

Francis M. Williams House
656 Bush Avenue
Railroad Island

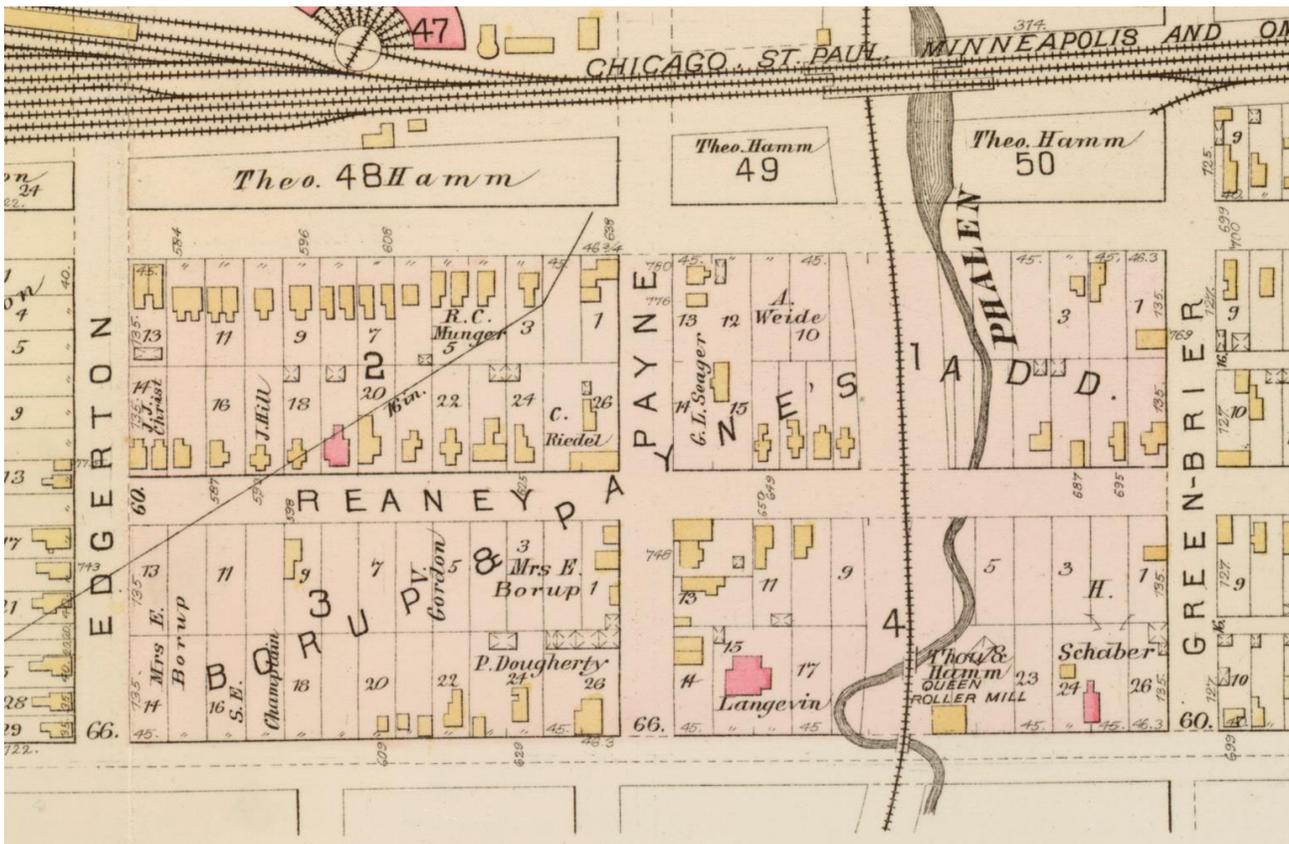


Francis M. Williams born 1858 in Minnesota, the son of David and Cynthia Williams both early pioneer farmers to the territory born 1831 in Ohio came to Minnesota in 1856 Omsted County . Francis and his older brother moved to St. Paul and became Teamsters with their band of horses hauling anything and everything. Francis even got sued once for running over Mr. Gilyatrick with his team of horses according to the Daily Globe Newspaper 1889. His brother Albert was a foreman at Morrison's livery stable on fifth street between Robert and Minnesota, were he reportable got kicked in the face by an angry horse according to the Daily Globe Newspaper 1897. Francis purchased 5 adjoining (lots 6 thru10) in1880 and built his home on Lot 10 Block 1 of Borup and Paynes Addition to St Paul in 1884 over looking Swede Hollow. The original address was 656 Fauquier Street that was later changed to Bush Avenue in honer of a 3M executive. He purchased the property from Charles A. B. Weide who was a land spectacular as well as Realtor for many of his properties at that time. Francis eventually moved to Iowa in 1889, Willow City and married Harriet H. born 1868 from Missouri and had three sons. He was listed as postmaster (Census 1910)

656 Bush Avenue is now a Multi Family House and on the Architecturally Historic

Properties listing in St. Paul, RA SPC 0460. (Mead and Hunt Architects LLC). The two structures have 2742 Square Feet, Ramsey County parcel ID number 292922430040 and it is currently owned by City of St. Paul HRA. There has been an environmental study preformed on the structure (Midwest Environmental LLC). Police reports show a murder took place in the property in 2008.

Architectural style is Front Gable and Other, meaning primitive construction. In Larry Millett's book he calls the design mildly Italianate and appears to be one of the best preserved of its era in the neighborhood. Front Gable houses contain front porches single story or a story-and-a-half. Many features and components of the house suggest much earlier construction however, that of the arched small pane sash windows 4 over 4 and the arched transom over the front door with a set back. The house has had several additions added over the years that confuse the original property. The back house on the property is a Four Square two story with a hip roof and center chimney also of primitive construction with a outside stair case going to the second story.



Plat Map of St. Paul 1885
Showing lot 6 thru 10 of block 1
Borup & Paynes Addition



Pictures of 656 Bush Avenue circa 1950
Courtesy of Mr Jim Sazevich

Details on these pictures indicate that the property had three rental units on 658 Bush and two rental units for the back house, judging by the three post boxes on the 658 picture. The porches on both houses still intact at that time. Lot 10 of Block 1 was 45Ft wide, so it is possible for both houses could be situated on the same lot. The four square two story house on the back lot is the one in question about being moved from Swede Hollow. Further hands on investigation will be required thou.



Picture of 656 Back House as it looks in 2015
The other two sides of the house are badly neglected
House believed to be moved from Swede Hollow
The house is facing north

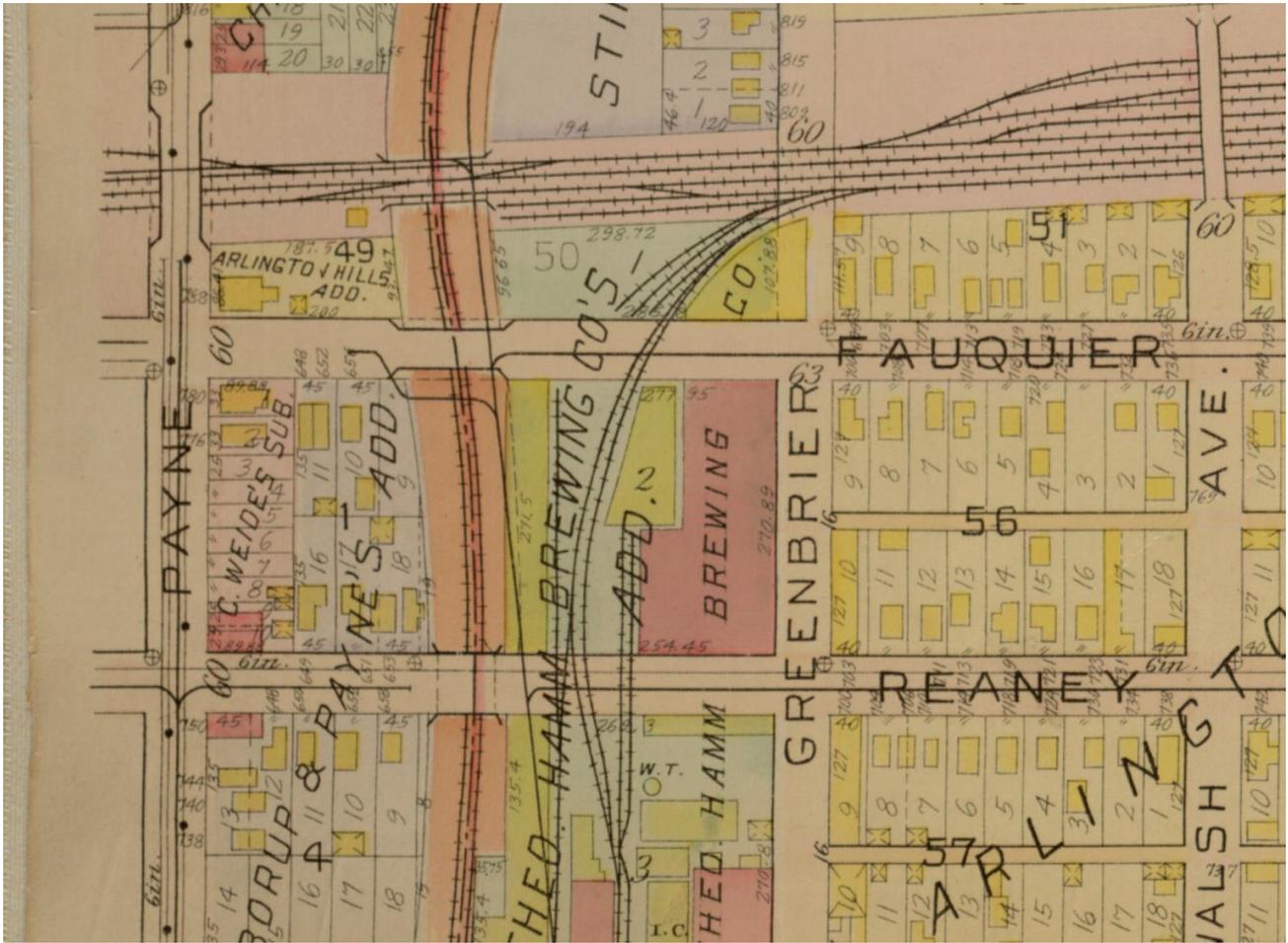


Picture of Swede Hollow depicting the house in question
circa 1912 MNHS

Picture courtesy of Mr. Jim Sazevich

House is facing west

Picture was taken just north and a little east of the
seventh street tunnels on Culvert Street



Plat Map of St Paul 1916
Lot 10 block 1
shows the back house on the property



Larger picture of the Back House
circa 1950's
Back house moved to lot sometime between
1912 and 1915



656 Bush Avenue side view 2015



656 Bush Avenue back of house
with multiple additions 2015

Sources

St Paul Daily Globe newspaper 1882-1896
Minnesota State census 1860-1910
History of St. Paul and Ramsey County
Iowa State census 1910
Minnesota Historical Society
Plat Maps of St. Paul 1884-1916
Guide to the Twin Cities, Larry Millett, Published 2007
Mead and Hunt Architects LLC
http://www.historicsaintpaul.org/files/historic_resources_inventory.pdf
Midwest Environmental Consulting LLC
<http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View/68133>
St Paul police reports
http://www.twincities.com/minnesota/ci_8049422

Courtesy of
Michael Pennig
Railroad Island Historian