



## Wintermantels: Schmiedlin Branch reunion

by **DORIS** LITSCHER GASSER  
*Feature Writer*

Through the years family names have come and gone in the history of he community. So it is with the Wintermantel name. The local General Telephone Book of 1865 had two Wintermantel names. George Wintermantel and Fred Wintermantel. Today there are none.

John Jacob Wintermantel and his wife, Salome Walter Wintermantel sailed to the United States in 1865. It is uncertain as to how they came to Wisconsin or Irish Valley; perhaps on the train.

John Jacob, his wife and six of their nine children left from Baden, Germany, Oberlein section on Passport #38. John Jacob is described as being 55 years old, 5'9" tall with a longish, healthy face, brown hair, high eyebrows, blue eyes, pointed nose, middle sized mouth, small beard on his cheeks, bad teeth and no distinguishing marks. The passport was issued with the "Proper payment in triplicate" and requested that all native and foreign civil and military authorities allow his travel without hindrance and to provide help if necessary. The passport included John Jacob Wintermantel's wife and the names and ages of six of their nine children accompanying them, Christian - 13, Rosina - 15, William - 17, John George - 20, George Jacob - 24 and Anna Maria - 26. The other three children followed the family later, George Frederich, John Jacob

and Salome Wintermantel. Another son, Frederich, came by himself via New Orleans and the Mississippi. He was never found by his family and is buried in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Wintermantels purchased a farm in Irish Valley and built a home. They sold the farm to Martin Yanke in 1907 and his descendants continue to live there. The house was in the path of the same tornado that destroyed the Catholic Church in Plain in 1918.

John George Wintermantel, known as George (1835-1920) son of John Jacob, must have been the most dedicated and affluent writers in the family, for his work has provided treasured sources of information about life during their time. George purchased a farm two miles west of the Ragatz Church on PF in 1871. It was a typical Swiss style stone house brought to our attention recently as a block and stack design by Jane Eisley and Donald Kindschi.

George married Charlotte Rose in 1862. They had a daughter, Charlotte. When Charlotte Rose, the mother, passed away, George married Anna Kindschi. George and Anna had seven more children, six daughters and then a son, Fred, mentioned in the first paragraph of this account, "farmed his father's farm before he took over the John Deere Dealership in Prairie du Sac." According to Dr Kindschi, Fred told that his father regarded his eight cows as being a sizable herd at that time. Fred sold the business to Les Sprecher about 1949. As a member of Sauk County Male Chorus, Fred was

known for being an accomplished singer. Les reported that Fred had a unique way of dealing with irate customers, "Fred just stood there and calmly sang a hymn." Fred's daughter, Ione and son, John are both deceased. Ione passed away at the Pines shortly after we worked on a short story with her for the Honey Creek Hamlets Sesquicentennial book.

The other Wintermantel, George, mentioned in the first paragraph of this article, who many people remember, was the son of John Wintermantel (1866-1938) who lived in Prairie du Sac and clerked at Conger and Schoephorsters. John Wintermantel married Emma Ragatz and lived next to the EUB Church in Prairie du Sac.

John had two sisters living in Prairie du Sac, Mary, Mrs. August Malletin who had no children, and Sarah, Mrs. Felix Sprecher, retired from the farm and had two daughters Grace, Mrs. Carl Litscher, who had four children and May who later in life became Mrs. Ray Meng. John's older brother, Jacob, went on to live in Hull, Iowa, married Amelia Buttkie and had one son, Emmet, who married Annetta Hall and had five children. John's older sister, Salome, married Al Hudson from Lodi and they made their home in Reedsburg. After Al passed away, Salome made a home for her two brothers George and Chris who were in the butchering and meat market business in Reedsburg. After Chris passed away in 1927, George went into the business of selling McNess products. Salome and Al had one daughter, Jessie, who married Maurice Cowles and had two daughters; the younger one was born after Maurice had passed away. Jessie, her mother, Salome and her Uncle George made their home together in Reedsburg. John's brother, William, passed away at the age of 27. Rose, the youngest in the family, married Fred Sprecher, farmed near Black Hawk and had five children, Wilbert married Marcella Felix and they had four children, Viola, Mrs. Howard Sorg, had five children, Clarence married Argent Marks and they had three sons, Rosina, Mrs. Cecil McCready, had one daughter and Ruth, the sole living member of her generation, Mrs. Donald Hehenberger, has five children.

We'll leave George, the banker, in Prairie du Sac and join his great Uncle George, the writer. George, in writing to his sister-in-law Matilda, upon the death of her husband, wrote,



Shown at the reunion in Marion Park, Prairie du Sac, are left to right: Julie Edwards, great-great granddaughter of Salome Wintermantel Schmiedlin and Mathias Schmiedlin, Manchester, MI; and Janice Wintermantel Bender, great granddaughter of Jacob Wintermantel (Salome's younger brother) and Agnes Joos Wintermantel, Prairie du Sac.

PHOTO BY DORIS LITSCHER GASSER





Johann Jacob and Salome Wintermantel came from Germany in 1856 with six of their nine children, followed later by the rest of the family. 'Suggested'

DRAWING BY DORIS LITSCHER GASSER



Christian (left) and George (right) Wintermantel, separated by a helper, are shown in a meat market at Reedsburg. Apparently, customers could carefully inspect before making their purchase.



The family of Jacob Wintermantel and Agnes Joos Wintermantel included, left to right: Sarah Wintermantel Sprecher (the author's grandmother), Prairie du Sac; Mary Wintermantel Mullentin, Prairie du Sac; John Wintermantel, Prairie du Sac; George Wintermantel, Reedsburg; Salome Wintermantel, Reedsburg; and Jacob Wintermantel, Iowa. Brothers William and Christ passed away and are buried in Black Hawk Cemetery.



# Doris

FROM PAGE 8

"Everything is subject to change, no exceptions. We are thank God, healthy. Since spring I have lived with my oldest daughter Charlotte Straub. She built a house in town last summer and by the middle of September it was ready to move into. Since that time we have lived in it. It is build of red brick, 26'x28', a two story home with a full basement. It is a nice looking little house, nicely arranged and costing, with the lot, \$1,900."

That nice, little, brick house across the street from Marion Park on Grand Avenue is now the home of Rev. Bill Richards.

In an earlier letter to his friends and relatives in Germany in 1975, George wrote about farming and life in the United States. Their family, like many others, fled turmoil in their own country, only to have to participate in the Civil War soon after their arrival to the land of freedom and opportunity.

Without complaining George wrote, "Brother Jacob, in Irish Valley found it difficult to leave his wife, Agnes Joos and their children to fight in the war. Brother William fought in Mississippi, Kansas and Arkansas, in Indian territory in danger night and day in bloody battle. Brother Christian was in grave danger serving between southern rebels and enemy Indians with everything sometimes looking like a cemetery for fallen soldiers."

In the same letter he mentions that M. Schmiedlins were living next to his parents. There lies the tie-in with the Schmiedlins.

George Wintermantel, son of John Wintermantel, married Della Kindschi, lived in Prairie du Sac and was a key figure in the Bank of Prairie du Sac for approximately 50 years. George and Della had two daughters, Shirley Finger, in Madison and Janice in Prairie du Sac. Janice married Rev. Gordon Bender (deceased), lived in various places where he served as a pastor and returned to retire in Prairie du Sac.

Julie Edwards of Manchester, MI, planned a reunion for the Schmiedlin branch of the family tree in Marion Park in Prairie du Sac, Saturday, August 9, as a central location for Lodi, Madison and other places Schmiedlins live in the surrounding area.

About 50 relatives came to become acquainted, meet one another, enjoy the potluck dinner and outing and hear of Julie's latest information in

researching the family history.

Salome Wintermantel was the oldest daughter of Johann Jacob Wintermantel and Salome Walter Wintermantel. Salome Wintermantel and Mathias Schmiedlin were both born in Baden, Germany. Mathias was born in 1820 and Salome was born in 1823. They were married and came to the United States with their eight children several yeas after their parents and younger siblings. While the Schmiedlins first came to live near Salome's parents, they moved around a bit. By 1900 Salome and Mathias Schmiedlin were living in Sauk City. Their daughter, Salome, married Emanuel Kirschner. They lived in Sauk City with their children Josephine, Rosa, Ernest, Louisa and Irma. Their son, Mathias and his wife, Kate Schmiedlin and their children, Fred, Mamie, Daisy and Mary lived in Lodi. Another son, Christian and his wife, Emma Schmiedlin and their children Clara, Roy, Raymond and Emma also lived in Lodi. Their oldest daughter, Magdalena and her husband Adolph Weber lived in Iowa.

Bill Kirschner of Sauk City is the great grandson of Salome and Mathias Schmiedlin. His grandfather, Emanuel Kirschner, started a "meat market" in Sauk City in 1864 on a butcher block made out of the trunk of a tree, according to Bill. Bill's father, Ernie took over the business in 1909. The Kirschner brothers, Bill and Phil (deceased) have a story of their family history in "People of Sauk Prairie" IV page 42 found in the local libraries.

We've touched the tip of the iceberg as far as the Wintermantel and Schmiedlin history is concerned. There are some high energy level individuals throughout the country who are pursuing the study. Some of them are Margaret Ann Jenstad of Richfield, Minnesota, great-great-granddaughter of Jacob Wintermantel and Agnes Joos Wintermantel, Julie Edwards, Manchester, Michigan, great-great-granddaughter of Salome Wintermantel Schmiedlin and Mathias Schmiedlin and Patsy Clark, Woodbridge, Virginia, great-great-granddaughter of Rosina Wintermantel Heitz and Paulis Heitz. These ladies are searching and researching information on stories and lives of the Wintermantels so that future reunions will become progressively more fascinating.

Auf Wiedersehen!

September

95 19.2.007





# DORIS

## Drafted into the Civil War after finally reaching freedom

by **DORIS** LITSCHER GASSER  
*Feature Writer*

Probably a number of people in the area have stories to tell of their ancestors serving in the bloody Civil War. My great-grandfather, Jacob Wintermantel, who immigrated from Switzerland to homestead in a community that later became known as Irish Valley, was the only Civil War veteran whom I have heard much about, both from my grandmother and a letter circulated among relatives written by George Wintermantel to his people back home in Switzerland giving an account of the family life in the United States, in 1875. There are fine Wintermantel descendants, both in Wisconsin and outside of the state who have done and are doing a great job of research. The only granddaughter left as a descendant of Jacob Wintermantel is Ruth Hehenberger of Sauk City. There are quite a number of Jacob Wintermantel descendants in the area with names as Bender, Becker, Moely, Sprecher, Ladd, Litscher, Steuber, Sorg and Gasser.

After a long, hard, courageous, challenging journey, the Wintermantels from Switzerland were able to settle near Honey Creek, it wasn't long before Jacob and his two brothers found themselves soldiers in the Civil War.

If there would be anything glamorous about the bloody horrors of war it would be the uniform or the officer's club in time of peace. As the picture shows Jacob Wintermantel's uniform seems to be some kind of thrown together civilian outfit, that wasn't too durable for the battlefield.

That was probably common attire for the soldiers. Yet, somehow, they managed to spruce up their "uniforms" the best they could and stand with pride and dignity to have their picture taken.

orous about the bloody horrors of war it would be the uniform or the officer's club in time of peace. As the picture shows Jacob Wintermantel's uniform seems to be some kind of thrown together civilian outfit, that wasn't too durable for the battlefield.

*October 12  
2006*

*Baden-Germany*



Jacob Wintermantel had to leave his wife and children to fight in the Civil War in Petersburg and Richmond, Va.

George Wintermantel, in his letter to his people back in Switzerland, explained that it was hard for Jacob to leave his wife and children when he was drafted into the Civil War. Jacob reported that sometimes everything on the battlefield was like a cemetery for fallen soldiers. He served in Camp Peterson and Richmond, Virginia for nine months.

The letter recorded that brothers Christian and William Wintermantel also served in the Civil War. William was in many bloody battles and was in danger day and night between the southern rebels and enemy Indians. Christian served in the 26th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment. He was in some of the largest battles of

the whole war era, Fredrichsburg and Chancellorsville in Virginia and

*84*

Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. He endured earth shaking cannon fire and saw blood streams on large and small battles. He finally came back to Wisconsin after three years. Two years later he acquired 160 acres of land in Kansas. George believed that every soldier who had an honorable discharge was entitled to land.

The impact of the experiences of our ancestors in the Civil War lives on. And how they have handled situations help us along the way in our present time.

Jacob Wintermantel and his wife Agnes Yoss Wintermantel moved to Prairie du Sac in his retirement. His obituary, (1916) Sauk County News read, "He (Jacob) was faithful and loyal to the church of his choice, in which he served his God according to the dictates of his conscience, enlightened by the Holy Spirit."

