

Schomaker  
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## Theodor Schomaker Cincinnati Contractor & Builder

submitted by  
William A. Luckey, EL Paso, Texas

### Introduction

The following is an English translation from an article that appeared in "Cincinnati Sonst und Jetzt" detailing the life of Theodor Schomaker Sr., owner and operator of the Lafayette Planing Mill. It is an interesting example of the detailed biographies that can be found in this publication. William A. Luckey, great-grandson of Theodor Schomaker Sr., also provided a list of local historic structures built by the Lafayette Planing Mill in the 19th century.

### Theodor Schomaker

The thorough learning of a trade and every other occupation claims many and often the best years of life, and yet we frequently see that a young man rashly skips from one to another, and the old proverb: "Shoemaker stick to your last" is unheeded. It is true there are universal geniuses who can find themselves quickly in any work and any new occupation, and who are naturally what one here calls "square" that is, that they always fall on the right side, but only too often in the so-called changing the saddle, suddenly and heedlessly go off on the wrong track. The United States is the land of work, and only through this--whether by head, or by hand, or by the good results achieved through a combination of both--has reached it's present greatness, and "worker" should be man's highest title of honor. In the old Fatherland, a boy is usually forced by outside circumstances into his future career; he is as it were, from childhood on, predestined for it; from earliest youth he will be put in chains, which, under the pressure of circumstances, and over-population, he may not be able to shake it off. There it requires a number of years of training until it is possible to be a master in any profession, and force of circumstances and iron-clad necessity compel the young man to turn henceforth, like the blind horse of the treadmill, in the same circle. For those who wish to realize their natural aptitudes in a more profitable and easy manner, the United States offers an El Dorado. Here, in rapid change-over, do the tailor and shoemaker not only become the highest statesmen of the Union, but our successful business men have seldom remained true to their first choice, but have, when a better opportunity presented itself to turn their talents to good account, grasped it without hesitation; and, when they had within themselves that which it takes, and were the "right man at the right place" gained wealth and honor.

Theodor Schomaker first saw the light of the world on July 12, 1824, at Lingen, Hannover. After attending school in the city of his birth for seven years, he entered a four-year apprenticeship with the renowned master-carpenter Zurburg in Fürstenau. After completing his apprenticeship, he migrated to Haselüne where he found employment as a journeyman. A year later we find him in Lingen active in his profession, and after the passing of two years, in the year 1846, undertaking the journey to the United States.

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Hamilton Co. Chap. OGS 17:2 (1996)



Betts House continued...

artifacts on display in the exhibit. There are seven display cases, organized by topic including food preparation and personal items explicated by artifacts from the historic district. One case is devoted to artifacts found in the Betts House builder's trench and in a subsequent excavation of the earth beneath the kitchen floor. This exhibit will be in place until the middle of August.

The front hall of the Betts House is the location of a permanent exhibit detailing the renovation of the house and the revitalization of the Betts-Longworth Historic District through letters, documents and newspaper clippings. Photographs of construction techniques employed in the house, and revealed during renovation when wallpaper and plaster were removed and chimneys rebuilt, are also on display in the first floor exhibit rooms. A large scale model of the house and an annotated floorplan (which are keyed to the renovation photographs) help the visitor understand the building sequence of this exceptional early house.

Future exhibitions will feature the work of local architects, builders, contractors, building material manufacturers and urban planners and relate to the mission to educate and inform our visitors about the history of Cincinnati and its region through the study of the built environment. The next exhibit, **Brick Making in Cincinnati before 1840**, will be about bricks and brick making, in honor of William Betts, and will feature information about early local brickyards and the change from seasonal to year round manufacture of this important building product. It will open in early September and will include a brick making demonstration. The 1997 exhibit will focus on ornamental ironwork, a building material that remains in glorious, although sometimes deteriorated, evidence all around the Tri-State.

All of the Betts House Research Center exhibits will combine a "nuts and bolts" explanation of how a building material is made and used along with a discussion of the historical context that produced and supported the particular building material or technique. We feel that this approach allows us to tell the story of the past, and perhaps the future, in a way that is immediate and interesting and not confined to the famous "dusty old tomes" of more conventional scholarship.

We are excited about the Betts House as a place and as a new institution promoting the study of the past. One of the plans for the future is a publication series on each of the exhibits. The illustrated pamphlets in the publication series will provide detailed information about the exhibition, mirroring and expanding on the information in the exhibit itself, as well as including a reading list for those interested in more in-depth information. The pamphlet will be for sale at the house and will also become part of the research library on the second floor. The library will house copies of the research done for each exhibit, building and renovation magazines, such as *Fine Homebuilding* and *This Old House*, as well as other documentation, including historic and contemporary books dealing with this region's built environment. The library opening will coincide with the September opening of **Brick Making in Cincinnati before 1840**.

The Betts House Research Center is open Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 until 4:00, and by appointment. For further information please call the house at (513) 651-0734

The emigrant ship "Emery" on which Schomaker took passage in Bremen, brought him, after a voyage of almost ten-weeks duration, to New Orleans, from where he continued his travels to Cincinnati without delay. Here he found employment immediately with his older brother, John Gerhard, as a joiner. He worked for him a year, and then began work for Wm. Cameron in whose service Schomaker remained the following five years. His next employers were the Messrs. Ryunion & Stickney, to whom Schomaker showed that a German carpenter could quickly adapt himself to the peculiarities of American building methods. After Schomaker worked in still another cabinet-making shop, he established himself at last, in 1859, on Hopkins Street. Later he moved his shop to the corner of Carr and Richmond Streets where he set up a steam-power equipped factory. Soon his reputation as a carpenter-builder, and then as a building constructor was established, his skillfulness and honesty soon recognized. Year after year he found it necessary to enlarge the production capacity of his factory in which were manufactured all kinds of articles in the cabinet-making line such as doors, door-frames, windows, window-shutters, lasts, moldings, etc., while his advertisements attracted ever more and more desirable attention especially there where one had to rely upon the honor and integrity of the cabinet-maker, and where the specifications did not include all details.

Schomaker helped to beautify our city with many splendid edifices. The St. Xavier College, the St. George Church, the restaurant building in the Zoological Garden, The Catholic Church in St. Bernard, and a hundred similar structures were erected by him.

Like so many of our prominent industrialists, he, also, had many obstacles to overcome before he succeeded in attaining his now well-earned position of building-contractor. Despite the fact that the number of his competitors who during the past ten years went bankrupt was legion, Schomaker always was able to "stay above water," yes, even the loss of \$10,000.00 which he suffered through fire damage on March 25, 1877, could not undermine his credit any more than it could paralyze his energy, for hardly were the ruins--into which he found his flourishing business transformed in one night--cleared away, before the building of a new factory was begun.

In January of 1849 Schomaker married Miss Gertrude Thamann, a native of Neuenkirchen near Vorden, who in time presented him with nine children of whom three daughters and four sons are living.

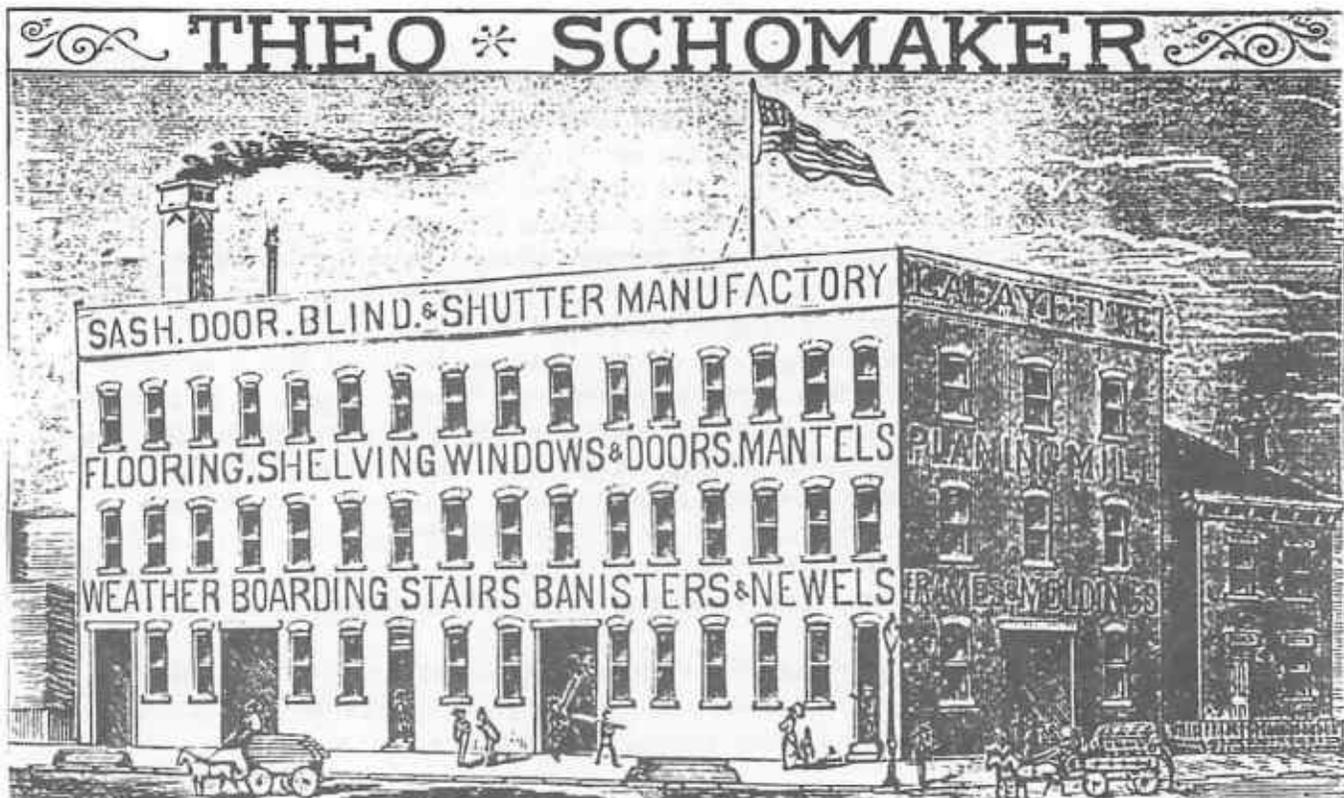
Three of the sons, Theodor, William, and Joseph are his valuable assistants in business and, in every respect, worthy descendants of the Schomaker tradition. Their recognized thrift, their industry, their model conduct, mark them favorably among the many sons of German parentage born in this country.

Katherine, Schomaker's eldest daughter, is the wife of Mr. John B. Wichelmann.

Schomaker's straightforward character, his integrity, and his affability form the foundation upon which he built such a wide circle of friends.

The St. Aloysius Orphan-and the Pioneer-Society count Schomaker in their membership.

Armin Tenner  
CINCINNATI SONST UND JETZT, 1878  
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The following, contributed by my cousin Arethusa Ankenbrock Watts, is a list of some of the structures built by Theodor Schomaker in and around Cincinnati.

- St. Clement Church in St. Bernard
- St. Anthony Church on Budd St. (torn down)
- St. George Church in Corryville
- St. Xavier Church, remodeled and rebuilt after a fire (when?)
- St. Xavier old High School (now torn down)
- Chapel in old Mt. St. Joseph College buildings
- Chapel in Mt. Alverno Boys School
- Catholic Church in Batesville, Indiana
- Catholic Church at Paris, Kentucky
- St. Patrick's in Covington (now torn down, Hwy interchange) He was never paid for this church
- Mt. Notre Dame Academy and Motherhouse in Reading, Ohio
- The Carnivora House, the Herbivore House, Bird Houses, and old Club House at the Cincinnati Zoo
- Millwork for the interior of Cincinnati Music Hall

Private Homes:

Wessels, Nagel, Casimir Werk, Stone House for Chas. Klosterman in what is now the picnic table area of Mt. Echo Park, Price Hill, the brick home for Chas. Klosterman, Jr., on Elberon Avenue, Price Hill, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Schomaker continued...

A list dictated to me by either my mother, Viola Schomaker Luckey, or Arethusa, a number of years after I received the above list, includes some additions. The asterisk (\*) indicates stone buildings:

\* St. George's Church

Organ Paneling Music Hall Cinti O Elm St across from 13th

Paris Ky Catholic Church (Pastor Brandt)

St. Xavier College Bldg. Corner 7th & Sycamore 1/3/1867

St. Patrick Covington (not paid yet)

All Saints Church East End. Car line end. Frame

St. Philomena Church Eastern Ave. Red Brick

Church and school on site of Railway Express garage and office 2nd and John

Old Stone Bldg. Old Lion House, Herbivores House, Elephant House, Bird House, Club House

St. Joseph (old)

St. Aloysius Church Cabinet Work

\* St. Clement Church St. Bernard

St. Anthony Budd St. Grandma and Grandpa (Theo Schomaker Jr., & Ella V. O'Brien) were married here)

Chapel in old Mt. St. Jo

\* Chapel in Mt. Alverno

Catholic Church in Batesville, Ind

St. Augustine Bank St.

**Important Dates in the Life of Theodor Schomaker, Sr.**

1824 July 12, born at Lingen, Hannover

1846 Immigrated to the United States

1849 January married Gertrude Thamann

1852 October 9 filed Declaration of Intent for Citizenship in the U.S. witnessed by John G. Schomaker

1859 Established business

1877 March 25 @ 2:00 AM Fire at Planing Mill & Lumber yard, \$2000.00. Matched Bay Brougham horses were lost

1893 Panic

1893 Theodor Schomaker Sr. died. Death notice in Cincinnati Enquirer states: died Thursday May 11, 1893 @ 4:15 AM at his residence in Bridgetown aged 68 yrs., 9 mos, 28 days. Funeral Friday, May 12 at 8:30 AM. Services at St. Aloysius' Church Bridgetown.

Great Grandfather Schomaker had 25 acres near Glenmore Avenue near Narrow gauge RR where he died in Bridgetown.

1894 July 2 Theodor Schomaker, Jr. graduated from St. Joseph Academy (College) Boys High School

PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ACQUISITIONS  
- A Quarterly List -

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MIAMI MEDICAL COLLEGE,  
OF CINCINNATI.

Material of genealogical interest and selected local histories received at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and available at the Main Library. List compiled by Steve Hutzel from information supplied by the History Department, Patricia Van Skaik, Head. PLEASE NOTE that due to volume this list is selective; many new materials are added to the collection without appearing here.

GENERAL & U.S. NATIONAL

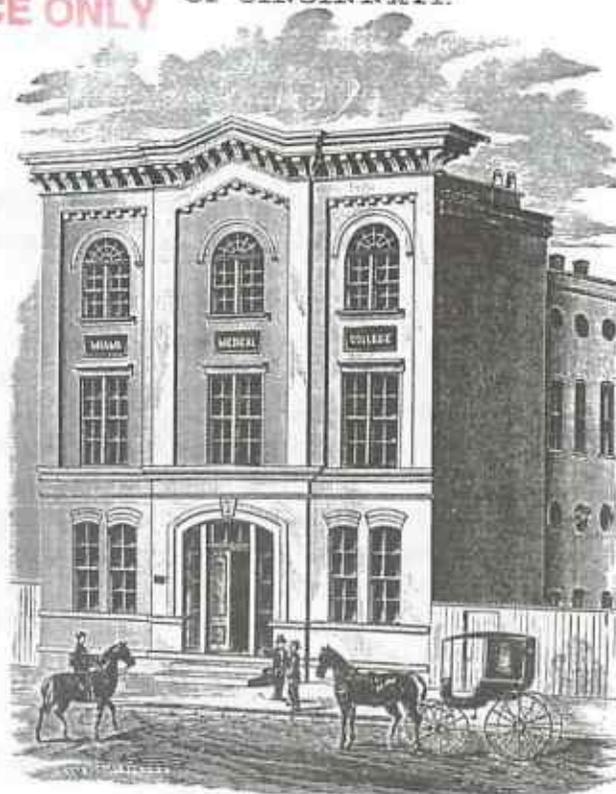
Supplement to the Official records of the Union and Confederate armies/ 973.74 U58 Suppl.  
Passenger and immigration lists index, supplement/ 929.373 qP2675 Suppl.  
Lineage book of the National Society of Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America/ R369.12 N2772

NEW ENGLAND & MID-ATLANTIC

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Memorial: genealogy and ecclesiastical history [New Britain, CN]/ R929.37462 A565 1995  
Vital records of Fairhaven, Massachusetts to 1850/ R929.374485 qS654 1993  
Portrait of Salisbury, Maryland thru the 1900s/ R975.225 C778 1994  
Later families of Sanford-Springvale, Maine/ R974.195 qB792L 1995  
Stewart's genealogical and historical miscellany [NJ]/ MFC973 G326 LH1429  
A history of East Amwell [NJ], 1700-1800/ R974.971 qE13 1979  
Some records of old Hunterdon County [NJ], 1701-1838/ R929.374971 D244 1979  
Salem [NJ] a century ago/ MPC973 G326 LH2131  
Major John Fenwick, colonizer and founder of the first permanent English speaking colony on the Delaware River, Salem County, New Jersey, 1675/ MFC973 G326 LH2109  
An index to Cherry Creek [NY] Illustrated/ R974.795 S562 Index  
Surname index to...Westmoreland County, PA cemeteries/ R929.374881 qC645  
Register of seamen's protection certificates from the Providence, Rhode Island custom district, 1796-1870/ R929.373 qR3371 1995  
Georgia, Vermont vital records/ R929.374313 M253 1995

KENTUCKY & THE SOUTH

The roster of Confederate soldiers, 1861-1865/ R973.742 qC748Zr 1995  
Slaves [Claibourne Co. MS]/ R929.3762285 T329 1995  
The 5th and 7th North Carolina Cavalry and the 6th North Carolina Cavalry/ R973.7456 W363 1995  
The historical writings of Henry A.M. Smith...from the South Carolina Historical (and Genealogical) Magazine/ R975.7 S649  
Obituaries and marriage notices from the Tennessee Baptist, 1844-1862/ R929.3768 B168  
Grainger County, Tennessee letters of administration, 1842-1854/ R929.3768932 S542g 1983



College Building, Twelfth St., bet. Elm & Plum, nearly opp. Cincinnati Hospital.

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