

# The Story of Twin Oaks— in the Words of Alvah Perry (1850-99): Part 3

by Dr. James Paul

1887 was a memorable year in my family history. My father and mother, David and Martha Perry, died six months apart that year—father died on May 19 and mother died on Nov. 14. Within those six months, my third daughter, Lomira, was born on June 11. I was 37 years old in 1887 having been born on June 25, 1850 in Bourbonnais Grove.



My wife, Ida, was 29 years old in 1887. She was born in Kankakee on Dec. 29, 1858. My parents died in their beloved Twin Oaks farm house in what was Porcelain portraits depict Alvah Perry's wife's parents George and Sarah Andrews. These artifacts are on display in the Durham-Perry Farmhouse.

starting to be referred to by locals as Woodland Park (present day Perry Farm Park). Ida and I had just celebrated our 10-year wedding anniversary on May 9, 1887—10 days before my father died. Our two other daughters were Bertha, age 9 and Sarah, age 4 in 1887.

At that time, my family lived in Chicago at 319 Bowen Ave., Hyde Park where I worked with Ida's father, George Andrews, in a cattle broker partnership—the commission firm of Andrews and Perry—at the Union Stock Yards.

My wife's parents, George and Sarah Andrews, were Kankakee River Valley pioneers who had moved to Kankakee from Indiana in the 1850s. I began to court Ida in Kankakee before her family moved to Chicago in 1874, three years after the Great Chicago Fire. We were married at Hyde Park in Chicago on May 9, 1877.

Ida wrote in a family memoir, "My mother [Sarah] was too young and too energetic to drop out of the activities after my marriage so she took up the study of medicine, being one of the first women to become a physician in Chicago. She received her degree from Hahnemann Medical College. She was raised a Quaker, and when chastised by her parents because of her interest in her brother's study of medicine (because at that time it was most unwomanly to be interested in such subjects, especially anatomy), she decided to accept the ardent [proposal] of her lover, George H. Andrews, and at the age of 16 was married in my father's sister's home—not because her parents did not approve of her choice, but because he was a Baptist. She could not be married in the orthodox Quaker church of the day. No music was allowed in the Quaker home—how things have changed. (George and Sarah were married on January 19, 1851 in LaPorte, IN.) I should also mention the fact that my mother helped to establish the first free clinic in Chicago and pioneered also the YWCA work there. She had the joy of being a great success in her profession."

There is a note on this memoir that in 1871, Hahnemann Medical College of Chicago began to teach women to become doctors in the practice of homeopathic medicine. Ida mentioned this memoir in a meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1934.

The address for George and Sarah Andrews in the 1880 census was 301 Bowen Ave., Hyde Park, Chicago, just down the street from my Perry family of five.

During my career as a Chicago cattle broker, my family and I visited Twin Oaks in unincorporated Bourbonnais several times a year in the summer and on holidays. As the sole survivor of David and Martha (Durham) Perry's five children, I inherited Twin Oaks upon the death of my parents. When my uncles on the Durham side of my family (mother's brothers) could no longer help farm Twin Oaks, I hired tenant farmers from 1887 to 1899 to cultivate the land and tend to the livestock. The 1890s saw major changes just east of Twin Oaks.

Just after George R. Letourneau was elected mayor of Kankakee in April, 1891 (he had earlier served as the first mayor of Bourbonnais in 1875-76), he had to deal with the May 4 bombshell trumpeted in the Kankakee Gazette headline "Hardebeck the Hustler has a Big Scheme in Hand—Nearly One Thousand Acres

Under Contract" (Vic Johnson, An Illustrated Sesquicentennial Reader: Kankakee County, Illinois 1853-2003, p. 116). North Kankakee was expanding to include many factory and town lot sites.

When Ida and I were about to sell 160.38 acres of Twin Oaks on the east side of Bourbonnais Rd. (later Kennedy Dri.) to Hardebeck in 1891, I found out that I did not have clear title to the farmstead. My father's will indicated that the farmstead "...in lieu of dower [a widow's share for life of her husband's estate] all the rents and profits arising from my farm on which I now reside, situated in the town of Bourbonnais, Kankakee County, state of Illinois, containing 355 acres more or less, [will transfer to my wife] during her natural life and at her decease to go to my only son, Alvah Perry."

In order to clear up any ambiguities and receive clear title to Twin Oaks, I filed an affidavit in 1891 which stated "David Perry and his devisees were in actual possession of said land from the first day of March 1866 to the present time, and they paid taxes yearly on said land during that time." I then received quit claim deeds from my surviving uncles on the Durham side of my family. Accordingly, on June 1, 1891, Ida and I sold 160.38 eastern acres of Twin Oaks to Hardebeck. This acreage was soon incorporated into Hardebeck's plat for the village of North Kankakee, which was renamed Bradley City in 1895 when the David Bradley Manufacturing Company started operation and then shortened to Bradley in 1896.

The 1890s were boom years in Chicago as well. The World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893 was located in our Hyde Park "back yard". What a dynamic city Chicago had become and now it was showing itself off to the world.

Even though I was only 48 years old when I died on Feb. 26, 1899, I had a full life. In my final days, I so loved listening to my daughters play their musical instruments. Bertha at age 23 was an accomplished pianist who even performed in Europe. Sarah and Lomira at ages 15 and 11 respectively, were also budding musicians. Our periodic trips to Twin Oaks in Bourbonnais complimented my full family and social life. What more could a person ask for?

For the full story of Twin Oaks (Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead), go to this link on the Bourbonnais Township Park District website [http://www.btpd.org/park\\_history\\_4\\_2934382977.pdf](http://www.btpd.org/park_history_4_2934382977.pdf).

Dr. Paul is a member of the Perry Farm Living History Advisory committee whose purpose is to teach the community about the history of the Durham-Perry Farmstead. Dr. Paul is also president of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society.

*The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting local history. Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month March to December.*

*Museum hours are 1 to 4 p.m. first and third Sundays of each month, March to December or by appointment.*

*Contact them at [bourbonnaishistory.org](http://bourbonnaishistory.org) on Facebook at [facebook.com/bourbonnais-grove](https://www.facebook.com/bourbonnais-grove) or call 1-815-933-6452.*

# KCC professor awarded Lifetime Achievement Award



Photo courtesy of KCC

Tim Wilhelm (center) accepted the Illinois Green Economy Network Lifetime Achievement Award during the 2017 IGEN Annual Sustainability Conference on March 22, 2017 in Bloomington. He was congratulated by Stephen Bell, IGEN executive director; and Jennifer Martin, IGEN senior program coordinator.

Kankakee Community College Professor Tim Wilhelm was awarded the Illinois Green Economy Network Lifetime Achievement Award. The award honors an Illinois community college leader who embodies the collaborative spirit of the Illinois Green Economy Network by leading by example, sharing expertise and resources and contributing to the collective impact the statewide network, through clean jobs, economic opportunity, career pathways and campus infrastructure.

Wilhelm often recounts that his love of solar energy started from the time he made his first photovoltaic solar-powered transistor radio in 8th grade, said Jennifer Martin, senior program coordinator at IGEN.

Wilhelm's career in clean energy education now spans more than 30 years. His accomplishments include developing fuel-alcohol from plants, building a year-round solar demonstration greenhouse and being the first solar dealer in the Midwest for SunWize Technologies.

In 2004, Wilhelm became KCC's electrical technology program coordinator and professor of electrical technology and renewable energy. Wilhelm's credentials include Interstate Renewable Energy Council Master Trainer, North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners' Certified PV Installer and professional engineer. Un-

der Wilhelm's guidance, KCC's renewable energy program has received nearly \$2 million in grants since 2009.

Among the awards was a 2012 National Science Foundation grant for KCC to help build a solar workforce market in the midwest. Through the grant, Wilhelm partnered with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association to bring free solar educational events to the community, reaching more than 500 people in the midwest; build a shared educational resource community including more than 25 community colleges in the midwest; worked with nearby junior high and high schools to demonstrate the importance of solar energy through the IGEN Solar for Schools program, designed to help create a pipeline for solar jobs in the Kankakee region; train nearly 300 local electrical inspectors in the midwest; and created partnerships with nearly 20 solar installers in the midwest.

In 2013, Wilhelm was awarded the IREC Clean Energy Trainer of the Year, as nationally-recognized leader in the renewable energy industry. The following year, KCC was the first community college in 22 years to receive the IREC Accredited Training Provider of the Year award.

KCC is an accredited two-year college which awards associate degrees and certificates of completion.

## Super Crossword

### Answers

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