor well enough to enjoy life and perform the duties which your daily avocation may impose upon you? Are you subject to QUEER SENSATIONS which you can scarcely define or locate, and, which, though not actually painful, are very annoying, causing a general depression, lowness of spirit, loss of appetite, &c. If so, we say, BEWARE! These are nature's warnings—unfailing signs of worse to come, unless you give them heed. To meet and remove the cause of these symptoms is the special design of

DR. T. S. McNEIL'S LIVER AND BLOOD PURIFYING PILLS,

MANUFACTURED BY

**McNEIL MEDICINE Co., Proprietors,
 500 N. THIRD STREET, and 242 WEST STATE STREET,
 HARRISBURG, PA.**

FOR SALE BY DRUGGISTS AND DEALERS GENERALLY.

[OVER.]

TESTIMONIALS.

Read what some of the best citizens say of
the merits of
Dr. T. S. McNeil's Celebrated Pain Exterminator.

WESTERVILLE, O., August 5, 1886.

When my oldest boy was six years old he had a severe attack of Inflammatory Rheumatism. One thorough application of Dr. T. S. McNeil's Celebrated Pain Exterminator gave him immediate relief, and, in my judgment, effected an almost immediate cure, and he has never had an attack since.

REV. C. W. MILLER.

ALLENTOWN, June 5, 1886.

GENTS:—I have used McNeil's Pain Exterminator for Cramps, Colds, Sore Throat, Diarrhoea and Dysentery, with good effect and would hereby recommend it to others. **It is a doctor in the house.**

J. R. GOSSLER,

Manufacturing and wholesale dealer in all kinds of Lubricating Oils, No. 24 South 8th St.

McNeil Medicine Co.

GENTLEMEN:—I have used McNeil's Pain Exterminator for many years in my family, and regard it as the best remedy for Internal Pains, Sore Throat and Fresh Colds, in the market. Some years ago I was requested to bring a doctor for a neighbor lady by the name of Reed, who was suffering from a severe attack of Cramp Colic. Instead of going for the doctor I took a bottle of the Exterminator to her house, of which the third dose entirely cured her, and I am confident saved her life, as she could not have endured the extreme pain until medical aid could have been secured. I have all confidence in its merits.

Yours, &c.,

G. H. MARKLEY, York Springs, Adams Co., Pa.

McNeil Medicine Co.

GENTS:—For thirty years McNeil's Pain Exterminator has been used in my family for Cholera Morbus, Cramp, Colic and Dysentery, with good effect. I have also found it exceedingly valuable in cases of Sore Throat and Fresh Colds, and would recommend it as a safe family medicine.

Yours, etc.,

D. THURN, Ex-Sheriff, Hagerstown, Md.

LEBANON, PA., June 24, 1886.

McNeil Medicine Co.

It is with pleasure, and I feel it my duty to the public, to state that I have been using regularly in my family, Dr. T. S. McNeil's Celebrated Pain Exterminator and Vegetable Liver and Blood Pills, since 1861, and I am persuaded that I cannot be without it. In the Summer of 1861, I had a severe attack of Cholera Morbus and I am confident the medicine saved my life.

GEO. A. MARK, Secretary U. B. Aid Society.

GALION, O., June 28, 1886.

McNeil Medicine Co., Harrisburg, Pa.

I take pleasure in saying through you, personally to all my friends who may see this, that for many years I have constantly kept in my house, Dr. T. S. McNeil's Celebrated Pain Exterminator and Liver and Blood Purifying Pills, and have found them a prompt and unfailing remedy for most of the ills that afflict an ordinary household, especially for colds, derangement of the stomach and bowels and for nervous headache. In my travels I always carry them with me. Our neighbors also frequently call on us for them and are always benefited by their use.

Yours truly,

ROBERT COWDEN,

Late Col. Com'd'g 59th U. S. C. Infantry. Secretary of the United Brethern S. S. Board.

HISTORICAL.

These celebrated remedies are the invention of Dr. T. S. McNeil, who was the sole proprietor until his death, after which Mr. J. X. Quigley became the proprietor and conducted the business of manufacturing and selling the same until April 1, 1884, when it was transferred to a joint stock company, namely, McNeil Medicine Company.

These medicines were established in 1848, and wherever known and used have always given that happy relief long ago predicted of them by their honored discoverer: the length of time they have been on the market will commend their virtues to any one of unprejudiced mind.

The preceding consecutive full-page advertisements from an 1889 book¹³ indicate the magnitude of Quigley's promotions and that he made the McNeil Medicine Company a joint stock company April 1, 1884 – but that statement appears to be an oversimplification. Records¹⁴ show that it was the J.X. Quigley Company that was incorporated March 29, 1884, and the following 1886 newspaper notice gives the date for name change.¹⁵

Change of Corporate Name. At the present term of court of Dauphin county the name of "The J. X. Quigley Company," proprietors of McNeil's pain exterminator and vegetable liver and blood purifying pills, was changed to McNeil Medicine Company. A more appropriate name could not have been selected, as it will help to keep before the people these valuable family remedies.

In 1905, the McNeil Medicine Company of Harrisburg is listed in the Journal of the American Association as an associate member of the Proprietary Association of America manufacturing McNeil's Pain Exterminator, McNeil's Catarrh Cure and McNeil's Consumption Cure.¹⁶

Dr. Joseph Nelson Clark, M.D. (1839-1920)

Dr. Clark acquired proprietorship of McNeil's medical remedies in 1887. He also has a United Brethren connection – although it is rather indirect, and through his wife. Mrs. Clark is descended from the Eberly family, a prominent United Brethren family in Cumberland County.¹⁷

Clark was born near Dillsburg PA, served with the 36th Pennsylvania Infantry 1861-65 (including one incarceration at Libby prison and another at Andersonville), and studied and practiced medicine in various places before returning to the area in 1869 to practice in Mechanicsburg – but other interests would soon move him away from routine medical practice. Also somewhat of an entrepreneur, he operated a school in York in the Lehmyer Building as described in the following advertisement.¹⁸

¹³ *A Poetical Description of the Sixth Army Corps Campaign*, pages 39-40. Charles L Cummings, compiler. S.E. Shade, printer.

¹⁴ Entity #5380479 from the website corporations.pa.gov/search/corpsearch. The 1885 *Laws of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, page 402, state that the company was incorporated with \$7,000 capital for "the manufacture and sale of McNeil's Pain Exterminator, vegetable liver and blood purifying pills and kindred admixtures, and also of official preparations according to the United States Dispensatory and Pharmacopoeia, and of other chemicals."

¹⁵ *Harrisburg Telegraph*, January 25, 1886, page 4.

¹⁶ *Journal of the American Medical Association*, volume 45, November 18, 1905, page 1592.

¹⁷ Mrs. Clark's first cousin once removed Rev. Daniel Eberly (1834-1910) was the lead author of the definitive 1911 *Landmark History of the United Brethren Church* and preserved much early United Brethren history that otherwise would have been lost.

¹⁸ *York Daily*, 4/6/1872, page 1.

YORK PRACTICAL SCHOOL – The 4th session of the scholastic year of this school will commence Tuesday, April 2nd, and continue twelve weeks. At the close of the session, the premiums offered will be awarded to the successful students. The competitors to be in attendance at least ten weeks. Tuition, from 75 cts. to \$1.00 per week. J.N. Clark M.D., principal.

In Mechanicsburg resided his future wife Miss Kate Eberly Gorgas, daughter of Mechanicsburg banker and businessman Solomon P. Gorgas, who had founded that community's Irving Female College in 1855. Rev. Daniel Eberly, a first-cousin to Kate's mother Elizabeth Eberly Gorgas, happened to be the president of the Cottage Hill Female College in York. That college had been purchased for the United Brethren denomination in 1866 by Eberly and his uncle, the noted former bishop Jacob Erb.¹⁹ Eberly served as the president 1866-72, at which time he was offered the presidency²⁰ of the denomination's Otterbein University in Westerville OH. This left Cottage Hill, with its waning United Brethren support, without a president. Clark was familiar with York from operating his Practical School there, familiar with female colleges from his now father-in-law S.P. Gorgas, and familiar with Cottage Hill through his connection with the Eberly family – and so J. Nelson Clark M.D. became the new president of the Cottage Hill Female School under the auspices of his own Presbyterian denomination.

That venture proved short-lived, and within a year Clark moved to Harrisburg to re-establish his medical practice. In 1887 he gave up the practice of medicine to acquire the McNeil Medicine Company, which continued to be a financial success under its new proprietor. Always the entrepreneur, Clark at various times served as president of the People's Savings Bank, Twentieth Century Building and Loan Association, and the Dauphin County Sabbath Association. He also served on the Harrisburg school board for ten years and was one of the founders of the Westminster Presbyterian Church.²¹

¹⁹ This was the same year that the denomination founded Lebanon Valley College in Annville. For several years there was strong feeling that Lebanon Valley should accommodate only males, and that Cottage Hill should be the school for females. This created tension between the Pennsylvania and East Pennsylvania Conferences, especially since the latter considered the purchase of the York institution a violation of the agreement between the two conferences to work together to establish a school in the East. When the Pennsylvania Conference finally accepted the co-educational reality of Lebanon Valley College in 1872, United Brethren interest diminished and the school became Presbyterian. After changing hands a few more times, the property, which occupied the corner of Cottage Hill Road and Grant Street, was acquired by the York Gas Company in 1885 for the erection of a new gas plant.

²⁰ Daniel Eberly accepted the presidency, but only to see the institution through its immediate school year – so that he could return to his interests in the East. He later taught at Lebanon Valley College 1876-84, at which time he was offered the presidency of that institution. When his wife died in July of 1884, however, he declined the position and retired from the active ministry – but continued to serve on the Board at LVC.

²¹ Luther Reily Kelker's 1907 *History of Dauphin County*, volume III, pages 69-71.

Like that of his predecessors T.S. McNeil and J.X. Quigley, Clark's church involvement was more than passing. After being an elder and Sunday School superintendent for many years at the Westminster Presbyterian Church he had helped to found, he moved to Mechanicsburg in 1905 and became a member and Sunday School superintendent of the Presbyterian Church in that town. He also served as a representative to the General Presbyterian Synod and the General Assembly.²²

Clark's leadership of the business lasted at least thirty years, for the Boyd's 1917 Harrisburg Directory, page 634, lists the McNeil Medicine Company, Joseph N. Clark, president, at 306 Verbeke (Broad) Street – with his son J.N. Clark Jr. as secretary and treasurer. The McNeil Medicine Company, however, eventually lapsed as a corporation, and in 1931 the manufacture of the products continued by filing for recognition of the company as a fictitious name.²³ The last advertisement for McNeil's pain exterminator that could be located appears on page 7 of the 1/14/1932 *Harrisburg Telegraph*.

The Clark family operated a chain²⁴ of three drug stores that sold several of their own medicines, as well as the remedies of other transient manufacturers, but the McNeil line of products appears to have been their bread and butter. No successor stores of the Clark family survive.



original bottles for McNeil's Pain Exterminator

²² John W. Jordan's 1914 *Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography*, vol. III, pages 815-817.

²³ Entity #2349153 from the website corporations.pa.gov/search/corpsearch. As of 8/29/1931, "McNeil Medicine Company" became a registered fictitious name for doing business.

²⁴ Those retail drug stores were located in Harrisburg PA (306 Broad Street), Scranton PA (326 Penn Avenue) and Syracuse NY (315 S. Warren Street) – but most of the business appears to have been mail-order.