

William and Christina Smith

By coincidence the history of William and Christina Smith was obtained from Edward Sandhoff. It was discovered by the writer that Herman Sandhoff's wife, Amelia, was a daughter of these two territorial pioneers who really came to America at an early date.

William Smith was born Oct. 10, 1810 in Germany, probably near where he made his home after marriage in Furstenthun, Schwarzburgh Turingen, Weimer, Saxony, Germany for that is where his daughter Amelia was born. If he wasn't born there it must have been in that vicinity. Nothing is known of his parents but of the wife, Christina quite a bit has been recorded. The mother Christina or Crystal as she was sometimes called, was born of Martin Schiller and his wife on April 9, 1813. She had at least one brother as none others were mentioned. The father Martin was a burgomaster, a sort of mayor or an official and was considered very wealthy. The terms of wealth in 1813 was considerably different from the term of being wealthy now in 1955. However he gave his daughter Christina two thousand dollars upon her marriage to William Smith, which must have been at least eleven or twelve years before Amelia Smith's birth in 1845 as she had a sister Augusta who was ten years of age when William and Christina came to America.

Robert Frederick Schiller the brother of Christina and the son of Martin Schiller was a musician, a concert violinist and a composer. He married at an early age, had a family of six when he contracted a severe cold and died at the age of forty years. It must have been a sad blow to the parents, Martin and his wife, to have lost a son and to have the daughter Christina go to America. However, William and Christina oddly enough left the aforesaid daughter Augusta aged 10 with her parents when they left for America in 1846. The daughter Amelia was born Nov. 9, 1845 and in March of 1846 departed with two

sons, Charles and Henry Magnus and their infant daughter Amelia arriving in Fort Wayne, Indiana where they lived for some time. At Fort Wayne, two children were born, Selma Elizabeth, on Oct. 9, 1849 and a son William who died in infancy.

Hearing of the migration to Minnesota, they started and arrived there in 1854. William was a blacksmith, a cabinet maker and a wheelwright and probably carried on his trade wherever he settled as that type of work was greatly needed. They had plenty of cash evidently as they, instead of preempting land purchased outright for cash. St. Anthony, too was the seat of the government office to which people had to apply for land. Their choice was on the west shore of Medicine Lake, a very lovely spot indeed and today in 1955 is very valuable. They chose the following and paid cash for it; Lot # 1, 61.75 acres, the SW 1/4 of NW 1/4, 40 acres and the SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4, 40 acres. Lot # 2 consisting of 34.60 acres was homesteaded. These homesteaded areas were very few and far between at that period as most of the land was preempted, which amounts to almost the same thing. This land transaction took place April 5, 1856, in Plymouth Township, Hennepin County, Section 26.

William, no doubt built his log home on the homesteaded lot as that was practically compulsory to hold the land. He also built as a matter of course his blacksmith shop where he could carry on his various trades. Settlers depended very greatly on these blacksmiths and wheelwrights in order to clear land and build their machinery or implements with which to work. A son, George was born on this location, the father evidently being very religious, had to baptize the child in the creek as missionaries came so seldom. But the father must have had his conscience bother him as the child was baptized in the proper manner by a missionary when they came on their infrequent visits. All the Smith children were musically inclined. They either

played musical instruments or sang well. The boys especially played instruments, most likely the violin and maybe the accordion or harmonic. The boys played at dances or frolics. The daughter Amelia was musically inclined as she saw to it that her daughters were given opportunity to play the organ.

Christina or Crystal as she was sometimes called, was well educated loved music and was a wonderful cook and baker. She must have been equally proficient in helping out neighbors at childbirth, sickness and in death. A neighbor, Mrs. Jonas Howe who had been brought up in Massachusetts and came to Minnesota at about the same time as the Smiths, evidently received some attention from Christina as in the Howe Memoirs it states that the neighbors helped her to do things to which she was not accustomed. They were good neighbors regardless of language difficulties and to show one how good, can be found in the following event.

Charles, the son of William and Christina, enlisted in the United States army as a soldier in the Civil War, being mustered in on August 14, 1862 at Fort Hutchinson, Minnesota. His sister, Amelia married Herman Sandhoff on Feb. 26, 1863 and Charles getting a furlough for this important event, got home for the wedding. Of course it was imperative that he return and on his way back to Fort Hutchinson while at Watertown, Minnesota, showing evidence that he must have been walking, he contracted pneumonia and died. He was brought home to be buried on the farm and as no minister was available, Jonas Howe the neighbor officiated at the funeral. This shows neighborliness. The evidence of this happening was in the Howe Memoirs, written by Mrs. Carpenter, Jonas Howe's daughter.

William Smith died June 12, 1872. His wife Christina died in 1899. They and their son Charles had been buried on the farm as the little

Lutheran Cemetery on the Rockford Road was not opened until 1871. The parents and Charals were reinterred and placed in the cemetery later. The daughter Amelia Smith Sandhoff died Dec. 21, 1908. The son George, who was born on the homestead inherited the farm after his mother's death and lived there until it was sold. He moved away to Minneapolis.