

William Gunther – Potter

William Gunther was born in 1797 in Nassau Germany. He came to Milwaukee in 1852 or 1853 and worked at the Milwaukee Stoneware factory as a potter. He had three children – Theodore, Maria, and Peter. Maria came to Milwaukee with him from Nassau, along with Weimar Remy. Maria and Weimar were married in May 1854.¹

Gunther probably originated the “Maxfield flower” decoration that John and Amos Maxfield consistently used for the five years they owned the pottery. Gunther worked at the Maxfield pottery from 1853 until it closed in 1858.² The only other potter we could identify who worked long-term for the Maxfield’s was John Stoeckert (aka “Stakert”), but Stoeckert did not arrive in Milwaukee until 1854. Gunther’s “Maxfield flower” was like the Thomas Williams flower more compact. Gunther rendered it consistently for the entire five years the Maxfield’s owned the pottery.

When Maxfield closed the pottery, Gunther joined his son-in-law Weimar Remy at the Charles Hermann & Co. pottery. Around 1860, Gunther’s other sons, Theodore and Peter moved to Milwaukee from Detroit. They worked at the Hermann pottery for about four years before Theodore moved to Sheboygan to start his own pottery.

In 1860 Gunther lived with John Stoeckert and Weimar Remy near the Hermann pottery according to the Census for Milwaukee.³

William Gunther eventually moved to Sheboygan, died, and is buried there.



Figure 1 The Maxfield Flower on the left was probably painted by William Gunther between 1853 and 1858 when the Milwaukee Stoneware Factory closed. The flower on the right was probably painted by Thomas Williams between 1848 and 1853.

¹ Milwaukee County, Marriage Certificate for Weimar Remy and Maria Gunther dated 5/1/1854

² Milwaukee City Directories – 1851/52, 1854/55, 1856/57, 1857/58, 1858

³ U.S. Census for the City of Milwaukee 1860