

Heritage Happenings

Woodbury Heritage Society

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Winter



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The Mahle Farmstead

A plaque commemorating the farm was recently mounted on a native stone. It is located on a walking path on Woodlane Drive south of Bailey Road.



As part of our ongoing series exploring the agricultural roots of Woodbury, this issue explores the role of one early farm families—the Mahles. We asked one of the last remaining Mahle family members, living in Woodbury to chronicle for the newsletter the “History of the Mahle Farm”. The Woodbury Heritage Society is indebted to Dorothea Mahle for telling the story of the farm and its families. *Editor*

History of the Mahle Farm...

Johan Christian Mahle (1834-1898) was born in Backnang, Germany where he worked at the tanner's trade. His parents were Johan Gottfried Mahle and Karolina Christine Schick. He was one of nine children in the family. In June 1854 he came to America on the ship O Thijen. He left Germany from Bremen Germany, arrived at New York City on June 23, 1854, and went to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to stay with his sister who had come to America in 1849 when she was 14 years old. He moved to St. Paul and worked for his brother William who started the Mahle Wagon Company which was located at Eighth and Olive Streets in St. Paul.

Johan Christian Mahle married Maria Heidel in 1859. They worked the farm owned by Maria's father August Heidel which was located in of Woodbury, Section 11. In 1861 they moved to the property bordering Woodlane Drive and Bailey Road. Christian chose this land because it reminded him of the rolling hills, woodlands and ponds of his boyhood home in Germany.

Their first house was a log cabin located where the Youth Center of the New Life Church is now located. The older Mahle boys told of it being so cold in the loft of the log cabin where they slept that their breath froze on the sheets.

Maria Heidel was a real pioneer. At the age of twelve, she went to work for the Larpenteur Family. Charles Larpenteur was an early settler, explorer and fur trader who bargained with the Indians in Minnesota. Rose Larpenteur, one of their children, was the first white child born in Minnesota. Maria Heidel Mahle was hired by the Larpenteurs to do house tasks and take care of the children. She would rock the babies to sleep in a wooden cradle. The Larpenteur cradle is now on display in the Territorial Pioneer Building at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Some of the families make a "pilgrimage" to the cradle each year.

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Maria and Johan Christian had fifteen children and opened their home to Johan Christian's sister's youngest daughter after his sister died. Their children were: Julius, Fredrich, William, Edwin, Henrietta, Olivia, Caroline, Arthur, Emma, Adeline, Laura, Wesley, Clara, Walter, Gertrude and Louise Eisele (child of Christian's sister). Julius, William, Arthur, Emma Mahle Rode, Adeline Mahle Biebighauser, Laura Mahle Kernkamp, Clara Mahle, and Louise Eisele all remained in Woodbury. Gertrude died of Diphtheria in 1891, the year the Diphtheria Antitoxin was developed but it was after she succumbed to the disease.

Every Thanksgiving Maria had the family home and started the traditional "Mahle Thanksgiving". Each year she took a collection which was usually sent to the Central Wesleyan Orphanage Asylum. Throughout the years she furnished an entire room in this orphanage. There are several receipts to recognize her gifts kept in the family Bible. This family tradition is carried on each year. Johan Christian Mahle was very active in all church work and education matters. He was a Trustee of St. Paul's College at St. Paul Park Minnesota. where many local Woodbury persons got their higher education. Johan Christian also helped build the Woodbury United Methodist Church in 1868. He built two grade schools in Woodbury, District 26 and District 28 and was elected to the Woodbury Town Board March 11, 1883. Johan Christian planned his own funeral and had his six sons act as pallbearers. He had August Triebold, a good neighbor; drive the horses that provided the power for the conveyance containing his body to its final resting place. The funeral cortege was over a mile in length with over eighty teams of horses in the procession. He is buried at the Woodbury United Methodist Cemetery.

Johan Christian and Maria's son Arthur (1870-1943) married Lydia Biebighauser in 1902. They had two children Kenneth Sr. and Lucille Mahle who married Alvin Warnke. Arthur farmed the Johan Christian Mahle property until 1943. Arthur and Lydia were very active in the Woodbury United Methodist Church. Arthur sang in the choir and the men's quartet and Lydia was active in the Ladies' Aid Society. Both were active in the Woodbury Community Club. The Mahle Farm became a family gathering place. Family birthday parties were held at their home. Arthur and Lydia would butcher 6-8 pigs a year and give the meat to the Mahle families who lived in the city.



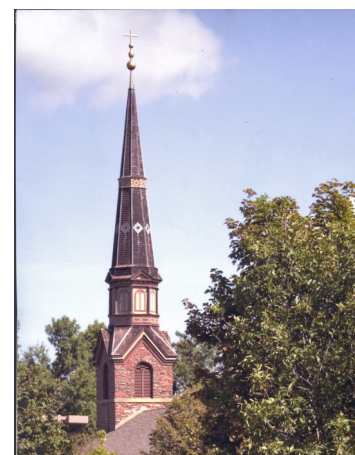
*Early barn on the Mahle farmstead.
(Photo courtesy of Bernice Mahle Darling)*

Kenneth Arthur Mahle Sr. (1907-1988) married Orella Leona Krueger in 1930. They worked the land that was passed down from Kenneth's Grandfather. They were active members of the Woodbury United Methodist Church and participated in community activities. They had three children Kenneth Arthur Mahle Jr., Robert William Mahle and Bernice Leona Mahle Darling. None of this generation was farmers; however as time passed Kenneth Jr's son Bruce Allen Mahle decided to help his grandfather Kenneth Sr. and learned to farm. Bruce and his wife Beth Ann Kartman Mahle farmed the land until 2002 when Windom Ponds was created. It was an emotional time for the family to see this land be developed into housing. Robert and Lillian Mahle moved to Cannon Falls Minnesota and Bernice and Randy Darling moved to Stillwater, Minnesota. Since the development was north of

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Steepleview
Photo contest winner
Louis Wilson

Winter

The Mahles
of
Yesteryear



Bailey Road, Kenneth Jr. and Dorotha Mahle still reside on what was once the William Mahle farm on the south side of Bailey Road where they built their home in 1962.

The big white barn that was located very close to Woodlane Drive was a landmark in the community. It was built in 1919. It was demolished by a tornado on May 31, 1998. The Mahle Family has dedicated park land and open space to those members of the family who worked the land and had a large rock with a brass plaque mounted on it placed in the park near the walking trails and Woodlane Drive. The City of Woodbury has named several streets in honor of the family- Arthur Drive, Christian Curve, Darling Drive, Lydia Alcove, Lydia Bay, Lydia Curve, Lydia Lane and Mahle Lane. At present there is only one Mahle family living in Woodbury.

The Mahle Family Tree dating back to the year 1530 will be on file at the Woodbury Heritage Society Room at the Woodbury City Hall.

and their descendants....



**Kenneth Jr. and
Dorotha Mahle**

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and their descendants....



Robert and Lillian Mahle



Bernice (Mahle) and Randy Darling

