

THAT SCANDALOUS LAWSUIT - September 1878

Divorce was uncommon, but not unheard of; however, this case was a suit for alienation of affection, filed in an effort to head off a divorce. Descendents of Mary and John recall references to a domestic dispute in the family, but never heard the details. This just might explain the situation. It is important to remember that most German fathers ruled their families with a stern hand and accepted no challenges to their authority. A recently married son might have rebelled against his father, a situation that was not to be tolerated. You have to admire the gumption and courage for a young wife, just 20 years old, to take such a drastic action as this.

Case No. 3334, was filed Sept. 25, 1878 -- Mary Schaedler vs. August Schaedler. *Mary claimed that* "On or about the 6th day of September 1876, after a long and affectionate courtship, one John Schaedler who is a son of the defendant, intermarried with her and they, the said Plaintiff and said John have all the time since lived together as husband and wife, until the 24th day of September 1878, during all of which time she had in every way demeaned herself as an affectionate virtuous and dutiful wife, and she has borne to the said John Schiedler a son, yet a child, less than two months old. From the sickness of which with she has not yet fully recovered, and she further says that she is and since her marriage, has been, of delicate health principally caused by said marriage and maternity. Thus rendering the services, care, protection and support of her said husband greatly necessary to her.

She says that the said defendant has ever since her said marriage, had great influence over her said husband, being his father.

[Her husband] being only of youthful age [around 23 years old] and dependent upon said defendant for employment, and said defendant [his father, August] being wealthy and the owner of a large landed estate, said John expects there from, and defendant expects and has promised to give to said John by deed or will, a large patrimony, and said John is dependent upon said August in large measure for the maintenance of himself and his family.

And plaintiff says that said defendant, taking advantage of his said paternal authority influence and patronage, has willfully, corruptly and maliciously, from the date of said marriage, been steadily alienating the affections of her said husband from her by denouncing her, reducing her character, slandering her, and threatening to withhold from said John any palimony to which he would otherwise be entitled until he has wholly succeeded in deducing and estranging the affections of her said husband from her.



August Schaedler built his first home around 1856 (the wooden part on the right side). The stone portion was built in 1873. To the east is the Schaedler Winery, built in 1866.

And on said 24th day of September 1878, said John, being so influenced, entered, acted and commanded by the defendant along with said defendant, both acting together willfully and maliciously, turned her out of the house and home of herself and husband and compelled her to leave with her child and a large part of her personal effects;

and so ... influenced by the said defendant, the said John has wholly abandoned her ...”
The baby, mentioned above, was George Washington Schaedler, born just months earlier on July 25.

John’s father, August, was apparently trying to get a divorce for his son, even though there was no cause or grounds.

“She says that said estrangement and enticing away of her husband is active and effectual so that said John is continually cursing and abusing her and he will no longer live with her and she can no longer live with him and he utterly refuses and has cause to live or cohabit with her or support her.

She says that her health being so poor, the support which she is entitled to have from said John is worth \$500 per year and the attention to her child due from him is worth \$500 per year, that by reason of said wrongs, her health has been greatly shortened and reduced, that she has lost said John’s affections. Her mind and body have suffered ...to her damage \$10,000.00, for which she asks a judgment against said defendant.” *A summons was issued for August Schedler on September 25, 1878, but no further information appears in the file. The case was marked as disposed on December 4, 1878. It appears that the case was either settled or dismissed as John and Mary continued to live together and had another child in 1881.*

From the book, Kelleys Island 1877-1884 – The fire, the Great Grooves & a mysterious disappearance by Leslie Korenko