

Basic Detail Report

Viola

Date

1889

Primary Maker

Frederick Heers

Description

Frederick Heers first appears in the Minnesota Census in 1860, living in New Ulm Township, Brown County. In 1870, he is located in nearby Cottonwood Township, his occupation listed as a carpenter, born ca. 1828 in Hanover, married to Dora, born ca. 1840 also in Hanover, with children Ernst, born in Minnesota ca. 1860, and Charles, born ca. 1862. In 1880 he is listed in New Ulm City under the name "Fritz," a diminutive of Frederick, with the occupation of a joiner. His son Charles is an apprentice joiner, and Ernst is a clerk in a store. There are other men with the surname Heers listed in the 1870 and 1880 Censuses as born in Hanover, Prussia, and Germany between ca. 1826 and ca. 1847, and it is possible that Frederick Heers had relatives who also immigrated to the United States. These men include Henry Heers (b. in Hanover ca. 1830) working as a cabinet maker in Des Moines, Iowa in 1870, William Heers (b. ca. 1839 in Prussia (1870), Hanover (1880)) working as a shoemaker in Des Moines in 1870 and 1880, William Heers (b. ca. 1828 in Hanover (1870) Austria (1880)) working as a farmer in Cottonwood, Minnesota in 1870 and 1880, Carl Heers (b. ca. 1832 in Hanover) working as a traveling agent in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1870 and a collector for a newspaper in 1880, Henry Heers (b. ca. 1847 in Prussia) working as a farm laborer in Allen, Ohio in 1870, C. F. Heers (b. ca. 1839 in Germany) working as a laborer in Denver, Colorado in 1880, George Heers (b. ca. 1844 in Germany) working as a cabinet maker in Leavenworth, Kansas in 1880. Frederick Heers is not documented in Eric Wenberg's books. See information on German-Bohemians in the New Ulm area, in file. Though they lived among German Bohemians, the Heers family was Prussian. Carmen Langel of the National Czech and Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa mentioned that Czechs, German Bohemians, and Germans tended to live near one another because of the common German language among them, even if they were of different ethnicities. (Telephone conversation 2/13/04) Top: two-piece, quarter-cut spruce: medium grain broadening toward the flanks; small dowel hole through top into bottom block on treble side of center joint Back: two-piece, quarter-cut maple: very narrow curl descending very slightly from the center joint; small button; large maple dowel through button into neck heel on bass side of center joint Ribs: quarter-cut maple: very narrow curl Head and neck: maple: prominent, very narrow curl; pegbox with shoulders; hole of 10 mm diameter cut in pegbox behind D peg; scroll and pegbox chamfers painted black Edging: prominent edges; chamfers painted black Purfling: light outside strips; outside strips significantly faded on back Varnish: light orange-brown Fingerboard: ebony; beveled; crudely fit, probably later Nut: ebony; replacement installed but not fitted Tailpiece: none on viola: see accessories Pegs: four ebony with mother-of-pearl eyes Saddle: ebony; set into top; finished with same varnish as body Endpin: missing F-holes: inside edges stained black Linings: spruce; extend fully

over corner blocks Corner blocks: spruce Top block: spruce; later Bottom block: spruce; small; upper and lower edges chamfered at center of joint with top and back

Dimensions

Total viola length: 640 mm Back length: 389 mm Upper bout width: 183 mm Center bout width: 119 mm Lower bout width: 230 mm Upper rib height: 29-31 mm Center rib height: 31-32 mm Lower rib height: 32 mm Stop length: 215 mm Vibrating string length: 359 mm Neck length (nut to ribs): 144 mm