

Peter Winnen

Peter Winnen, with his father, Michael, mother, Katherine, and uncle Peter Webber, came to the United States in the early 1850's. It seems Michael and Katherine had a son Henry who came with them but died at an early age as nothing is ever said or told about him. According to Christine Dillman, daughter of Peter, Katherine, wife of Michael, had sixteen children born in Germany and all died either at birth or shortly after. Michael, the father, was born in Germany in 1808, Peter on Nov. 5, 1835 and Katherine in 1817. The uncle, Peter Webber, brother of Katherine was born about 1814. Peter Webber was known to Peter Winnen's children as Omar. The family migrated to the United States, arriving at Detroit, where they stayed one year and in 1854 went to St. Paul, staying until 1855. While in these two places they most certainly engaged in cabinet making as both seemed highly experienced. From St. Paul, the family arrived in Plymouth Township, but it is rumored that they settled in Medina first, living on the farm known as the old Hansman place or the present farm (1953) of Ed Schommer near Holy Name Church. At any rate, they left and preempted the present Winnen farm in Plymouth Township. On Oct. 16, 1860, Michael purchased at Forest City, near Litchfield, the N E 1/4 of Sec. 32, consisting of 160 acres.

The family built a log house similar to those in the neighborhood, and cleared and farmed the land in the same manner as the rest of the settlers. Peter, a young man, evidently dissatisfied with farming, and having married in about 1859 or 1860, left the farm, leaving their young son, Henry, with Peter's parents. Peter worked in a furniture store in St. Paul, no doubt making furniture as he was a very fine cabinet maker, judging from the furniture he made at the Winnen home, where to this day can be seen. The mother of Peter was broken in health, as was her husband Michael, who begged his son Peter to return to the farm and made him promise to care for the mother in event of his, Michael's death, which happened soon after Peter returned. While living in St. Paul, Peter's son

Henry, died and was buried in St. Paul. The father, Michael, died in 1867 and the mother Katherine, in 1887. Peter assumed the management of the farm and reared his family and cared for his mother.

Peter's wife was Anna Lacher, a daughter of an old settler of Holdridge, Lake Minnetonka. She was born in Switzerland and came here at an early age. Christine Dillman tells of her mother and her grandmother Katherine, cupping, or bleeding people who desired it, each spring. It seems to have been a custom similar to the molasses and sulphur theory of thinning one's blood or invigorating it. Whatever part of the anatomy that was to be cut, was washed, cut and a small glass with paper burning in it to cause smoke, was inverted over the cut, the smoke causing a suction, and the blood flowed into the glass. Sometimes as many as four or six cups were inverted and applied at one time. The apparatus with which they cut was a treacherous little cube of brass, with slots for hidden blades, and levers to press to cause the sharp little knives to appear and cut. I believe if anyone being prepared to be cupped would have fled if he could have seen those sharp little blades coming out suddenly from those slots.

Now, Peter was a great lover of nature. He left part of his farm in a wild state to preserve what he loved, hunting and fishing and observing nature. A son of Francis Clay, Charles, father of Blanche Rosing, told her that many times about his travels in the woods when he was a boy and of meeting up with an old man who just sat motionless and peered at a bird or a tree or an animal. This old man was Peter Winnen, finding material to use for designs in his beloved hobby, wood carving. Most all his designs were deer, birds, leaves, flowers, sheaves of wheat, bird's nests and other things too numerous to mention. A cluster of nuts or berries on a tree or a graceful twig could be carved into a very delicate and beautiful design. He had a wood working shop right near the house and it still stands tho in a state of disrepair. It was only within the past year (1953) that Paul Winnen's wife, rummaging

through the shop found an unfinished wardrobe, still unassembled, the carving completed in every detail. She took it and assembled it to use in her son's bed room. It was not yet stained nor complete as to finishing but it is very nice.

The old Mc Nair mansion, the present St. Margaret's Academy in Minneapolis, has some carving done by Peter. The Pulpit of the Crystal Bay Presbyterian Church was made and carved by him also and is still in use. (1953) The pulpit at the Parker's Lake Methodist Church was also made by Peter, but was partially destroyed in the fire of 1947. It is at present, stored in the barn on the Gus Kreatz farm. It is hoped it can be restored to its original beauty by a grandson of Peter Winnen. The old rustic bridge which used to cross the creek below Minnehaha Falls was built by this same Peter. Not only was Peter a fine wood carver, but a good teacher also. He evidently taught his daughters or some of them at least, as some turned out very creditable pieces of wood carving.

Now, Peter was supposed to be a farmer, but by the statement accorded Christine Dillman again, he was a great planner. The work for each of his nine daughters was carefully mapped out each morning by him and he personally saw that it was done. The girls hoed, weeded, planted and did everything to be done on the farm, while Peter went to town to act as salesman. He had a wonderful berry patch, which the girls took entire care of, planting, weeding, hoeing and above all, picking. A man said at the market the berry business was profitable, but it was so hard to get pickers. Peter waved his hand, laughed and said, " Oh, I have nine and all made to order." Mrs. Dillman said that the sorghum making capped the climax. The seed was planted by the father but everything else was left to the girls. First hoeing, then cutting, pressing and cooking. It was pressed by horse power but who drove the horse? Anna, the wife cooked the juice in trays or kettles using a series of them until the juice was perfectly clear and of the right consistency. It was then bottled or put in pails or cans and delivered by Mr. Winnen to regular customers. It was sold at from 45 cents to \$ 1.00 a gallon.

Whenever the girls wanted a new ribbon, trinket or dress, they took to the woods to pick black caps or any other berry in season and hunted ginseng to sell. It seems that a man drove around and bought the ginseng. The money from the sale of the berries and ginseng was used for their very own selves. I imagine the work was done on their own time. Some man in the neighborhood farm (1953) stated that the Winnen girls always had a pretty ribbon in their hair and were very winsome and pretty to look at.

Peter and Anna had quite a family. The children were born at short intervals, nine girls and one living boy. There is a record of births in the Town Clerk's Registry, 1870 - 1887 of children being born to the Winnens in 1870-71-73-74-75-77 and 1883. Three were born before 1870. The one born in 1873 and listed as a male, lived one day. This child was probably buried on the farm. The daughters married sons of neighbors near their home but even at that it took in quite a territory. Henry the eldest, died at the age of four and is buried at St. Paul. Mary, Mrs. Alex Frick, deceased, is buried at Parker's Lake Cemetery. Katherine, Mrs. Fred Reum, deceased, is also buried at the same cemetery. Annie, Mrs. Andrew Dickey, deceased, is buried at Long Lake, Minn. Christine, Mrs. Eben Dillman, living (1953) in Wayzata. Josephine, Mrs. Henry Van Beck, deceased, is buried in Minneapolis. Sadie, Mrs. Arthur Squires, living, (1953) also lives in Wayzata. Carrie, Mrs. Harry Crawshaw, living (1953) in California, as did Barbara, Mrs. Vernon Eddy, deceased, and buried there. Paul, living (1953) on the old Winnen farm, is in very poor health. Lilly, the baby girl of the family, Mrs. Ed. Keller, deceased and is buried at Parker's Lake Cemetery. Peter and Anna Winnen both died in 1915 and are buried at Parker's Lake, as is Uncle Peter Webber (Omar) who passed away in 1893. Michael, Peter's father died in 1867, and his wife Katherine, who died in 1887, are both buried at Holy Name Cemetery, Medina Township, Hennepin County.

Michael and Katherine Winnen had a daughter Katherine who married Christ Swaggert and was given half of the Michael Winnen farm. The farm was not divided equally north and south nor east and west, but according to what could be grown to advantage, for instance a hay field here and a cultivated field there. Peter retained the old home and Katherine's land lay to the south. Katherine passed away in 1928 and Christ in 1923. Both are buried in Parker Lake Cemetery.

A Notation About Peter Winnen's Carving in St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis.

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" The Parish House " Chpt. 77. The main section of the Parish House was completed before the new church was ready for occupaney and for two years services were held in a large room on the second floor, into which were brought the Altar and Sanctuary furnishings from Sixth Street. Since the consecration of the church in 1910 this has been the Church School Assembly Room. In it have been established memorials appropriate to the place."

Page 96 The Jaffray Chapel.

" The Southeast room on the second floor of the enlarged Parish House was " provided and furnished " by the Wednesday Club in memory of Mary Freeman Jaffray 1891-1923, daughter of Bishop Freeman and first wife of Clive Palmer Jaffray. This room became known as the " Jaffray Chapel". In it were placed the Altar from St. Mark's Church on Sixth Street, the Altar Cross and some of the Altar furnishings used in that edifice.

The Altar was given by Mrs. Elisha Eldred of Milwaukee, Wisc. mother of Jrs. James Lewis (Alicia Marie) Spink, who was a member of one of the founding families of St. Mark's. Mrs. Spink was the thired Junior Warden. The carving of the Altar was superintended by the Rev. Edward Augustus Bradley, first Rector of the parish, and executed by P J Winnen, a local wood worker, who also carved the Bishop's Chair and the Puopit that were used in the Sixth Street Church. Many years later Mr. Winnen made a new Pulpit, using wood from the settees of the mission ahcpel "etc.