

When I was in college, I took a class on family history and for the final paper, I had to write my family's history. I wrote the paper on my mother's family. I sat down with my grandmother who told me stories that I had never heard. The paper only got a B+ but I was hooked and my family history project has continued to this day.

Eventually I began to work on my father's family, the Mayer's. My Grandfather, Charles Mayer was the youngest of 13 and died when I was 4 years old. All of my Great Aunts and Uncles predeceased him so the Mayer family was a mystery to me. As far as I knew, other than my immediate family, I had no relatives named Mayer.



I don't remember what led me to the St. Louis Church records but after a few afternoons of looking at microfilms at the library, I learned how connected to the church my family was. I found baptisms, weddings and funerals. I discovered that the funerals for my great-grandparents were held at St. Louis and most of my great aunts and uncles were married in the church. I learned a lot of names and dates from the church records.

It wasn't until I came across the St. Louis Dramatic Circle on a website that Chris Andrlle had, that I began to learn about how my ancestors lived. I found out that my great-uncle played the ghost in the Dramatic Circle's first production, Hamlet in 1887. The critic at the Buffalo Courier said "It is proper to say that especially good was

Mr. Otto Andrlé's impersonation of the melancholy Dane and Frank L. Mayer as the Ghost." Frank's brother John P. Mayer played King Claudius in the production. My Mayer family was finally beginning to be more than just names and dates.

The St. Louis Dramatic Circle was formed in 1885 in part to help raise funds to rebuild the church that burned earlier that year. Their first production was *Legend of the Catskills* in September 1885. It was a great success and many more young men joined the Dramatic Circle. Included were Frank and John Mayer. Among the 29 members who celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Dramatic Circle at the German-American Café were Frank L. Mayer, John P. Mayer, Sr., John P. Mayer, Jr. and Bernard Mayer. Over the years, the Mayer family appeared in productions of *Advice Gratia* (1892), *Robert Macaire* (1894), *The Bells* (1890), *The Traveling Salesman* (1917) and many more. Frank Mayer is also pictured with the St. Louis Choir in 1929 and John Mayer, Sr. would eventually own a bowling alley across Main Street at the corner of Main Street and Burton Alley.



Bernard F. Mayer as Col. Hardy.

There are many places in Buffalo that I can connect to my family but it is in St. Louis Church where I feel the strongest connection. It is here that over a hundred years ago that my family attended Mass and found their social life. The strongest picture that forms in my mind is that of my great-grandfather's funeral in 1917. I can picture his children following his casket down the main aisle as he left the church and community that meant so much to him and his family for the last time.

TO GIVE 3-ACT COMEDY

St. Louis Players in The Bride tonight at Teck

The Bride, a three-act mystery comedy by Stuart Olivier and George M. Middleton, will be presented tonight in the Teck Theater by the St. Louis Dramatic Circle. In the cast will be John A. Bralla, Clara Sendker Fischer, John P. Mayer, Jr., Walter J. Rick, Mary Barrett, Edward M. Simon, Frank L. Diebold, Edward A. Rick and Norman L. Kolb. Margaret Ryan directed the production.

St. Louis Dramatic Circle, associated with St. Louis Church, Main and Edward streets, is among the oldest amateur theatrical groups in the country. It was organized in 1885 and has presented at least 40 plays, classic as well as popular dramas and comedies. This year's production will be seen here for the first time. It was done first in New York in 1924, with Peggy Wood, later associated with George Arliss, in the leading role.

Officers of the circle are: President, Frank L. Diebold; vice-president, John G. Fischer; secretary, H. Edward Albert; treasurer, William H. Kiefer; business manager, Raymond Hoffman.

WILL PRESENT "NATHAN HALE"

The St. Louis Dramatic Circle is to present one of Clyde Fitch's masterpieces in the way of a dramatic production, "Nathan Hale," which is a powerful stage story of the American Revolution. The production is to be at the Teck Theater Wednesday night, May 8th. The permission to give the play without a royalty has been kindly given to the circle by Clyde Fitch.

This is the play in which Nat Goodwin and Maxime Elliott made a great success. The costumes for the play have been secured in Philadelphia. The cast for the production is to be as follows:

Nathan Hale.....Bernard F. Mayer
Guy Fitzroy.....Joseph J. Lux
Leut.-Col. Knowlton,

Louis Ludaescher
Captain Adams....Frank L. Diebold
Cunningham....Leon J. Armbruster
Ebenezer Lebanon.....Lucien Haas
Tom Adams..Emanuel F. Gollwitzer
The Jefferson Boy,

Master Eugene M. Diebold
The Talbot Boy,

Master Joseph J. Diebold
JasperAugust Neutrich
SentinelJohn Schweigert
1st soldier.....Frank L. Mayer
2d soldier.....Louis J. Roth
3d soldier.....Edward C. Dearing
Alice Adams....Miss Lillian Hertzog
Missress Knowlton,

Miss Bertha Riester
Angelica Knowlton,

Miss Clara Lienert
The Widow Chichester,
Miss Marion E. Jackson.