

Oliver Spencer Munsell (1825-1905)

Oliver Spencer Munsell (pronounced Muhn-sl) was born on June 8, 1825 in Miami County, Ohio to Leander and Hannah (Lee or See) Munsell.¹ He was the second of four children born to the couple. He had one older brother, Charles, a younger brother, Edward, and a younger sister, Clara.² At the age of seven, Leander moved the family to Paris, Illinois, where Oliver spent the rest of his childhood. He received his early education by attending a subscription school.³

During Munsell's youth, Abraham Lincoln was said to be a frequent visitor in his family's home in Paris. He was particularly proud of his connections to Lincoln. Much later in life, Munsell recalled that the future president would visit his family's home while Lincoln was a practicing lawyer on the Eighth Judicial Circuit. During one such visit, when Munsell was fifteen years old, he recalled that Lincoln treated him with kindness, and honored him with his "attentions and confidence." These actions won Munsell's "fervent boyish admiration and love."⁴

In 1841, at the age of sixteen, Munsell entered Indiana Asbury University (today known as DePauw University), in Greencastle, Indiana. Asbury was founded in 1837 by the Methodist Church. It was named in honor of the first American bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Francis Asbury. It was the vision of the founders that the institution "was conducted on the most liberal principals, accessible to all religious denominations, and designed for the benefit" of citizens in general.⁵ Munsell graduated in 1845 with honors and a Bachelor of Arts. He then decided to pursue a law career, and a year later, passed the bar exam to become a lawyer.⁶

It was during his time at Asbury that he was influenced by the president of the university, Reverend (later Bishop) Matthew Simpson, to join the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1842. After he was admitted to the bar in 1846, Munsell realized his true calling was the ministry. So, he left behind a career in law and became a licensed Methodist preacher that same year.⁷

Records indicate that Munsell was married three times. First, to Catherine Hite on September 13, 1847 in Coles County, Illinois.⁸ She was born on February 26, 1827 to James and Ann Hite.

¹ "Oliver S. Munsell," *The Council Grove Republican*, March 23, 1905; Ohio County Marriage Records 1774-1993, for Leander Munsell, Ancestry.com, Date Accessed September 2, 2019; Iowa, Marriage Records, 1880-1940 for Oliver Munsell, Ancestry.com, Date Accessed May 18, 2019.

² 1850 United States Federal Census for Leander Munsell, Ancestry.com, Date Accessed September 2, 2019; "Last Will and Testament for Leander Munsell," Illinois, Wills and Probate Records, 1772-1999, Edgar County volume 3-5, 1854-1900, Ancestry.com, Date Accessed September 3, 2019.

³ In Illinois, parents who sent their children to subscription schools had to pay a certain fee per child for each term. For example, when Delilah Mullins-Evans began teaching in McLean County, students had to pay \$2.50 each for the term of four months, John Burnham, George P. Davis, Ezra Prince. *Transactions of the McLean County Historical Society, Volume II The School Record of McLean County with Other Papers*, (Bloomington: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Co., 1903) 17.

⁴ Oliver S. Munsell, "Abraham Lincoln's Religion," *The Council Grove Republican* (Council Grove, KS), May 19, 1893.

⁵ "History and Traditions of DePauw University," <https://www.depauw.edu/discover/campus/history-traditions/>, Date Accessed, September 3, 2019.

⁶ "Oliver S. Munsell."

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Register of Marriage for Oliver Munsell and Catherine Hite, Illinois State Wide Marriage Index, 1763-1900, Illinois State Archives, www.ilsos.gov, Date Accessed, May 18, 2019; DePauw University. *Alumna Register of Officers, Faculties, and Graduates, 1837-1900*, 37, Google Books, Date Accessed September 6, 2019.

Not much is known about this first marriage, or if the couple had any children. Catherine died on November 22, 1850 at the age of 23.⁹

The same year Munsell became principal of the Danville Seminary, he married for the second time. Munsell married Elizabeth Whipp on September 4, 1851 in Cass County, Illinois.¹⁰ She was born in Sheffield, England on February 28, 1827, the daughter of Reverend William and Mary Whipp. Elizabeth was devout in her Christian faith, having joined the Methodist Episcopal Church when she was a child. She was a graduate of Jacksonville Female Academy, which was similar to a high school. Elizabeth worked as a teacher for one or two years until she married Oliver. They had five children together, three of whom died in early childhood.¹¹

Munsell ran the Danville Seminary in the old Methodist church in Danville until 1854. He was then transferred to Mount Morris, the seat of the Rock River Seminary in 1856.¹² Perhaps due to his successes at these two seminary schools, Munsell was elected the president in 1857 of the then virtually shuttered Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington.

Illinois Wesleyan University was first organized on September 23, 1850 by a group of thirty civic and religious leaders “who came together to establish an Institution of learning of Collegiate grade.”¹³ Since there was a large Methodist population in the area, it was decided that the university would be a Methodist affiliated college (even though those who were involved in its inception were of various faiths). It was named for John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement.¹⁴ In hopes of making the idea a reality, two of the founding members, James C. Finley and John S. Barger, visited Methodist conferences throughout 1850 with no success in their fundraising. Due to the shortage of money, the men were turned down. Finally, a report was written by Finley and Barger that detailed the financial support and the necessity of an educational stronghold in Bloomington. It was submitted to a Methodist committee on the education of Illinois. The report was approved in late 1850 and, before the Methodist conference adjourned, the founders of Wesleyan signed their names to the paper that would seal the establishment of Illinois Wesleyan University.¹⁵ By December of that year, a meeting was held to determine the officers that would serve on the Board of Trustees. A constitution was also adopted to establish the institution’s goal of providing “a system of education adapted to the wants of the country and based upon the system of religion and morality revealed in the Scripture.”¹⁶

⁹ “Catherine Hite Munsell,” Find-a-Grave.com, Date Accessed July 23, 2019.

¹⁰ Register of Marriage for Oliver Munsell and Elizabeth Whipp, Illinois State Wide Marriage Index, 1763-1900, Illinois State Archives, www.ilsos.gov, Date Accessed, May 18, 2019.

¹¹ “Death of Mrs. O. S. Munsell,” *Council Grove Republican* (Council Grove, KS), February 25, 1898.

¹² “Oliver S. Munsell.”

¹³ “Illinois Wesleyan University History,” www.iwu.edu, Date Accessed September 5, 2019.

¹⁴ “John Wesley,” The people of The United Methodist Church, accessed April 15, 2019, <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/john-wesley>.

¹⁵ The General Conference is the main governing body of the Methodist Church that sets official policy and speaks for the denomination. It is subdivided into other sub-conferences that govern at more centralized or local levels that hold annual meetings where a delegate is voted to attend the General Conference, United Methodist Communications, “General Conference –TheUnited Methodist Church,”The United Methodist Church, <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/general-conference>, Date Accessed September 7, 2019.

¹⁶ “Illinois Wesleyan Was Organized in This City Seventy-Five Years Ago,” *Pantagraph*, September 24, 1925; Watson, Elmo Scott. *The Illinois Wesleyan Story, 1850-1950*. (Bloomington, IL: Illinois Wesleyan University Press) 55.

The first classes of the university were held in the Methodist Church in Bloomington in October 1850, while the trustees worked to secure land on which to build the university.¹⁷ However, it appeared from the get-go that the university would struggle financially as they worked to secure enough funds to construct a building to house the university, as well as to find the necessary funds to continue operating the fledgling school.¹⁸ Due to those ongoing financial struggles, the university suspended operations just after the New Year in 1855.¹⁹

Attempts were made to appoint a committee to raise funds to reopen the school, but those attempts failed. Because of this, the trustees resolved to continue to suspend all classes and functions as of July 31, 1856 until adequate funds could be raised to pay off the indebtedness that had been incurred.²⁰ The Methodists were strong believers in pay-as-you-go, for debt was to be avoided. As a last-ditch effort to save the university, the Board of Trustees decided to offer the school to the Peoria and Illinois Conferences of the Methodist Church that fall. The proposition was accepted and the school's charter was reorganized. The presiding bishop of the Illinois Conference, Matthew Simpson, (who was formerly the president of Asbury University, the Munsell brothers' alma mater), remembered both Oliver and Charles from their time at Asbury and recommended that they be hired to get the university's affairs in order. Charles was appointed the chief financial agent of I.W.U. because of his experience with a successful business in Paris. Oliver was made president of the university.²¹ It was the hope of the trustees that the brothers would both whittle down, if not eliminate, the school's debt, and raise money to "provide for an endowment to keep the university alive once it had been revived."²²

The brothers inherited quite a mess, consisting of over \$5,000 of debt from the uncompleted North Hall, which they would increase to \$9,853 (or over \$280,000 in 2018) to complete the building.²³ Despite these handicaps, Oliver signed a most unusual three-year contract with the Board of Trustees. The trustees only had to provide the grounds and equipment, and Oliver would run the university at his own expense. He would have the right to determine the use of the money from tuition and his own funds to hire and pay faculty.²⁴ This agreement also stipulated that he was to provide "such a course of instruction as the circumstances of the Institution demand."²⁵ While Oliver focused on getting classes started again, his brother Charles immediately set out to raise \$75,000 to pay off the debts the trustees had incurred, "to erect additional buildings, and to provide for an endowment to keep the university alive once it had been revived."²⁶

The brothers' efforts proved successful. They worked hard to finish construction of North Hall in time for the university to open that fall. On September 10, 1857 the school reopened with

¹⁷ Watson, 33.

¹⁸ Ibid, 47-49.

¹⁹ "Illinois Wesleyan Was Organized in This City Seventy-Five Years Ago."

²⁰ Watson, 22, 32.

²¹ Richard D. Leonard, "The Munsells Save Wesleyan," *The Central Illinois Historical Messenger* 2, no. 4 (1970).

²² Watson, 55-58.

²³ Leonard; Robert Sahr, "Consumer Price Index (CPI) Conversion Factors for Dollars of 1774 to estimated 2028 to Convert to Estimated Dollars of 2018," (Oregon State University, 2018), <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/polisci/faculty-research/sahr/inflation-conversion/pdf/cv2018.pdf>, Date Accessed March 25, 2019.

²⁴ Leonard.

²⁵ Watson, 59.

²⁶ Ibid, 57-58.

three professors and seventeen students.²⁷ *The Daily Pantagraph* reported the following summer that, “the Trustees have made arrangements for the opening of the University this coming fall and are able to assure the public that the Institution, so far as the maintenance of the school for three years to come is concerned, is upon a reliable basis.”²⁸

Oliver worked hard to maintain high standards of education for the university. One way he improved the standard of material presented to students was by hiring qualified faculty. One such faculty member was his younger brother, Edward Munsell, who was a professor of mental and moral science.²⁹ The university continued to improve in status and quality, thus increasing enrollment. Members of the community and the *Pantagraph* regularly commended the efforts of the institution.³⁰ By the end of the 1858-1859 academic year, the *Pantagraph* praised Oliver, stating that the university under his control “is gaining an enviable reputation in this State; and will, we predict, in time, become a successful and paying school.”³¹

After three years had passed and control was returned to the trustees, the university was out of debt. And during those three years that Oliver and Charles were in charge, neither brother worked for a salary and both used their own funds to support the university. After the university was no longer in debt, Oliver began taking a salary, but Charles continued to work as financial agent without any payment at all.³²

What makes the Munsells’ success even more remarkable was that the year they took charge of the university was the same year as the Panic of 1857, which was caused by the declining international economy and over-expansion of the United States’ economy. Banks began to fail, and in turn demanded immediate repayment of their loans. Companies who were the receivers of those loans could not repay and therefore began to fail as well. All of this threw the country into an economic depression that lasted for three years.³³ Nevertheless, during those same three years, the Munsells freed the university from debt.

Working at an educational institution like I.W.U., it was only natural that Oliver Munsell continued to work on his own educational pursuits. He had a special interest in natural history, and as a member and president of the Illinois Natural History Society, he worked to greatly expand the university’s natural history collection.³⁴ Later in his life, he continued this love for natural history in his travels, publishing a piece recording his trip to Utah and the Green River.³⁵ He also pursued the field of psychology and wrote a textbook entitled *Psychology; or, The Science of the Mind* in 1871.³⁶ In the *Pantagraph*, it was stated that those who had the opportunity to examine his book remarked it was “one of the most comprehensive and critical which has been written upon that subject.”³⁷

²⁷ “The Illinois Wesleyan University,” *The Alumni Journal of the Illinois Wesleyan University*, August, 1876, Vol. VI, No. 8. 22.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Watson, 59.

³⁰ Ibid, 61-62.

³¹ “Illinois Wesleyan University,” *Pantagraph*, July 11, 1859.

³² Leonard.

³³ “On this Day,” <http://movies2.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/harp/1024.html>, Date Accessed, September 6, 2019.

³⁴ “Illinois Wesleyan Was Organized in This City;” “Illinois Natural History Society,” *Pantagraph*, June 2, 1871.

³⁵ O.S. Munsell, “A Trip to Utah, No. 2,” *Council Grove Republican* (Council Grove, KS), August 19, 1892.

³⁶ Rev. Oliver S. Munsell, D.D., *Psychology; or, The Science of the Mind* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1871).

³⁷ *Pantagraph* (Bloomington, IL), May 11, 1871.

Munsell was recognized as being highly educated by his students and peers. He presented many times at graduation ceremonies, and was consistently praised for his oratorical skills. In 1861, the *Pantagraph* praised him for his Baccalaureate Address, stating that his speech was presented “in his usual classic purity of diction.”³⁸ However, Munsell was more down-to-earth than his public image portrayed. George E. Scringer, who grew up on a farm near Lexington, Illinois and graduated from I.W.U. in 1874, recalled later in life that his “rural mind” regarded a college president like Munsell as “a Super Man.” However, when Scringer met Munsell for the first time, his “idol was rudely shattered.” Munsell had his feet on his desk with his chair tilted back and was not “the most fastidious about his personal appearance.” Despite that, Scringer still praised him for being “a born-teacher, and a man of a great heart, and a profound mind.”³⁹

One major event that marked Munsell’s presidency more than any other was the United States Civil War. During the first year of the war, only one student, George H. Fifer (brother of future Governor of Illinois Joseph Fifer) left the university to enlist in the army.⁴⁰ The following year, on the night of May 24, 1862, the students and faculty “awoke to the ringing of the college bell.” Illinois Governor Richard Yates had sent a telegram asking for 200 volunteers to report to Springfield by 9 o’clock the next morning. This caused more than three-fourths of the students to leave the university to answer that call.⁴¹ Most of these students returned for the 1862-63 school year.⁴²

While the U.S. Civil War raged on, Munsell visited Lincoln at the White House in Washington, D.C. in June 1863, about three weeks before the Battle of Gettysburg. Munsell had just stepped down from his position as a member of the Board of Visitors at the West Point Military Academy (a position to which Lincoln had appointed him earlier that year). In an interview towards the end of his life, Munsell recalled that he had asked “for the privilege of a personal interview” with the president, “not for any business relation, but in a meeting of friendship.” According to Munsell, near the end of that interview he asked Lincoln if he thought that the country would survive the war. Lincoln gave a tearful and emotional response, stating that he had no doubt that the country would survive, although he may not live to see it. Lincoln emphasized that, “God will bring us through safe.” Munsell said that this response moved and thrilled him, as he feared that Lincoln aligned himself more with “the philosophical musings of Paine and Voltaire,” than with “the God of Our Fathers.” Munsell stated that he left that meeting “thanking God, as I had never before thanked Him, for such a leader in our country’s deadly hour of peril.”⁴³

The war impacted the university beyond just enrollment. It permeated every aspect of campus life. Presentations, events, and debates related to the war or the issue of slavery were now commonplace.⁴⁴ After President Lincoln initiated the draft, a school policy was created, stating that, “Drafted Students will be placed upon the same footing in regard to the return of tuition

³⁸ “The Commencement Exercises,” *Pantagraph* (Bloomington, IL), June 28, 1861.

³⁹ George E. Scringer, “Sketch of Oliver Munsell,” undated, McLean County Museum of History Library and Archives.

⁴⁰ Watson, 66.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 67.

⁴² *Ibid*, 68.

⁴³ Munsell, “Abraham Lincoln’s Religion.”

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 70.

with those absent on account of personal illness.”⁴⁵ After the war was over, enrollment grew to a new record of 198 students.⁴⁶

Following the Civil War, the university continued to prosper and progress. Munsell reported that the university’s endowment was up to \$100,000 cash. Munsell also expanded the university’s faculty by hiring John Wesley Powell (a fellow member of the Illinois Natural History Society). During his tenure at the university, Powell taught natural sciences for three years and was curator of the natural history museum at Illinois State Normal University in Normal. Powell made his first of several famous expeditions west while still a teacher at the institution.⁴⁷ It was also during this time that I.W.U became a co-ed educational institution.

Both during and after the Civil War, many colleges for women were established, including Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley. Not only was education becoming more readily available for women, but these institutions provided high quality education. The idea of separate colleges, while popular in the eastern United States, was not as popular in the west (which included Illinois at this time). Coeducational institutions of higher education became more prevalent. This, however, did not mean that everyone supported coeducational programs. At the June 1869 meeting of the I.W.U. Board of Trustees, Reverend A. C. Higgins of Galva suggested a change in the school’s charter to accept women as students. This resulted in a “spicy debate” breaking out, causing the issue to be tabled. At the June 1870 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the faculty once again pushed for women to be admitted to the university.⁴⁸ The faculty submitted a report to Munsell that stated they wished to present a resolution to the board that recommended admission to the university be extended to all persons, “regardless of Sex.” After additional debate among trustees, they finally voted to accept women at the university, with only one “no” vote.⁴⁹ The action was ratified by the Central Illinois Conference and the Illinois Conference of the Methodist Church in September 1870, which prompted Munsell to send a telegram back to I.W.U. instructing the professors there to, “Open your doors to the ladies.”⁵⁰ During the 1870-71 school year, twenty-two women were the first to attend Illinois Wesleyan. Their arrival helped the enrollment of the university swell to 212 students.⁵¹ More than a century later, a new women’s dormitory that was dedicated in honor of Munsell in January 1947. Named “Munsell Hall,” the converted residence (located at the corner of Beecher and Main streets in Bloomington) was named for him to acknowledge his presidency at the time the university became coed.⁵²

Despite the university prospering during Munsell’s tenure, his distinguished career at I.W.U. came to an abrupt end with his resignation in 1873. Just two years after women were admitted to the university, scandal struck. In February 1873, Munsell wrote in a communication to the executive committee of the Board of Trustees that he wished to “be relieved [...] from all official duties until [...] next June” due to “the present unhappy condition of affairs in the University affecting [his] usefulness and acceptability.” The executive committee convened on February 22, 1873 to discuss this matter, but the problems that Munsell hinted at were not recorded in the

⁴⁵ Ibid, 71.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 73.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 76-96.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 97.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 98-99.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 100.

⁵¹ Ibid, 101.

⁵² “IWU Dorm Will Be Named for O.W. Munsell,” *Pantagraph*, January 14, 1947.

meeting's minutes.⁵³ On February 25, the *Chicago Tribune* published two anonymous "special dispatches" exposing Munsell. The author claimed that Munsell asked to resign so that he could avoid being forced out of his office due to accusations that he was "repeatedly guilty of gross and immoral conduct with the young lady pupils of the institution."⁵⁴ Immediately, Munsell responded with a letter to the *Chicago Tribune*, denying that he had resigned from the presidency and that he had been "charged with criminality." He also included resolutions of support from faculty members stating that there was no incriminating evidence, and that every case of complaints of acts of indiscretion had occurred with a third party member present. Munsell finished his letter admitting that he had in fact requested a hiatus in his duties as president, and that he would submit to any investigation deemed necessary.⁵⁵ On February 28, the *Pantagraph* ran an article stating that they had information from a reliable source that the allegations against Munsell were that he was "somewhat profuse in his attentions to some of the ladies, and that he kissed them rather too frequently. Nothing of a criminal nature is alleged against him by anyone connected with the students or faculty...an investigation...will at once take place." Furthermore, the article went on to state that "Dr. Munsell, who is known to be naturally rather demonstrative in his demeanor towards ladies asserts his entire innocence of any intention or improper acts."⁵⁶

A meeting of the full Board of Trustees, along with representatives of the Central Illinois Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was called to investigate and put Munsell on "trial." According to the Methodist Episcopal Church's *Book of Discipline*, whenever a member of the conference (like Munsell) had charges of any sort made against them, he or she was put on trial. Evidence was compiled, witnesses were called to speak, and both sides had "attorneys" to represent them. Members of the conference then voted.⁵⁷

The trial was conducted on March 19 and 20, 1873. At 10:00 a.m. on the first day, four faculty members were called to testify. The next day, eight female students testified. Not much was written in the notes of what exactly was said at the trial. The only specifics from the trial records come from a sustained amendment to the statement of Miss Mary Hood. She had originally stated that Munsell had visited her and her sister three times instead of five, and that he had been observed kissing them "upon entering and on leaving" what may have been their boarding house in town.⁵⁸ This, combined with the apparent testimony of seven other women, was more than enough for the Board to expect Munsell to submit his resignation—which he did at the end of the trial.

Immediately following the trial, the Board of Trustees submitted a public statement to the *Pantagraph* condemning Munsell's actions. In it, the trustees proclaimed that they regarded Munsell kissing different ladies "unwise and improper and that his position as the President of the University heightens the folly and impropriety [sic]." However, they emphasized that there was no criminal intent in the case, that all acts were done in the presence of a third party, and that his actions were not flagrant. They hoped to preserve the good name of the university so that it may continue to grow.⁵⁹

⁵³ Dr. Robert Bray, "The 'Trial' of Oliver S. Munsell – an exposition," 2015, unpublished, 5-6; McLean County Museum of History Library and Archives.

⁵⁴ Bray, 2; "Another Black Sheep," *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1873.

⁵⁵ Bray, 3; "Dr. O.S. Munsell to the Chicago Tribune," *Chicago Tribune*, March 1, 1873.

⁵⁶ Bray, 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 6-7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 9.

⁵⁹ Bray, 10-12; "The Dr. Munsell Scandal – The Accused Virtually Exonerated," *Weekly Pantagraph*, March 28, 1873; For a more detailed examination of the scandal, please read the full unpublished paper by Dr. Robert Bray

After Munsell's resignation in 1873, he and his wife moved to Shelbyville, Illinois where he pursued the banking business.⁶⁰ However, as part of the deal that Munsell made with the Board of Trustees, he remained the "financial agent of the University building fund...in which position he has been acting efficiently for some time past."⁶¹ He continued in that role until June 1875.⁶²

After living in Shelbyville for three years, Munsell purchased a large tract of land in Council Grove, Morris County, Kansas, and relocated there with his family in 1876. Once in Council Grove, he became the president of the newly established State Bank of Council Grove.⁶³ He also became involved in politics, and by 1880 was the chairman of the Republican County Central Committee.⁶⁴ That same year, Munsell ran for State Representative on the Republican ticket.⁶⁵ He won the election and served as a state representative until 1887.⁶⁶

In 1881, Munsell purchased the *Council Grove Republican*, a local newspaper, and became the editor.⁶⁷ He ran the paper with his son, Francis. Under Munsell's leadership as editor, the paper was "full of interesting reading matter." He wrote articles of national and state scope, and supplied readers with "a broad view of all subjects he dealt with."⁶⁸ However, not everyone was impressed with his writing. Despite his high level of education and skills in writing, he was later evaluated as "too didactic to become a popular newspaper writer."⁶⁹ Regardless of his journalistic skills, or lack thereof, he continued in the newspaper business until January 1887 when he sold the newspaper.⁷⁰ It is not known what type of business, if any, Munsell engaged in after this.

On February 21, 1898, Elizabeth Munsell died of senile dry gangrene at the age of 70.⁷¹ She had been painfully ill for approximately three months, but had only been on bed rest for two days before her death. It was reported that despite the severe pain she suffered during the last few months of her life, she was almost "uniformly patient, cheerful, and hopeful." She was described as the ideal wife for a man in Oliver's position because she was an active worker and efficient helper.⁷² Her remains were brought back to Bloomington and funeral services were held at the First Methodist Episcopal Church.⁷³ She was buried at Bloomington Cemetery (today known as Evergreen Memorial Cemetery).

which is held in the archival collection of the McLean County Museum of History. Dr. Bray, Emeritus Professor of English at Illinois Wesleyan University, is the scholar responsible for unearthing the information and historical records documenting to this long forgotten scandal.

⁶⁰ "Oliver S. Munsell."

⁶¹ Watson, 106.

⁶² *Ibid*, 224.

⁶³ "The New Bank," *Council Grove Republican* (Council Grove, KS), December 9, 1876.

⁶⁴ *Morris County Enterprise* (Parkerville, KS), May 27, 1880.

⁶⁵ "National Republican Ticket," *Morris County Enterprise* (Parkerville, KS), October 7, 1880.

⁶⁶ "Personal," *Pantagraph* (Bloomington, IL), November 29, 1880; DePauw University, 37.

⁶⁷ "What They Say of Us," *Council Grove Republican* (Council Grove, KS), June 10, 1881.

⁶⁸ Lalla M. Brigham, "The Story of The Council Republican—1872 – 1922," *Council Grove Republican* (Council Grove, KS), August 24, 1922.

⁶⁹ "Council Grove Republican...Brief Sketch of the Men Who are Responsible for Its Success," *Council Grove Republican* (Council Grove, KS), January 3, 1902.

⁷⁰ Brigham.

⁷¹ "Death of Mrs. O. S. Munsell;" Dry Senile Gangrene is a type of gangrene that occurs in the elderly. Gangrene is a type of necrosis that is caused by low blood supply, causing the premature death of cells in living tissue, "Senile Dry Gangrene," University College London, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/pathology-collection/senile-dry-gangrene>, Date Accessed, September 6, 2019.

⁷² "Death of Mrs. O. S. Munsell."

⁷³ "Mrs. O. S. Munsell's Funeral," *Pantagraph*, February 25, 1898.

At his age, one may expect Munsell to remain a widower the rest of his life. However, in 1903, at the age of seventy-eight, he married Clara B. Stevens of Cameron, Missouri.⁷⁴ Stevens was fourteen years his junior (being sixty-four at the time of their marriage), had been married before, and had adult children.⁷⁵ Munsell had apparently kept his marital intentions a secret from most others, and this wedding came as a shock to many.⁷⁶ After the marriage, the couple made their home in Cameron, Missouri.

Two years after his third marriage, on March 13, 1905, Dr. Oliver Munsell passed away in Kansas City, Missouri.⁷⁷ The cause of his death was listed as respiratory paralysis.⁷⁸ He was seventy-nine years old. Word of his death spread to all the places he had lived throughout his life, and his death was mourned by many who knew him. His body was brought back to Bloomington for burial, and he was buried in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery next to his second wife, Elizabeth.⁷⁹

By: Erin Jessup, 2019

Edited By: Candace Summers, 2019

Researchers: Dr. Robert Bray, Erin Jessup, Candace Summers, and Doug Williamson

⁷⁴ "The Same Dear Mother," *Council Grove Republican*, February 13, 1903.

⁷⁵ "75 Years Ago," *Pantagraph*, February 11, 1978; Marriage Record for Oliver S. Munsell, Iowa, Marriage Records, 1880-1940, Ancestry.com, Date Accessed May 18, 2019.

⁷⁶ "The Same Dear Mother."

⁷⁷ "Dr. Munsell Passes Away," *Mattoon Morning Star*, March 17, 1905.

⁷⁸ "O. S. Munsell," Missouri Death Records, 1850-1931, Ancestry.com, Date Accessed September 6, 2019.

⁷⁹ "Dr. Oliver S. Munsell Brought Back for Internment to the Scene of His Early Labors," *Freeport Journal-Standard*, March 17, 1905.