

Keen Weber: A German American Hoosier Family

In the mid to late 19th century thousands of Germans immigrated to this growing city of Indianapolis. Our Keen and Weber ancestors were a part of that movement.

Mary Anna Keen was the daughter of a South-side Indianapolis shoemaker and his



wife, who emigrated from Bavaria. Mary came to be a Hoosier at five years old when her family moved to Indiana from Ohio. In 1886 she married Harry Adam Weber, eldest son of German immigrants Adam and Amelia Weber, in the local German Catholic parish of St. Mary's. They managed to raise 11 children in their home on South Alabama Street in Indianapolis, bringing Harry's mother to live with them for 13 years as well. The home was the gathering place of children and grandchildren until the 1940s. Weber family members today recall that the family passed down the German custom of waiting to decorate the Christmas tree on the 24th of December.

In 1887, at the age of 28, Harry established a wholesale dry goods business with partner Louis Zimmer at 178 Virginia Avenue, near the thriving Indianapolis wholesale district and what came to be known as Fountain Square. Many German-

American businesses located at this center of activity around Union Station, a crossroads of numerous railroad lines. Harry and Louis did business as Weber & Zimmer Dry Goods until 1912.

The Weber family home on South Alabama passed to a number of the children who lived there for a time after Harry's death in 1938, Mary having preceded him in death in 1928. Walter Weber and his sister, Ida (Weber) Cordell, and her children lived in the home in 1942 when Walter died. This is a photo of the home, possibly after being purchased by the Lilly Company for demolition.



Harry Adam Weber appears second from the left in the 1937 photo below. He stands between two of his sisters and among his descendants.

Harry and Mary Anna's eldest son, Harry Lawrence is the man on the far right, second row. Harry Lawrence and Tillie (Kuhn) Weber's family also resided for many years on the south side of Indianapolis, on Singleton Street, near Garfield Park. Harry L. worked his way from a 19-year-old messenger boy to loan officer in the Fletcher Trust National Bank. He retired from his banking career shortly before he died in 1946.



This Weber family, including Harry L. and his 10 siblings, is an example of the many German Americans that came to be a major portion of the population of the near south side area of Indianapolis by the turn of the 20th century. The Webers are still represented in the area, although the branches of the tree have extended far and wide.

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