

**Herman Schroeder (1821 – 1905) & Baroness Maria von Buchau Schroeder (1827 – 1901)**

*Much of what we know about Herman Schroeder comes from his own accounts. Some of this information must be taken with a grain of salt as he was known to exaggerate about his accomplishments and was accused of being a braggart and a liar. The following biography of he and his wife attempts to clear up some of his misinformation and tall tales.*

Herman Schroeder was born on May 22, 1821 in the town of Althandensleben, near Magdeburg, Prussia. He was the only son born to William Christopher and Elizabeth (Stolz) Schroeder. His father was a music master in Napoleon Bonaparte's army during the Napoleonic Wars. It is said that he was one of the men who gave the signal to retreat from Moscow. Herman's father also became a prisoner of war and was being taken to Siberia when he was able to escape to Germany where he worked as a builder and architect. Herman was born during a time of great famine in Europe. A combination of multiple harvest failures, rapid erosion of purchasing power among the poor, rising food prices, and the winding down of the Napoleonic Wars (which ended in 1815), contributed to an economic depression that led to a famine that was so bad that four years before Herman was born, the gross mortality rate in parts of southern Germany had risen by 20%.<sup>1</sup>

Herman often said that because his parents were devout Roman Catholics, it was their desire for him to become a priest. Even though they lacked the funds to do so, they sent him to the best schools in order for him to become a priest. He was an excellent student and excelled in school which he claimed attracted the attention of local aristocrats and Bishop von Lebedour who helped support his education. However, after his mother died he abandoned his studies to become a priest and began to study philosophy and natural medicine and later architecture. It was as an architect that Herman was the most successful and prospered financially.<sup>2</sup> Through this career he became a contractor of many government structures and helped to construct the railroad between the cities of Magdeburg and Leipzig in Saxonia. Herman even went so far later in life as to claim that he built one of the first railroads in Germany but this boast cannot be proven or disproven.

Unlike her husband, Baroness Maria von Buchau came from an aristocratic background. Maria was born on March 23, 1827 in Altmark, Prussia. She was the youngest daughter of the Baronet Prinz von Buchau of Prussia. Her father was the General-Adjutant of the great General Blücher, the commander of the victorious Prussian forces at the Battle of Waterloo during the Napoleonic Wars. Her father was also the last commander of Cassel and one of thirteen men adorned by the King of Prussia as Knight of the Order Pour le Merite, the highest order of Germany. Maria's ancestry was traceable to Johannes Prince von Buchau, the first Swedish governor in America who also built the first Protestant church in the United States in Princedorph, New Jersey.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Webb. "Emergency Relief during Europe's Famine of 1817, Anticipated Responses to Today's Humanitarian Disasters," September 2002 [http://nutrition.tufts.edu/docs/pdf/fpan/wp14-relief\\_1817.pdf](http://nutrition.tufts.edu/docs/pdf/fpan/wp14-relief_1817.pdf) 3-5

<sup>2</sup> Alice McCarty Schlenker. "The People's Friend," *Illinois Magazine*, July – August 1981, 14

<sup>3</sup> *The Biographical Record of McLean County, IL Illustrated*. (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1899) 597-598

Despite her aristocratic background, Maria fell in love with Herman, a free thinking bourgeoisie. This was during a time of revolutionary upheaval when young people of all classes were joining in the attempt to overthrow despotic government in Prussia. Maria shared Herman's political views against the established order. The two were married in 1846 after struggling to obtain the consent of Maria's noble father. They were married in the small city of Klötze, in the province of Altmark, where Maria was born.

However, trouble arose in 1848 when Herman became involved with revolutionary activities. He had a love of republican principles and discussed them at will at public demonstrations and through the press.<sup>4</sup> It was these views against the aristocratic establishment that led to his (and other revolutionaries) arrest and sentence to be executed. He and Maria managed to escape the night before his sentence was to be carried out and boarded a ship bound for New York City. According to later accounts by Herman, all they had on them was ten dollars and a needle gun he had taken from a soldier he had killed during their escape. It was also recorded that this gun was the first of its kind in the United States<sup>5</sup> but yet again, this is another fact which can neither be proven or disproven.

It was hard to find work in New York City so Herman and Maria headed further west to Cleveland, Ohio where Herman studied medicine with the help of, according to Herman, "a former wealthy refugee."<sup>6</sup> He became a respected physician in just two years and spent another two years practicing in the cities of Mansfield and Mount Gilead, Ohio.

In 1851 Herman, Maria, and their first daughter America, migrated to Bloomington, IL on a 6-week wagon journey. When they arrived in Bloomington, Herman fashioned a home from an old log cabin (reportedly the first log cabin built in Bloomington) near where the Illinois Central Railroad would come to be constructed. This shanty also served as a place where he began practicing medicine again but the people in town could not afford to pay for his services. As a result, he decided to try something different and began participating in land speculation. Herman purchased nine lots in town and built thirteen houses. He earned money from renting those houses out and with that income was able to buy 240 acres of land (south of the present day town of El Paso, Illinois) from the Illinois Central Railroad in 1853. He also purchased an additional 160 acres of land further to the east and plotted out a new town which he called "Schroederville," today the town of Gilman.<sup>7</sup>

Even though he was successful in his real estate affairs, he sold "Schroederville" in 1856 for a sizeable profit in order to establish a vineyard in Bloomington. Herman liked to boast that his vineyards were the "first in the West," a statement which was untrue. He was successful in growing grape vines and sold between 18 and 20 million vines throughout the United States and even abroad to Canada, France and Germany making Bloomington nationally and internationally known for grape production. Herman's vineyards were so successful that when he sold grapes and vines at the 1860 State Fair in Decatur, he said that his pockets "could not hold all the money, so I tucked

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<sup>4</sup> *The Biographical Record of McLean County, IL Illustrated*, 597

<sup>5</sup> *The Biographical Record of McLean County, IL Illustrated*, 597

<sup>6</sup> Letters discovered at Deaconess Hospital cornerstone, written September 17, 1900 by Herman Schroeder, McLean County Museum of History Archives

<sup>7</sup> "Dr. Herman Schroeder," *The Daily Bulletin*, January 24, 1899

my trousers in my boot tops, took my knife and cut slits in my pockets and thus filled trousers, legs and all, the money being in silver, copper, and currency.”<sup>8</sup>

Herman did much to aid in Bloomington’s growth. In 1866 he erected the first opera house in Bloomington; the Schroeder Opera House, located across from the McLean County Courthouse in Bloomington. The construction of the building cost over \$70,000, which would equal more than \$943,000 in 2008. This opera house had two stores on the first floor and the theater was located above those stores.<sup>9</sup> It was built with all the modern conveniences of the day including private box seats, orchestra chairs, balcony and galleries. It also had seven full sets of scenery and could seat between 300 and 400 people.<sup>10</sup> The Opera House was host to some of the biggest and most well known performers of the day and the first opera ever presented there was on December 5, 1867 by the Latti Opera Company.<sup>11</sup> After over 30 successful years in business, Herman’s health began to fail so he sold the Opera House on February 24, 1896 for \$50,000 to the Cole Brothers, well known dry goods merchants.<sup>12</sup>

He also built the Minerva Block in 1869. This building was located on the west side of Main Street, between Monroe and Jefferson Streets. The block was named after their youngest daughter, Minerva. The Schroeder’s lived on the second and third floors which were filled with a library of books dating back to 1410, valuable oil paintings, fine Italian marble statues, and valuable mosaics. He and Maria also owned what was said to be the first grand piano brought to Bloomington. It was apparently sent to them by Maria’s family from Stuttgart.<sup>13</sup> In the front of the building, Herman had a life-size statue of the goddess Minerva, (the Roman goddess of wisdom, medicine, poetry, and commerce) erected. This statue was later brought into the front parlor of their home on the Minerva block.<sup>14</sup>

Herman also dabbled in the business of coal mining. Coal was found underneath Bloomington in the 1860s. Prior to this, coal was imported from Peoria, Danville, or other more distant areas. However during the Civil War coal became harder to obtain due to a shortage of train cars, horses and wagons. The people of Bloomington realized they needed a new and closer source of coal and began to look locally. In 1863 drilling commenced in an effort to locate a local source of coal. This effort was funded by the city. However, this early effort failed and it would not be until February 2, 1867 near North Mason Street that coal was found in Bloomington through the efforts of private businessmen Thomas Bunn, Judson Spaulding, Dr. Luce, and James Ridelbubur.<sup>15</sup> These men founded the Bloomington Coal Mining Company that same year. How Herman became involved in this business is unclear. A celebration in honor of the discovery of coal was held at the Schroeder’s Opera House on November 15, 1867 when coal was finally discovered at the North Shaft of the company on November 12 of the same year. No admission was charged and the first wagon load of coal was brought to the

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<sup>8</sup> Schlenker, “The People’s Friend,” 14

<sup>9</sup> *The Biographical Record of McLean County, IL Illustrated*, 598

<sup>10</sup> Directory of Illinois Opera Houses and Halls, 1870, *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1908-1984), Vol. 35, No. 2 (Jun., 1942), 189

<sup>11</sup> “Opera ‘Martha,’” *The Daily Pantagraph*, December 6, 1867

<sup>12</sup> “Schroeder Opera House Sold To Cole Brothers for \$50,000,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, February 24, 1896

<sup>13</sup> “Dr. Herman Schroeder,” *The Daily Bulletin*, January 24, 1899

<sup>14</sup> Schlenker, “The People’s Friend,” 17

<sup>15</sup> Alice Staley. *McLean County Coal Company*, March 31, 1976, 6-7

celebration and auctioned off that evening (with the proceeds going to help the poor of Bloomington).<sup>16</sup> Herman liked to boast that it was through his efforts that coal was found in Bloomington. He claimed that he had “secured scientific experts to make examinations, and, as he anticipated, coal was found.”<sup>17</sup> He became the owner of the company and served as president of this organization from December 1869 to January 1870. He also owned one-fifth of the stock in the company. On January 19, 1870 he published a letter in *The Pantagraph* resigning from the company stating that he hoped that all of the company’s friends would continue to buy coal just as they did when he was president.<sup>18</sup> He turned that position over to a man by the name of George Lichteuthaler in order to devote more of his time to his nursery business.<sup>19</sup>

Schroeder tried his hand at several other business ventures because he saw opportunity everywhere. He established a vinegar and cider factory which he developed into a very large and profitable business but eventually sold.<sup>20</sup> He operated a pickle factory on South Clinton Street for a time as well. He also tried his hand at raising silkworms. Herman planted a large numbers of mulberry trees to raise silkworms on. However, in 1877, after it became apparent to Schroeder that the climate was not right in Illinois for this enterprise and after the silkworms he purchased did not survive Illinois’s often harsh winters, he cut his losses and moved on to the next business venture. The mulberry trees remained and thrived.

In 1875 after a trip to Europe with his family, he decided to try another new business venture, manufacturing sausage. After months of preparation his factory, located on South Main Street near the railroad depot, opened for business on December 3, 1877. This factory produced sausage, lard, and sugar cured ham. His factory was reported to have been very well equipped with steam heat, city water, and the best equipment available.<sup>21</sup> It was reported that Schroeder only hired the most “thoroughly experienced men” to run the business and that his factory would adhere to “the strictest mode of cleanliness.”<sup>22</sup> He not only sold the sausage locally but also intended to sell it in Europe, particularly in his home country of Germany. But according to Schroeder, it was found that his first large shipment to Germany was contaminated with trichina (the common name for *trichinella spiralis*), a parasitic worm commonly found in undercooked pork meat, and nearly all of the meat had to be destroyed. Schroeder also stated that this upset the importers in Germany to the point where the German Ambassador paid a personal visit to him and threatened to cut off all meat importation from the United States. Herman wrote several articles defending American pork and tried to dispel the “lies” which were being published by the German press such as that factories in Chicago “dressed dead carcasses.”<sup>23</sup> He also stated that other American pork producers were not properly inspecting their meat either which was part of the problem. In this article Herman stated that he had foreseen the exclusion of American pork from the German Empire and that if the exporters of hog products would have listened to his

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<sup>16</sup> Staley, *McLean County Coal Company*, 9

<sup>17</sup> *The Biographical Record of McLean County, IL Illustrated*, 598

<sup>18</sup> “Resignation,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, January 17, 1870

<sup>19</sup> “Resignation,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, January 17, 1870

<sup>20</sup> *The Biographical Record of McLean County, IL Illustrated*, 598

<sup>21</sup> “Industrial, The Sausage Factory,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, November 21, 1877

<sup>22</sup> “A New Enterprise for Bloomington,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, November 8, 1877

<sup>23</sup> “Pork and Beef,” Letter to the Editor by Dr. Herman Schroeder, *The Daily Pantagraph*, January 10, 1883

warning “about trichina years before and spent a few extra cents on inspecting hogs and pork products for this parasite, then pork and live hogs from the United States would not have been expelled from most European states.”<sup>24</sup> Because of the ban of the importation of pork products in many European states, particularly in his native country of Germany, Herman would eventually retire from the business.<sup>25</sup>

From all of these different business ventures, Schroeder liked to boast that “his extensive business brought at least a half million dollars from abroad to our city, all spent here for work and materials.”<sup>26</sup> What can be said for certain is that during all of these different business ventures, his vineyards and nursery business continued to flourish.

Through all of these ventures, some successes and others failures, Maria and Herman had nine children: America, Heinzer, Franklin, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Prince Eugene, Gambetta, Manny, and Minerva. The names of their children illustrated their political views. Five of their children were named after revolutionary heroes: Mazzini, an Italian who believe in complete freedom and emancipation of mankind; Gambetta, a French patriot who called for separation of church and state, freedom of press and assembly, free compulsory education and the removal of restrictions on labor unions; Franklin, for Benjamin Franklin an American Revolutionary; Heinzer, a socialist philosopher; and Garibaldi, an Italian revolutionary who made the creation of modern Italy possible. Only America, Franklin and Minerva survived to adulthood.

Besides being well known as a business man and forerunner of Bloomington city development, he was almost better known for speaking his mind and his free-thinking philosophical and political views. He believed in the tenets of socialism saying “I always was a Free Thinker, or Self Thinker, could not believe in the doctrine of the Bible humbug that the Creator of the Universe made the first man out of clay, or the stupid story of the snake and the apple tree.”<sup>27</sup> Politically, he considered himself a Democrat and voted with the party, but he tended to go back and forth in supporting each party. In a letter found in the cornerstone of Brokaw Hospital when it was torn down in 1959, he had written, “I could never believe in absolute governments by kings and emperors, but only by the people and for the people.”<sup>28</sup> Even though they could afford to do so, the Schroeders’ had no servants because of their beliefs.

One example of his socially forward thinking occurred prior to the Civil War. It was reported that Schroeder had promised long ago “that whenever the Negroes were granted the right to vote, he would promenade the streets of Bloomington with a Negro woman and a band of music to show that there should be no distinction on account of color.”<sup>29</sup> This promise was fulfilled on April 1, 1870 after news of the passage of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (which prohibited any government in the U.S. from denying any person the right to vote based on race, color or previous condition of servitude<sup>30</sup>), reached Bloomington. Schroeder, accompanied by an African

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<sup>24</sup> “Pork and Beef,” Letter to the Editor by Dr. Herman Schroeder, *The Daily Pantagraph*, January 10, 1883

<sup>25</sup> “The People’s Friend,” 18

<sup>26</sup> “The People’s Friend,” 15

<sup>27</sup> “The People’s Friend,” 11

<sup>28</sup> Letters discovered at Deaconess Hospital cornerstone, written September 17, 1900 by Herman Schroeder, McLean County Museum of History Archives

<sup>29</sup> “Promenade Extraordinary,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, April 2, 1870

<sup>30</sup> Amendments to the Constitution of the United States,

[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_amendments\\_11-27.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_amendments_11-27.html)

American woman by the name of Miss Ham, were seen arm-in-arm “parading” around Main, Center, Front, and North Streets and back to his residence on the Minerva Block at approximately two o’clock that afternoon. A large crowd had gathered to witness the event with some in the crowd voicing doubts that he would attempt the task. Schroeder did not let them down nor did he go back on the promise he made long ago.<sup>31</sup>

He also often spoke out against the prohibition of alcohol which was a topic of some dispute for many residents of Bloomington. In a letter to the editor of *The Pantagraph*, he argued that it could not work because it could not be enforced. He recounted the failures of prohibition throughout history stating that religions such as Islam and Christianity tried it [prohibition], “mighty emperors and kings have tried prohibition, even with capital punishment and degradation threatened and still none listened” and prohibition ultimately failed every time.<sup>32</sup>

Many of his thoughts and opinions on economic chaos, politics, and business were written in letters and editorials to newspapers, particularly *The Pantagraph*. These letters often caused a stir among the townspeople, particularly his fellow Germans, when he bashed organized religion or they did not see eye-to-eye with him on other topics he wrote about. In the July 18, 1856 issue of *Weekly National Flag*, thirty-nine Germans of Bloomington wrote a statement against Schroeder stating, “We the undersigned German citizens of the city of Bloomington, declare hereby that we consider the person known as Dr. Schroeder, as a disgrace to our reputation as our countryman... This said Schroeder is a man of no principle or consequence. He will be a Republican today and a Democrat tomorrow; seemingly your best friend today and your worst enemy tomorrow; this depends all on money matters. We will never follow the counsel of a being of such low character.” Several of the undersigned listed their complaints against Schroeder ranging from slander, to being a thief, to bold-faced lying and even one woman accused him of causing the death of her child.<sup>33</sup> Schroeder’s rebuttal back to those Germans simply stated that “they are men of no character and hence are beneath my notice and merit only my contempt.”<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, to many other residents of Bloomington he was considered a “friend of the people” who always had the best for the community in mind. In fact, at the end of his daughter America’s wedding in May of 1873 he was given an unanticipated tribute. Prominent Bloomington lawyers Ezra Prince and Lawrence Weldon, who were friends of Schroeder’s, presented him with a gold-headed cane in the name of the citizens of Bloomington for his “numerous acts of benefaction to the public, aiding in various ways in its improvement and more especially in the erection of the Opera House building and the Minerva Block.” Herman was overwhelmed and totally surprised by this act. He expressed his gratitude and stated that he would treasure this gift and it would be cherished as an heirloom in his family.<sup>35</sup>

Herman was not the only successful member of his family. Maria, his wife, had her own money and income as well. Thanks to the work of Myra Colby Bradwell, in 1861 a law was passed which entitled married women in Illinois to their own property

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<sup>31</sup> “Promenade Extraordinary,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, April 2, 1870

<sup>32</sup> “A Challenge from Dr. Schroeder,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, January 2, 1883

<sup>33</sup> “Mahon vs. Schroeder,” *Weekly National Flag*, July 18, 1856

<sup>34</sup> “The People’s Friend,” 13

<sup>35</sup> “Dr. Schroeder Caned,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, May 2, 1873

and earnings including equal guardianship of children after divorce, the right to share in a deceased husband's estate, and to enter into any occupation or profession. Prior to this law, all of a woman's property became their husband's upon marriage. In 1869 Myra Bradwell also lobbied for and got approved an act which gave married women control over earnings from their labor and guaranteed a widow a third of her deceased husband's estate regardless of the terms of her husband's will.<sup>36</sup> Maria took full advantage of her rights for not only did she have her own money, but she also carried on her own business affairs, owning a store beneath the Schroeder Opera House which her husband built. She also owned a farm and several houses for which she collected rent. Maria was a powerful woman and was said to have controlled her husband with quiet firmness. She never quite trusted his business judgment and always made sure that their family would be secure, "regardless of what speculation might tempt him." It was also said that Herman sometimes sought her advice in matters of business.<sup>37</sup>

In another show of independence, Maria shocked the residents of Bloomington when she filed for separate maintenance from her husband in March of 1887. According to a *Pantagraph* article published on March 7 of that year, Maria said that her husband "has made life miserable for her...a continual course of unkind and harsh treatment has been practiced toward her by her husband, and life with him is unendurable."<sup>38</sup> It was also said that after forty years of marriage, Maria was seeking peace and quiet for her final days. She claimed that Herman had not been providing her with enough food because of his "penurious instincts." She asked the court to order him to pay her a proper sum for support, since she confirmed that he was worth \$75,000. During this time of separation, Herman built a home in the middle of his vineyards and named it "Villa Maria," after his wife. It was located north of Oakland Avenue and was described as "a rambling, frame, one-story affair with six bedrooms...a perfect bower of floral beauty in the summer months."<sup>39</sup> In spite of this, Maria did not reside there. She continued to reside in their apartment on the Minerva Block while Herman primarily lived in the villa.

Even though Maria left Herman because she accused him of being cheap and not providing enough for her, Herman was not quite as penny pinching when it came to contributing to the welfare of the community. On several occasions he had given money to various causes and organizations to not only benefit the community, but to most likely inflate his ego as well. On May 15, 1857 Herman's name appeared on the list of subscriptions pledged to founding a teacher's college, Illinois State Normal University, in North Bloomington (today the Town of Normal). Even though his nursery business was struggling at the time, Herman pledged \$1,000 of his own money which would equal about \$25,224 in 2008 to help establish the school along with many other wealthy men in Bloomington.<sup>40</sup>

On October 18, 1898 Schroeder deeded to the trustees of Deaconess Hospital "a valuable tract of land in the southern part of the city" (the land being surrounded by Wright, Wood, Gridley and Bell Streets), "the proceeds of with by sale are to be devoted

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<sup>36</sup> Michelle Moschella, "Myra Colby Bradwell: A Decade of Legislative Reform in Illinois (1996)," <http://data.law.georgetown.edu/glh/moschella.htm>

<sup>37</sup> "The People's Friend," 18

<sup>38</sup> "She is Tired Of It," *Daily Pantagraph*, March 7, 1887, McLean County Museum of History Archives

<sup>39</sup> "The People's Friend," 17

<sup>40</sup> John Cook and James McHugh. *A History of Illinois State Normal University*. (Normal, IL. 1882) 20

to erecting” a building adjoining the hospital for the care of aged and indigent people. Of course, wanting to perpetuate his name for many years to come, when he made this donation, the home was to be named after him, “The Dr. Herman Schroeder Old Folks Home.” The property was valued at the “modest sum” of \$5,000, which would equal about \$127,360 in 2008. This was remembered as a major gift to the hospital’s first major expansion project in 1900. It is unclear whether or not the hospital did name the new addition after Schroeder. But, according to a letter Schroeder wrote in 1900 that was placed in the cornerstone of the new addition (which was found when that building was torn down in 1959), that the new building was “dedicated for the Sick, or the infortunate, or old Folks Home people for whose benefit this building where donatet by Patriotet Citycisions of all Classes in Live.”<sup>41</sup> Prior to this he had given another small tract of land worth about \$500 to the hospital.<sup>42</sup>

The last few years of Herman and Maria’s lives were filled with declining health and even tragedy. On June 19, 1900 a fire broke out at the Model Laundry on East Monroe Street and swept through Downtown Bloomington. Known as the Great Fire, the fire spread quickly due to antiquated fire equipment and poor water pressure, and consumed much of the Minerva Block, (their home) and reduced 45 buildings in 4 ½ blocks to little more than rubble. It destroyed their valuable possessions such as heirlooms over 400 years old, statuettes, portraits, their library, and many other priceless articles. Fortunately, Herman and Maria were together that night and “Herman escaped carrying his sick wife, still in her nightgown, over his shoulder, down the stairs and into the alley. He, in his [late 70’s], was dressed in torn slippers, an old jacket, straw hat and cane.”<sup>43</sup> After the fire, Maria became even more ill because of heart disease and also the shock cause by the Great Fire. She decided to live at St. Joseph Hospital for the remainder of her life though she did return home for short intervals when her health allowed. Herman visited her every day bringing her fruit and flowers. If he did not come, Maria would send for a carriage to go see if her husband was ill. It seemed that even though they were legally separated, they still could not live without each other. Maria spent the last six months of her life at the hospital before finally passing away on November 27, 1901.

Herman continued to live alone in an apartment at 408 North Main Street after the death of Maria. A week before his death he suffered an acute heart attack and on April 7, 1905 suffered another attack and died alone in his apartment. Minutes before his death, he felt pains and immediately phoned his physician Dr. Elder for medical help. Sadly, he died before Dr. Elder even arrived.<sup>44</sup>

His funeral, like Maria’s four years earlier, was held at the Unitarian Church even though they were free thinkers and did not believe in organized religion. Yet Herman had shown a preference for the church for many years, donating flowers at Easter time and trees for children at Christmas. Reverend J.H. Mueller gave the funeral address that Herman had once written one out for him, but had lost in the Great Fire. The reverend gave a sermon that revealed the truth as he knew it as well as the Christian virtue of

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<sup>41</sup> Letters discovered at Deaconess Hospital cornerstone, written September 17, 1900 by Herman Schroeder, McLean County Museum of History Archives

<sup>42</sup> “A Generous Gift,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, October 19, 1898

<sup>43</sup> “Friend of the People,” 18

<sup>44</sup> “Dr. Schroeder Dies Suddenly,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, April 8, 1905

charity in a way he felt Herman might have appreciated, quoting Goethe and Faust. Herman's obituary in *The Pantagraph* stated, "With the death of Dr. Schroeder, there passes away one of the strong pioneer characters and unique figures in the history of Bloomington."<sup>45</sup> Herman and Maria were buried in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington, Illinois.

By: Sarah Yoo, 2009

Revisions and additions: Candace Summers, 2010

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<sup>45</sup> "Dr. Schroeder Dies Suddenly," *The Daily Pantagraph*, April 8, 1905