



EDWARD LEE McCLAIN

EDWARD LEE McCLAIN, son of William Page McClain and Margaret Ann (Parkinson) McClain, was born May 30, 1861, in Greenfield, Ohio. Here he grew to manhood, established his own home, lived the Biblical three score ten, and almost three years, and died on May 2, 1934, its beloved and most distinguished citizen.

Mr. McClain is survived by his widow, Lulu Theodosia (Johnson) McClain, whom he married December 17, 1885, and three children, Edward Lee McClain, Jr., of Hood River, Oregon, and Los Angeles, California, Helen McClain Young (Mrs. Robert S. Young), of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, Donald Schofield McClain, of Atlanta, Georgia; also, three grandchildren—Edna Mildred McClain, of Los Angeles, Donald Schofield McClain, Jr., Helen Marjorie McClain, Atlanta, Georgia; and one sister, Nellie McClain McCafferty (Mrs. Wm. M. McCafferty), of Los Angeles, California.

Continuously members of four generations of Mr. McClain's family have been associated with Greenfield since 1857. The Rev. John McClain lived his last days in the home of his son, William Page McClain, and during that period gave of his faith and labor to the upbuilding of the local Methodist Episcopal church, concluding here fifty years of activity as a local preacher, having followed in the footsteps of his father, the Rev. Peter McClain.

In early youth Mr. McClain affiliated himself with the church of his father and his forefathers, and steadfastly served therein in the way that best suited his talents, in earnestly helping to provide and maintain a beautiful temple and church property in the community. "If anything ever does happen you so that you can not carry on" it was written to him only a few brief weeks ago, "the church of your love and the object of your service and care will so miss your presence and blessing that it will need to be prayed for in order that it may not be so discouraged and heartless that it can't carry on. That church is pretty much a monument to E. L. McClain. Who should covet any greater monument than . . . the church that goes by your spirit!" But his beneficent interest transcended local and denominational lines and all religious undertakings had his respect and many knew his bounty.

At the age of fifteen, Edward Lee McClain began his active business career in the harness shop of his father, William Page McClain. Conceiving the idea of a horse collar pad for the general trade and constantly alert for improvement of his product, the idea of the elastic steel hook presented itself to his active mind. The device permitted the pad to be readily attached to and detached from the horse collar, thus avoiding the risk of frightening the animal by adjusting it over its head, as in the cruder style. "A Success From the Word Go", his advertising slogan, became a prophecy of the young man's successful business career.

It is not unusual for an American business to grow rapidly to very large proportions, for such enterprises are found in every state. They are, however, usually begun and matured by a combination of men of experience and capital—seldom founded and made successes, practically unaided, by one person starting as a youth, with grime, grit, and a few borrowed dollars as his associates. Thus was founded an industry which eventually became the largest of its kind in the world.

In the year 1903, Mr. McClain was seeking "the most perfect cotton mill location in the world". A tract of land near Cartersville, Georgia, became the site of a model mill and village—Atco—unique, in that it was the first cotton mill village in the South where cottages were designed with unusual regard for the comfort and welfare of the employees, where streets and sidewalks, lawns and parks, were part of well-laid plans, where a regular church building was provided exclusively for Divine service, a large and beautiful brick building for school purposes, with rooms for lodge meetings and a hall for moving pictures and local entertainments, a kindergarten, swimming pool and playgrounds centrally located. In the words of the late Senator Rebecca Latimer Felton, "Aladdin's lamp never exhibited a greater feat in human dreams than has been bestowed on this section of Cherokee, Georgia, with the real things that multitudes work for, strive for and suffer for, in towns and rural places and fail to obtain during mortal life".

"And ye shall succor men;
'Tis nobleness to serve;
Help them who cannot help again;
Beware from right to swerve".

