

History of Richard “Drew” Musser, the Home, and the Organ

The “Pine Tree Bachelors” came to Little Falls, MN in 1891. Charles A. Weyerhaeuser and Richard “Drew” Musser, ages 25 and 26 respectively, would soon become managers of the Pine Tree Lumber Company. Their fathers, Frederick Weyerhaeuser and Peter Musser had organized the Weyerhaeuser lumber company in 1890. Charles and Drew were good friends who shared rooms at the Antlers Hotel and above the Pine Tree offices.

The two friends had purchased land together and hired architect C. H. Johnston, an associate of Cass Gilbert, to design the houses. Little Falls contractor A. D. Harrison erected the homes. Charles married Frances Maud Moon on December 14, 1898 and settled into their newly-built mansion overlooking the Mississippi River. Drew Musser, who was not at the time intending marriage, arranged for an equally fine home to be erected within feet of the Weyerhaeuser house. Drew, while on business trips to Cloquet, met a lovely young woman from Glens Falls, New York, who was staying with her sister, Mrs. Huntington Taylor. On June 3, 1903, Richard Drew Musser and Sarah Walker were united in marriage at the Taylor home. It, too, was a quiet home wedding. Drew and Sarah took up residence in his commodious white house.

The two beautiful brides were accepted immediately into Little Falls’ society, and they, in turn, became leaders in the cultural community. The houses and artistically landscaped grounds were the center of activity. Weddings, showers, card clubs, musical entertainment and community events were frequent. Several community children were tutored there, and Charles and Drew entertained dignitaries and business associates. They also began to raise their families; the Weyerhaeusers, son Carl and daughter Sarah Maud, the Mussers, daughters Laura Jane, Mary and Alice. The Musser’s son, Peter, died shortly after birth.

In 1911 Maud Moon Weyerhaeuser and Sarah Walker Musser were among a group of women who organized the Musical Art Club. They brought highly acclaimed classical performers to Little Falls. Mrs. Weyerhaeuser, a soprano, was also a frequent performer, as was Laura Musser McColm, sister of Drew Musser. In 1919 Mrs. Weyerhaeuser donated to the community a new hall for the Musical Art Club and furnished it with a grand piano. It was named the Maud Moon Weyerhaeuser Hall. Pine Tree Mill closed in 1912 and Charles/Maud Weyerhaeuser moved from Little Falls. A luncheon for Mrs. Weyerhaeuser was given by the Musical Art Club, paying tribute to her generosity to the club and the community. Drew and Sarah Musser remained and took over the entire estate, which became known as “Linden Hill.” The Musser home was the setting, in 1921, for the marriage of their daughter, Alice Drew, to Dr. Edward C. Davidson.

In 1930 the Musser house was remodeled with major additions, including a large music room. The pipe organ was dedicated January 19, 1931, with a reception held in the new downstairs recreation room. In 1939 the wedding of Mary Musser was described. “In a beautiful setting of pines, cream chrysanthemums and cathedral candles in the spacious music room at the home of Mr. & Mrs. R. D. Musser Saturday evening their daughter Miss Mary became the bride of Roger Eugene King.” Musser’s daughter Laura Jane participated as flower girl at Alice’s wedding and as a bridesmaid at Mary’s. Laura Jane sought a career in music, graduated from Julliard and worked in New York. The houses on Linden Hill sit quietly now except for a few events held in the Musser music room.

The Musser Trust later designated the two mansions as a Little Falls museum as a legacy to the Weyerhaeuser and Musser families.

Notes: <https://linden-hill.org/>