

Jennie MacDonald Wickizer (1852-1941)

Jennie MacDonald Wickizer was born on December 31st, 1852 at Knightswood, Scotland, located just outside of Glasgow. She was born to Daniel and Elizabeth MacDonald. At the age of three, she came to the U.S. with her parents. On October 19th, 1873 she married William Wickizer in Minonk, Illinois. William Wickizer was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania located west of New York City, on September 1st, 1846. William and Jennie moved to Bloomington in December 1879. In 1881 they had their first child, May. In 1885 they had their second child, a son named Wallace. Unfortunately he only lived until the age of four.

Not much is known about the Wickizers besides what was documented in the Bloomington City Directories beginning in 1880. In the 1880-1881 directory, Jennie's husband, William was listed as a "tinner," which is a person who makes and repairs tinware. Jennie was listed as a [sewing] Machine agent. They resided at 605 East Empire in Bloomington¹. In the 1882-83 directory, they were listed at a new residence at 519 North Main Street.² They would have lived on the second floor of this building because located on the first floor was a saloon owned by a man named L. Haker. In 1884 Jennie was an agent for "Domestic mach[nery] and fancy goods." This most likely meant she was a seamstress along with selling sewing machines.³ In 1886 Jennie was a "notions," someone selling or working with sewing materials, and William was again listed as a "tinner."⁴

The 1887 Bloomington City Directory business listings was the first mention of Jennie as a "Baker and Confectioner" reported. She ran her business out of their place of residence at 529 North Main Street (the old 519 North Main Street).⁵ In 1889 William was also listed as a baker and they moved to 608 North Main Street.⁶ By 1893 William was listed as "manager" and their address changed to 606 North Main Street.⁷ According to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Bloomington, this building was a two-story brick structure.⁸ They would have lived in the second story above the bakery. Four years later the bakery was listed under Jennie's name and William was no longer the manager but simply lived at 606 North Main. This was probably due to his failing health. Miss May Wickizer, their daughter, also appeared at this address.⁹ As of 1899 Miss May was listed as a student and they all resided at 602 North Main. This was the second floor above their bakery. That same year, the city directory listed their bakery for the first time as "Wickizer's Bakery."¹⁰ In the 1900 census William, Jennie, and May were listed as living in the same home on 602 North Main. William was listed as a baker, Jennie was the

¹ *Gould's City Directory of Bloomington and Normal*, 1880-81, 198

² *Gould's City Directory of Bloomington and Normal*, 1882-83, 187

³ *Charles I. Barker's Bloomington City Directory*, 1884, 297

⁴ *Bloomington City Directory*, 1886, 376

⁵ *Bloomington City Directory*, 1887, 393, 406

⁶ *Bloomington City Directory*, 1889, 409, 422

⁷ *Bloomington-Normal and McLean County Directory*, 1893, 455, 638

⁸ *Insurance Maps of Bloomington, Illinois including Normal*. (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company, July 1896) 4

⁹ *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1897, 466, 608

¹⁰ *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1899, 496-497, 582

manager of baking, and May was a candy saleslady.¹¹ Sometime in 1902 they changed their residence to 101 West Mulberry and May no longer lived with the Wickizers.¹² In the Bloomington City Directory, an advertisement lists some of the baked goods that they offered: “lovely Marshmallow, Chocolate, Nut, Caramel, or Loaf Cake.”¹³ By 1905 Jennie became the sole proprietor.¹⁴

Jennie and her husband were charter members of the Second Christian Church. It was first incorporated on April 22, 1901 and was located at 411 East Mulberry Street.¹⁵ The church’s first pastor was Reverend J.H. Gilliland.¹⁶ The church was last listed in the Bloomington City Directory in 1997.¹⁷

On July 18th, 1908 William died at their home at 101 West Mulberry. He suffered from a stroke of “apoplexy,” which is a sudden loss of consciousness, three weeks prior. Since that time, he had been confined to his bed.¹⁸ He was buried in the Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington on July 20th, 1908. Jennie continued to reside at their home on West Mulberry. By 1909 the Bakery left her ownership in some manner which the directories did not specify and went into the ownership of W. L. Freeman.¹⁹ As the new owner, he sold home-made bread and cakes, rolls and Boston brown bread.²⁰ W. L. Freeman continued to use the Wickizer name for the bakery until 1917 when the bakery disappeared in both name and listing.²¹

On May 9th, 1941 Jennie died at the age of 88. She suffered from an illness for three years before she passed away. Upon her death, she had four surviving grandchildren, with both of her children having preceded her in death.²² On May 12th, 1941 she was laid to rest in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington next to her husband and son.

By: Lisa Dreske, 2009

¹¹ 1900 McLean County, Illinois Census

¹² *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1902, 557, 612

¹³ *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1902, 562

¹⁴ *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1905, 556, 674

¹⁵ *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1905, 35

¹⁶ Taylor, Elaine J., *Bloomington-Normal in Vintage Postcards*, 2002, 91

¹⁷ *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1997, 342

¹⁸ *The Daily Pantagraph*, July 20, 1908

¹⁹ *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1909, 620

²⁰ *Angeline Baker Milner’s probate records*, receipt from: October 13, 1909

²¹ *Bloomington and Normal City Directory*, 1917, 646-647

²² *The Daily Pantagraph*, May 10, 1941