

Oliver Hazard Payne

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Oliver Hazard Payne was born to Harry B Payne (b Hamilton, NY 10 Nov 1810; d 9 Sept 1896; married 16 Aug 1836) and Mary Perry on 21 July 1839.in Cleveland, Ohio.

Mary Perry was the only daughter of Nathan Perry and Pauline Shimmer. Nathan had moved to Cleveland in 1804, one year after Ohio became a state. He became the chief rival of John Jacob Astor in the fur trade, and later became the leading merchant in Cleveland.

Edward Perry, a Quaker, emigrated to Sandwich, Mass around 1639.Two of his sons, tired of harassment of Quakers, moved around 1704 to Narragansett country, near the town of Newport, Rhode Island which had large farms which used many slaves imported through Newport. The Church of England enjoyed greater prestige. The impact of this gay, opulent, slaveholding society was unfavorable to the growth of so ascetic a sect as the Quakers, and the Perrys eventually moved into the Anglican communion.

Freeman Perry married Mercy Hazard in 1755, the daughter of Oliver Hazard. She inherited 300 acres in North Kingstown and lived and died there.

The more famous of the Perry's remained in Newport. Christopher Perry broke out of the pacifist Quaker tradition and served in both the army and navy during the American Revolution. His oldest son, Oliver Hazard Perry, was the victor of the battle of Lake Erie in 1812, but died in 1819 aged 34. A younger son, Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry was a career naval officer. Samuel Eliot Morison's biography title says it all:

Old Bruin, Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, 1794 – 1858, The American Naval Officer Who Helped Found Liberia, Hunted Pirates in the West Indies, Practised Diplomacy with the Sultan of Turkey And the King of the Two Sicilies; Commanded the Gulf Squadron in the Mexican War, Promoted the Steam Navy and the Shell Gun, and Conducted the Naval Expedition Which Opened Japan. Commodore Perry was instrumental in establishing the Naval Academy and enforcing education of naval midshipmen.

Harry Payne had come to Cleveland from Hamilton, New York, where many of the Paynes settled.. The Payne (or Paine) family dated back to the pilgrim days in Yarmouth, Massachusetts, and followed the time-honored route from Eastern Massachusetts to Western Massachusetts then Albany, New York area and eventually to the middle of New York State when that area was opened for development. The couple had six children.

Children of Henry B Payne and Mary Perry

Nathan Perry Payne born 17 Aug 1837 at the house of his grandfather, Nathan Perry, Jr., in Cleveland Ohio; enlisted in the Cleveland Grays "at the outbreak of the Civil War"; engaged in numerous commercial and mining enterprises in Mahoning and Summit Counties of Ohio, particularly in relation to the coal industry; councilman often from 1862 to 1872; elected Mayor of Cleveland 1875, serving until 1877; died 12 May 1886 at Cleveland, Ohio, two months after the death of his grandmother Perry, whose home he shared.

Oliver Hazard Payne (b Cleveland 21 July 1839, d NYC 27 June 1917) is the subject of this essay

Flora Payne (b 25 Jan 1842 Clinton Park, Cleveland, Ohio; d 5 February 1893 in New York City) married Oliver's Yale chum, William Collins Whitney in 1869.

Henry Wilson Payne born 7 Mar 1845 at Clinton Park, Cleveland, Ohio; graduated Yale 1867; Columbia Law School 1870; admitted to the Ohio bar 1870; practiced at Cleveland; went abroad for his health and died at Mentone, France, February 8, 1878. One source says he died from injuries originally sustained from rowing at Yale. He was commonly called Harry.

Elisha Howard Payne born 29 June 1851 at Clinton Park, Cleveland, Ohio; died there 1 Sept 1852)

Mary Perry Payne affectionately called "Mollie" (born 9 July 1854 at Cleveland, Ohio; died West Palm Beach Florida 20 Jan 1898. married Charles William Bingham who was identified with the business interests of Cleveland and was the head of William Bingham Company, manufacturer and distributors of hardware, founded by Mr. William Bingham, his father. Before going abroad to study in Germany in 1868, she studied at Newburgh, New York, with two or three other girls in a private home under private tutors Mollie spent two years abroad, missing Flora's wedding. The greater part of Mollie's time in Europe was spent in study but she also found occasion to visit Switzerland and just before her return home to spend some weeks in Italy.

Children of William Collins Whitney and Flora Payne Whitney

- Leonora Whitney born circa 1870, died at birth
- Harry Payne Whitney (b NYC 29 Apr 1872; d 26 Oct 1930) married 25 Aug 1896 Gertrude Vanderbilt. Couple had three children: Flora, Cornelius Vanderbilt (called "Sonny") and Barbara
- Pauline Payne Whitney (b 21 Mar 1874; d) in 1895 married Almerrec Paget, Baron Queenborough
- [William Payne Whitney](#) (b 20 March 1876 d 25 May 1927) later known only as Payne married Helen Hay, daughter of

John Hay, Lincoln's personal secretary and biographer. Couple had two children: John who was known as "Jock" and Joan; Joan married Charles Payson and she was a co-founder of the New York Mets in 1962.

- Oliver (b 1878; d Paris, France 3 Feb 1883)
- Dorothy Payne Whitney (b Washington DC 23 Jan 1887) married Willard D Straight in Sept 1911. They founded the *New Republic* magazine. After Willard's death, Dorothy married 1925 Leonard Knight Emlund; they founded Dartington Hall school in UK.

Children of Charles William Bingham and Mary Perry Payne

Oliver Perry Bingham (b Cleveland 2 Dec 1877; d Palm Beach Florida 14 Feb 1900)

William Bingham (b Cleveland 21 July 1879)

Elizabeth Beardsley Bingham (b Cleveland 29 Sept 1881; d ???) married Dudley Stuart Blossom

Frances Payne Bingham (b 29 March 1885 in Cleveland Ohio; d 9 March 1977) married Chester Castle Bolton

Henry (called "**Harry**") **Payne Bingham** (b 9 Dec 1887; d NYC 25 Mar 1955) [Click here](#) for further information about Harry Bingham

return to [top of page](#) or to the [home page](#)

Oliver Hazard Payne grew up in comfortable circumstances in a house on Euclid Avenue, the fashionable address in Cleveland. He attend the local secondary school, where John D. Rockefeller was a classmate. He completed his secondary

education at Philips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts and entered Yale University in 1859 with the class of 1863.

Civil War Service. When the war broke out, Oliver left Yale in October 1861, as his father had secured a commission for him in the 64th Illinois Regiment, the "Yates Sharpshooters". He soon advanced to the rank of captain and his company saw action at New Madrid, Missouri (13 Mar 1863), and Island No. 10 (9 Apr 1862), Farmington (9 May 1862), Booneville, Mississippi (1 July 1862), and Corinth, Mississippi. (Oct 3-4, 1862) as well as in numerous skirmishes.

In September 1862, he became a lieutenant colonel in the 124th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and was promoted to Colonel in January 1863. His regiment fought at Thompson's Station, Tenn on March 4-5, 1863. Payne fought under General Thomas at Chickamauga, Georgia, where Oliver was seriously wounded on Sept 19, 1863. After a recovery of several months, he rejoined the regiment and fought at Rocky Face Ridge, Resaca, and Pickett's Mills, Georgia during the Atlanta campaign. He may have participated at the battle of Brown's Ferry, Tennessee on Oct 27, 1864. On November 2, 1864 he resigned his commission, having completed his three year enlistment.

[click here](#) for extended treatment of Payne's war service
For Col O H Payne report of Atlanta activity [click here](#)

Payne's Business Activities. Payne returned to Cleveland in 1865 and started Clark, Payne & Company whose principal business was refining oil. In 1872 he sold out to John D. Rockefeller, and became principal stockholder and treasurer of Standard Oil of Ohio, a position he retained until he moved to New York in 1884. He continued to be a principal owner of Standard Oil, but used his wealth to invest in many other ventures. Among these were American Tobacco Company, Tennessee Coal and Iron Company (which

later merged into United States Steel) and several railroads. For a detailed description of his business activities, [click here](#).

William Collins (1841 - 1904) and Flora Payne (1842 - 1893) Whitney . When Payne attended Yale, he met and liked William Collins Whitney, a young man from Western Massachusetts. They shared many interests, although Whitney was not nearly at Payne's financial level. After the war, Oliver arranged a meeting between Whitney and Payne's favorite sister, Flora. They fell in love and married in 1869. Harry Payne gave them a town house at 74 Park Avenue in the Murray Hill section of New York City. In 1879 Oliver Hazard Payne purchased the Stevens mansion at the southwest corner of 57th Street and Fifth Avenue and gave it to the couple. Oliver also used an apartment on the second floor as a stopping place when he visited New York City. William Whitney was very successful as a lawyer for important clients like Commodore Vanderbilt and in business, especially with the Metropolitan Railway. He built an elaborate residence in Washington, DC, where Flora became known for the dinners and parties she hosted. One estimate is that during four years there, no less than 65,000 guests attended parties at the Whitneys. The couple had six children, one of whom was [Payne Whitney](#), who became one of Oliver Payne's favorite nephews. The couple became estranged late in their marriage, which they handled by living in separate houses -- not too difficult as they had houses in Lenox, Massachusetts, Bar Harbor Maine, New York City, Washington, DC, and Aiken, South Carolina. After Flora died in 1893, William became estranged from his father-in-law; he always resented the common opinion that it was Oliver's wealth which made William wealthy. In 1896 Whitney married Edith Randolph, a widow with two children. Oliver Payne resented this marriage and Oliver and William became estranged. Edith died in May 1899 as a result of a fall from a horse which placed her in a coma for several

months. William Whitney spent the remainder of his life racing horses both in Saratoga and England.

return to [top of page](#) or to the [home page](#)

Political Activity Oliver Hazard Payne, his father Harry B. Payne, and William Collins Whitney were lifelong Democrats, somewhat of an oddity in the milieu of the late 19th century rich of New York. Harry B. Payne was a perpetual office seeker, and Oliver helped him get elected as a representative from Ohio for several terms. When Harry lost re-election, he wanted to campaign for the Presidency, but Oliver and William talked him out of this. Instead they suggested he become a senator of Ohio. At that time senators were chosen by the state legislature. Oliver Payne was accused of sitting in a hotel room with \$100,000 in cash and meeting with the members of the state legislature one by one, after which Harry B Payne was elected Senator. The US Senate chose not to investigate the charges,

O H Payne's principal activity while with Standard Oil was relations with state and national governments -- in effect a lobbyist for the company.

Both Republicans and Democrats were unhappy with the scandalous state of affairs in both the state and national governments. William C Whitney worked for Samuel Tilden in his run for New York governor and introduced legislation in NY State which led to the breakup of the infamous Tweed Ring. Whitney also worked in the Tilden presidential campaign which resulted in a victory for Rutherford Hayes. He then encouraged Grover Cleveland to run for Governor of New York State shortly after he had won election as Mayor of scandal-ridden Buffalo, and acted as one of campaign managers for the run for the Presidency. Cleveland's reputation for honesty propelled him into the race for the Presidency, and Harry and Oliver Payne pumped \$170,000

into his election campaign -- an enormous sum at that time. When Cleveland was elected, he wished to place Whitney, who was one of his three closest advisors, as Secretary of Treasury. However, this was seen as giving in to the oil lobby, so Cleveland appointed Whitney Secretary of the Navy. In this position Whitney did a remarkable job of modernizing the Navy, which had remained stagnant since the Civil War. Whitney commissioned a large number of steel ships with modernized guns. Without his intervention, the US would not have been able to succeed in its efforts against Spain in Cuba and the Philippines.

return to [top of page](#) or to the [home page](#)

Payne's Properties. After the Civil War, Oliver Payne lived in Cleveland until 1884, when he moved to New York City. In 1879 Oliver purchased the Stevens Mansion at 57th and Fifth Avenue and gave it to Flora and William Clifford Whitney. Oliver used an apartment on their second floor, but later built a home at 852 Fifth Avenue for himself.

Oliver spent most of his later summers aboard his yacht, the Aphrodite, then the longest steam powered yacht in the world (330 feet), traveling to Europe and the Mediterranean every year from 1898 until 1914, after which he confined his sailing to United States waters. Earlier Payne had chartered a steam yacht, the Eleanor, built by the Bath Iron Works of Maine (recently purchased by General Dynamics, and now concentrating on Navy high tech vessels). He was impressed with her beauty and the fact she had traveled some 80,000 miles without needing any repairs, he felt this was the yard to build his yacht. As a result he had Bath Iron Works build the Aphrodite, a yacht true to her namesake, being full of luxury and beauty! The statistics on the Aphrodite:

BIW HULL #25 APHRODITE Steam Yacht for Colonel Oliver H. Payne.
330'long, 35'-6"beam, 21'-3 1/2"depth, 15'draft, displacement 1,147
light ship, 1,823 full load, 1 triple expansion steam engine, 3,500

horsepower, 4 boilers, 1 stack. Launched December 1,1898, delivered March 25,1898. With a 303'long deck, 260'long waterline, a steam engine and 3-masted bark rig with the top of the main topmast 136'above baseline and spreading 17,000 square feet of canvas, she was a "Sea Palace." Reached 17 knots on trials. With a complement of 56 she sailed the World Oceans for 17 years. To the United States Navy for World War I, commissioned May 29,1917. Used for convoy escort and patrol off Bordeaux. Struck a mine off Helgoland and repaired. Returned to the Payne Whitney in 1919 (Oliver Payne had willed the yacht to his nephew) and sold to Greek owners in 1928.

During the winters, Oliver stayed at a home in [Thomasville](#), Georgia called Greenwood Plantation, and in the final years of his life, he summered at his Hudson River estate at [Esopus](#). His New York townhouse was at 852 Fifth Avenue. When Oliver Payne died, he left the Thomasville estate to Payne Whitney and the Esopus estate to Harry Payne Bingham, his two favorite nephews.

After reading this account, Payne Middleton, Payne Whitney's granddaughter wrote (in 2002):

Oliver was angry that two years after the death of his sister, William C Whitney remarried. At that time he told Harry Payne Whitney and his brother, William Payne Whitney and the two sisters that he would leave his fortune to whichever children took his side; I like to think that they decided that two would go to Oliver and two would stay with Dad. William Payne and a sister went with Oliver, and William Payne dropped the William and was henceforth known as (Plain) Payne which has caused confusion! So the house in Georgia was left to Plain Payne, who died in 1927, and subsequently to his wife, Helen Hay, daughter of Lincoln's biographer John Hay, and not to Harry Payne Whitney who inherited nothing from Oliver Payne but inherited from William C. Whitney

Despite this unpleasantness, Harry Payne Whitney and Payne Whitney and their families remained friends.

return to [top of page](#) or to the [home page](#)

Philanthropy Payne quietly donated to many educational and medical causes. In his will he left \$500,000 to Philips Academy at Andover, \$200,000 to Hamilton College (recall the Paynes settled in Hamilton), \$200,000 to the University of Virginia, and

\$1,000,000 to Yale University, which had granted him an honorary bachelors degree in 1878. He also left \$1,000,000 to the New York Public Library.

Having been cured of a serious illness by physician Alfred Loomis, Payne became interested in assisting the medical profession. In 1887 he endowed the Loomis Laboratory in New York City for teaching and research in chemistry, biology and pathology. In 1889 he donated \$500,000 to found Cornell Medical School, and his subsequent donations to this school totaled over \$8 million. He gave New York University \$150,000 for its medical school and \$100,000 each to New York City's Post-Graduate Hospital and to the University of Virginia and Western Reserve University to establish laboratories of experimental medicine. He also donated \$1,000,000 to Lakeside Hospital in Cleveland, \$200,000 to St. Vincent's Charity Hospital at Cleveland, and \$200,000 to the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum.

The family history in 1954 contains a brief biography of Oliver Hazard Payne:

Colonel Oliver Hazard Payne, born July 21, 1839, at Cleveland, Ohio; received his preliminary education at Phillip's Academy, Andover, Massachusetts; matriculated at Yale College with the class of 1863; left college to enlist in the Union Army in October 1861; commissioned lieutenant "First Battalion of Yates, Illinois, Sharpshoo9ters"; saw service at New Madrid, Corinth, Farmingham and Boonesville; promoted to the rank of colonel in command of the 124th Ohio Volunteer Infantry; his letters to his father from camp have been preserved by the family; he emerged from the war with the rank of brigadier general, though he never used a higher title than colonel; engaged in business in Cleveland after the war; received degree of A.B. from Yale College in 1878; removed to New York about 1884; noted for his integrity, sweetness of character and great accomplishments; an ardent huntsman and interested in outdoor sports; treasurer and director of the Standard Oil Company; director of the American Tobacco Company; interested in philanthropic work and a founder and contributor of the Cornell Medical School and of the New York Public Library; died June 27, 1917.

return to [top of page](#) or to the [home page](#)

Burial The Find-a-Grave website indicates that Oliver Hazard Payne is buried in Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, Plot 1, Section 6, lot 235

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Photo in uniform downloaded from <http://community.webshots.com>

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Private communication from Payne Middleton, Oliver's great grand niece, via Charles Haughton

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return to [top of page](#) or to the [home page](#)

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