

The first panoramic map of Helena, drawn in 1865 by A.E. Mathews sketch from the MHS Research Center and in the book Helena, The Town That Gold Built by Ellen Baumler, Ph. D.

Eventually Paul wearied of the mining and smithing life in the city and in 1879 Mary Anna and Paul took the young and growing family into the Lewistown area of Fergus County, Montana. They built up a ranch to raise sheep.

When not too busy with ranching or smithing work, Paul continued to search for gold in Maiden, Montana.

Paul Weydert was a wheelwright, blacksmith and carpenter - all skills that helped him to become a successful rancher.

Paul Weydert died at the age of 72 as a result of an accident which occurred while unhitching his team of two horses from his wagon.

The horses bolted, possibly the result of the bite of a horsefly or other stinging insect, while he was underneath the 'tree' of the hitch.

He was trampled to death.



Mary Anna Geyermann Weydert died in January 7, 1924 in Lewistown, Montana.

At the time of her passing Mary Anna Geyermann Weydert was 87 years and seven months old.

She was buried in the Lewistown City Cemetery.



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Mary Anne
Geyermann
Weydert
1836-1924



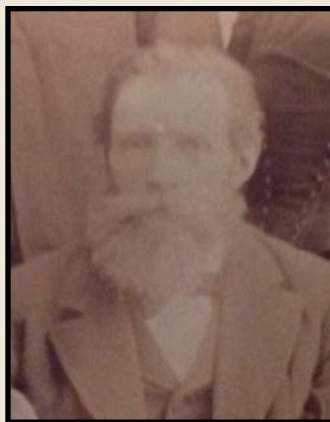
Mary Anna Geyermann was born June 6, 1836 in Waldeck, Bernkastel-Wittlich, Germany, a little village near Coblenz on the Rhine. She came to America when she was 18 years of age in 1854. For a time she resided at Aurora, Illinois, later moving to St. Paul, Minnesota. On June 27, 1859 in St. Paul, she married Paul Weydert, who was born on Landscheid, Luxembourg on May 1, 1829, son of Gaspard Weydert and Marguerite Thies Weydert. Mary Ann and Paul had 8 children: Anna, Peter, Helena Mary, Anna Mary, Susan, Theodore, Augusta Elizabeth and Albert Nicolas Weydert.

Their first child, Anna, died in infancy. Soon after, Mary Anna and Paul moved to Shakopee. Shortly after the birth of their son Peter in 1864, Mary Anna and Paul joined the The Holmes Wagon Train.

Mary Anna Geyermann Weydert was one of 14 women who were on the Holmes Wagon Train of 1864, and the only one with a baby in tow. There were about 113 to 175 wagons, and about 200 to 300 people.



Thomas A. Holmes



On left is Paul Weydert, husband of Mary Anna Geyermann Weydert. On right is a family picture of Mary Anne Geyermann Weydert and Paul Weydert and children ca. 1897 in Lewiston, Montana.



The journey across the plains occupied four months and was filled with hardship, as were the years following in a country altogether new and undeveloped.

A young Indian man travelled beside the train for several days in June of 1864. The Indian man was very interested in the infant son, Peter from Shakopee, who was with Mary Anna Geyermann Weydert and Paul Weydert. The Indian asked in sign language if he could hold the baby. Mary Anna was a bit scared, but decided to hand Peter to the Indian. The Indian gently wrapped two beautifully tanned buffalo robes about the baby and gave it back to his mother.

By mid-September 1864 Thomas A. Holmes wagon train from Shakopee, Minnesota arrived. They had planned to go to the gold fields of eastern Idaho Territory, but when Congress created the Territory of Montana on May 26, the train headed to Montana. They were tired after four months of harrowing experiences crossing rough waters and Indian lands.

Only half of their names were recorded. Many hailed from Minnesota, but emigrants also came from Connecticut, Massachusetts,

New York, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin, and some were European-born immigrants. The incomplete roster includes a number of pioneers who stayed and became citizens of Helena.

When they arrived at Last Chance Gulch, later called Helena, Paul tried his hand at mining while Mary Anna took care of the children.

In 1870, Paul, his wife Mary Anna and their 5 children were living in Helena, Montana where he ran The California Blacksmith Shop with a partner in order to keep himself and his family fed on a regular basis.



A wagon train heading West. The Thomas A. Holmes wagon train in 1864 took 4 months. Only 14 women were on the train, along with about 300 men.