

Winesburg & Meisenhelder Families of Boggs Run

By Eileen Long Goddard

Meisenhelder & Winesburg genealogy files:

<http://www.wvgenweb.org/marshall/gen-pmeisenhelder.pdf>

<http://www.wvgenweb.org/marshall/gen-jacobwinesburg.pdf>

My great-grandparents, Samuel Winesburg, 23, and Sarah Margaret Meisenhelder, 21, were married in Marshall County, West Virginia on July 20, 1875. Samuel was born in Ohio County and had been residing in Tyler County. Sarah Margaret was born in Marshall County and also resided there. Her parents were Christian Meisenhelder and Mary Ann Jones, who were married in Marshall County on April 19, 1841 [Marriage was probably in 1840 instead of 1841 because marriages were listed in order of time performed. The listing before and after is 1840. Census of 1840 shows this couple as a family.].

Samuel and Sarah Margaret "Maggie" Winesburg had the following children:

- (1) Belle Lamar Winesburg, b Jan 16, 1876, Marshall County, W.Va.; d Apr 26 1949, Marshall County, W.Va.
- (2) Ethel Winesburg, b May 1883, d Mar 16, 1885
- (3) Ira Winesburg, b Mar 14, 1885, Ohio County, W.Va.; d unknown
- (4) Earl Winesburg [**PHOTO**], b 1886; d Mar 27, 1913, Norfolk, Va.; buried Mt. Olivet, Marshall County
- (5) Erick Winesburg, b Dec 16, 1889, Marshall County, W.Va.; d Jan 14, 1891, Marshall County, W.Va.
- (6) Iola/Iona Winesburg, b Jan 4, 1892, Marshall County, W.Va.; d unknown

My great-grandfather, Samuel Winesburg, was murdered on Boggs Run on July 24, 1892.

John Moylan was found guilty of the murder Samuel Winesburg. On Feb 27, 1893, the court sentenced him as follows: *...the said John Moylan to be imprisoned in the Public Jail and Penitentiary House of the state for the term of Ten years and that he be kept at hard labor....*

Michael Moylan, father of John Moylan, received this sentence for his part in the crime: *Michael Moylan is to be imprisoned in the jail of this county for the period of 30 days and pay a fine of twenty five dollars for said assault and battery and the costs of this cause by the state of W.Va.*

My great-grandmother, Sarah Margaret "Maggie" (Meisenhelder) Winesburg, was shot at the same time as her husband. She was not expected to survive but she lived until 1925. "Moundsville Daily Echo," Friday, December 11, 1925: *MRS. MAGGIE WINESBURG DIED HERE EARLY TODAY - Mrs. Maggie Winesburg died this morning at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Long on Arlington Avenue, after a long illness of paralysis. - Mrs. Winesburg was 69 years of age and is survived by her daughter Mrs. Long. Arrangements for the funeral are not complete but interment will be made at Mt. Olivet.*

One of the family stories of interest about the shooting is that Maggie's daughter, my grandmother, Belle Lamar Winesburg, was at Mt. Olivet church for a meeting. My grandfather, James Francis Long, was also at the meeting. When the news of the shooting came to Belle, Granddad went with her, and while Grandma held the lantern for the doctor to perform the surgery on Sarah Margaret, Granddad held Grandma's hand. Soon after they started dating and got married in 1893.

A HORRIBLE TRAGEDY.

Suicide Winsburg Murdered, and His Wife Seriously Wounded.

THE MURDERESS UNDER ARREST.

They are Michael and John Moylan, Father and Son—The Tragedy Occurred About Two Miles Up Boggs' Run, in Marshall County, About Nine O'Clock Last Night.

A horrible tragedy was enacted in the valley of Boggs' run, about two miles from the lower end of this city, about nine o'clock last night. Michael Winsburg, a well-known workman in the Wheeling steel plant at Duwood, was murdered, and his wife seriously and probably fatally wounded.

Their assailants were Michael and John Moylan, father and son, the former was a workman in the Wheeling plant.

Both these men were arrested a short time after the bloody affair, and were safely confined in the Duwood lock-up. Word was sent to this city, about ten o'clock, shortly after the tragedy became known in Duwood, and the city police on duty in the lower ward did all that was possible to assist in capturing the accused persons.

NEWS REACHES DUWOOD.

The first news of the tragedy reached Duwood about ten o'clock, when Tom Jones and Fred Keltz, neighbors of the parties, came to town in a taxi, bound to meet a physician. They stopped first at the City Building, and called Michael Lusk Clark, and continuing down the street, they then called upon Dr. McDevitt. The physician accompanied them back to the scene of the crime. The story spread like wildfire, and in a few minutes a large crowd of men had gathered around the police station, anxious to hear the news, while wild rumors were circulated. Marshal Glavin, accompanied by officer Wm. Casey, and Constable Ignouss secured a taxi, and started after the murderer. An old quarry has been used as a tunnel connecting the run with that part of the hillside near the Riverside plant. The officers started through this tunnel with the latter.

In the meantime Will Meyer, the well-known druggist, accompanied by a former friend near his place, drove in to town, and from there the messenger brought the story as it was told by the wife and sister-in-law of the murdered man.

ONE STORY OF THE MURDER.

It was supposed from their story that Winsburg, who is supposed to be a blackleg, had come into the Wheeling steel plant, had worked during the morning, and part of the afternoon, of Monday. He went to his home late in the afternoon, and went to sleep. He awoke before eight o'clock in the morning and was informed that Moylan had invaded his wife. He became very angry, and re-communicated with his father-in-law.

A messenger visited the house of Michael and Winsburg. The house of the former is on the north side, and the latter on the south side of the run. When Winsburg told Moylan to quit his meddling, with the latter demanded him to come down to the road. According to Mrs. Winsburg's story, her husband went down to the road, and Moylan at once struck at him. While they were quarreling Mrs. Winsburg came down to prevent them from coming to blows, when John Moylan produced a revolver and fired three times. The first shot passed through Winsburg's breast and the second entered the left breast of his wife, about two inches above the heart. The third shot missed its mark.

WINSBURG KILLS.

Winsburg at once fell to the road, and when he awoke, conscious by the pain of the pistol shot, rolled to his stomach, he was dead. Among the first to arrive on the scene were the two men who came to Duwood for a physician. They carried the dead body into Winsburg's home, and laid it upon the door of the front room.

Mrs. Jones then ran to the house of Will Meyer, about a half-mile away, and he was upon the scene in a few minutes. After doing the shooting, the Moylans, father and son, entered their home and the men went to bed. A crowd of half a hundred curious people soon gathered on the scene of the tragedy. The physician arrived in a short time, but Winsburg was beyond medical aid. The bullet in Mrs. Winsburg, scored above the head, and lodged just beneath the ribs below her shoulder in her back. The physician extracted the bullet, and did all that was possible to alleviate her suffering. The wound is a very deep one, and will very probably prove fatal.

THE ARREST.

About eleven o'clock the officers arrived through the tunnel. Moylan's house was dark, and a light being visible. The officers knocked at the front door. Moylan, who had probably remained up in anticipation of arrest, came down and opened the door. The officers placed him under arrest, and asked for the son. The father called John down from the second story, and he was also placed under arrest. The officers proceeded up stairs, on which the woman with whom the murderer was committed to a fight was waiting. The woman is a thirteen-year-old girl, and was very much excited. After firing the shot Moylan calmly retraced his retreat, and when it was found all the chambers were full. Moylan took his arrest very coolly and did not offer any resistance. He said he intended coming to town in the morning to surrender. The son, a stout lad, said in front of him, and went down without protest, bearing his head and spirit as a man.

MAKER OF MULL.

Both prisoners walked the entire distance with the two officers, while Constable Ignouss remained at the home of Winsburg, to aid the physician. The

party reached town about one o'clock. The crowd about the City Building, numbering about a hundred, came and pressed forward anxious to get a look at the prisoner, and were held back by the city police, until the officers reached them. The father and son were carefully searched, and then placed in solitary cells.

A reporter's report was given when the prisoners were brought in, and based the story of the trial from their own lips. The father was seen in the crowd, and stated that the murderer was done as well as himself. He said he was in town with his wagon, and several of his children in the afternoon which were corroborated by the officers, and a half dozen men present, who had seen him. He said he was returning to his home when he was met by Winsburg and his wife on the road and Winsburg told to plot a quarrel, and a few words were exchanged. He and his wife then closed to street and Moylan and son John started to run toward the house. They passed three times with voices, and one voice struck John beneath the left eye and almost knocked him down. It was then, believing that they intended to kill him, that he pulled his revolver and fired at random. Mr. and Mrs. Winsburg, he said, were on the property at the time. He stated that the boy had the revolver or fired the shot.

THE SON'S STORY.

The boy was placed in the cell beneath his head, and proceeded to take off his shoes. When the reporter spoke to him, he came forward, and his eyes were filled with tears. The story he told corroborated that of the father. He showed a scar on the side of his face, which he said was the result of being struck by the stone. He said his father and the murdered man had quarreled frequently, and that Winsburg was always "picking on them." The father also stated that Winsburg was very quarrelsome.

A very diary which was taken to the scene of the tragedy early this morning, and will hold an important position today. Moylan was taken here about a year ago, on complaint of Winsburg, and was held. Stories are told of the prisoner Moylan, which are of a very disgusting nature. It is well that he has always carried a revolver, and that he has frequently saved him from the law by facing them with the weapon in his hand.

THE PARTNER TO THE CRIME.

All the parties are well known in Duwood. Winsburg, the victim of the awful tragedy, has been employed for a long time at the lower steel plant. His wife's maiden name was McDevitt. He leaves three children. He has always enjoyed a reputation as a peaceable law-abiding citizen.

Michael Moylan, the self-confessed murderer, was employed at the Wheeling steel plant until about a month ago, since which time he has been idle. He met with an accident about eighteen months ago by which a limb was broken, and the loss of work left him in very poor circumstances. He has a farm of twenty acres surrounding his home. His wife has been dead about six years, leaving a chance of five children, upon him. The oldest of these, who is with him, shared with last night's awful crime, is like his father. He has been employed for some time by McDevitt, the Duwood titan. Michael Moylan was generally regarded as a good, law-abiding citizen.

In the excited crowd which gathered about the jail last night, Mrs. Winsburg was given the story of Moylan, the general opinion being that the son was the real murderer.

My great-grandparents, Samuel Winesburg, 23, and Sarah Margaret Meisenhelder, 21, were married in Marshall County, West Virginia on July 20, 1875. Samuel was born in Ohio County and had been residing in Tyler County. Sarah Margaret was born in Marshall County and also resided there. Her parents were Christian Meisenhelder and Mary Ann Jones, who were married in Marshall County on April 19, 1841 [Marriage was probably in 1840 instead of 1841 because marriages were listed in order of time performed. The listing before and after is 1840. Census of 1840 shows this couple as a family.].

Sarah Margaret was a published poet.

Charles Meisenhelder, a brother of Sarah Margaret, served during the Civil War in Company "P" 6th West Virginia Infantry. At the age of 21, he mustered in 8 Aug 1862. Charles is buried at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Marshall County.