

"We had already for 14 days, snow, but this week is exceptionally nice weather and the snow was almost melting away. I hope there is not new snow coming, but we will take it. It would be alright if we got snow so tomorrow morning and Sunday we want to go hunting for deer, while we are waiting to finish the house, because when the house is ready, we won't have much time. That's why we want to go and hunt now. And when the Indians don't come back and take the animals away, there is plenty of deer over here."

In 1857, Peter and Emelia Geyermann opened a General Store in Shakopee, on the fertile banks of the Minnesota River. According to Peter and Emellia, men and wagons carried goods to the settlers on the Prairie. By the clanking of the pots and tinware as their wagons jolted down the hard packed and rutted roads, they came to be known as drummers.

Peter Geyermann also became mayor of Shakopee. He was mayor from 1873-1876, and again in 1878, and Emelia was the wife of the mayor. While he was mayor of Shakopee in 1878, Peter Geyermann was involved in controversy. The town needed a bridge over the Minnesota River. Peter wanted to have the bridge on Lewis Street, near their store. He won, but some of the people in Shakopee were not happy.

Geyermann's General Store on Lewis Street was boycotted by many of the residents. They were upset because the Lewis Street Swing Bridge was built on Lewis Street, instead of Fuller Street. The people, especially those in the west part of town, were not happy. They boycotted the store. It became so effective that Emelia and Peter were forced out of business. After 24 years in the business in downtown Shakopee, Emelia and Peter moved out of Shakopee in 1881.



Emelia and Peter moved to Brewster, Minnesota, where they set up a new store.

Emilia Berreau Geyermann died on January 25, 1907 in Brewster, Minnesota.

Peter Rudolph Geyermann died at his home in Brewster from pneumonia on November 25, 1911.



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**Emelia Berreau
Geyermann**
1835-1907



Lewis Street in Shakopee. The dry good store the Geyermann's was probably on the corner of Lewis and First Street.



Shakopee ca 1858 Edwin Whitefield. Minnesota Historical Society

Emelia Berreau was born on April 5, 1835 in Paderborn, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Her father was Frederick Berreau, and her mother was Antonette Hacke.

On June 2, 1863 in Shakopee, Emelia married Peter Rudolph Geyermann. They had 6 children.

Emelia, along with her husband, Peter operated the Geyermann's General Store between First and Second Avenue and Lewis Street in downtown Shakopee. It included groceries, dry goods, boots and shoes, hats and caps, dress goods, clothing, and crockery. The store was opened in 1857.

Peter (sometimes with help from Emelia) sent letters home to family in Germany. The letters were translated to English by Ernst Wirt. These letters show the immigrants experiences as they move to America, and their process as they built a house just outside Shakopee in 1855.

On May 3, 1854, he wrote about those heading to America. "...I will give them the best advice: I think you should take with you 10-12 toasted breads, dried fruits, 20-40 pounds of white flour, and some sacks of potatoes, some hams, some beans, vinegar and onions...."

"You should not buy clothes except one or two pairs of good trousers. Shirts are cheaper than in Germany. One shirt costs 50 cents. Do not bring boots and shoes with you. My sisters being here have to change the manner of wearing their hair. Also take a pot for cooking and a cake mold with you. The other cooking utensils you should buy better in the seaport. Eiderdowns you have bring with you - not the other house-utensils."

"The charge for carriage is too high. Many peoples have left in the lurch all they had because the charge was too high by railway."

"You have to be careful in all seatowns! Don't go into a hotel for every meal. It will be too dear for you. Every time you must ask the price at first. Never pay more than you have arranged. After having arrived New York you have to prove your tickets. Perhaps you could take the best train to Chicago for five dollars, or at first to Buffalo for four dollars, (or) to Chicago four dollars...."

By November 30, 1855, Peter moved to Minnesota Territory. "I bought a claim there. The land belonged to the government and was not yet sold. The law says whoever comes first and homesteads it has a claim to it, but you have to be over 21 years of age. I had to take 160 acres of land and you were supposed to build a house on this land, and supposed to take care of the land...."

"The house that exists is in very poor condition in the country and we are in the process of building a new one. Last Wednesday we started."

"You are probably surprised to hear that people build houses here in the winter, but here in the country people take tree stems and they make very nice houses. (log houses) So if you plan to build a house you have to see that you get all the logs nearby, bring it to the place, and cut them into the measurements as big as the house is supposed to be. Then you go and call on 8 to 10 neighbors and then everything will be put together in one day but the roof. The rest a person has to do himself and that goes better than anybody can imagine. Once you are between 3 and 4 years in America, you become a pretty good builder, and you acquire all the tools that craftsmen need to make a building."

Later, the Peter and Emelia Guyermann wrote, "I have approximately 40 acres of wood on my land, approximately 6 acres of meadow and the rest are hedges.... Here we take 2 or 3 young oxen and put them into a yoke, and then the land will be worked. One yoke of oxen I own and that cost me \$150. Animals are very expensive here. I must say that animals are much more expensive now than when I came to America, because when I came to America, a yoke of oxen I could buy in those days for \$60. Here the animals are not quite so expensive as in the old states like in Illinois where I came from."