

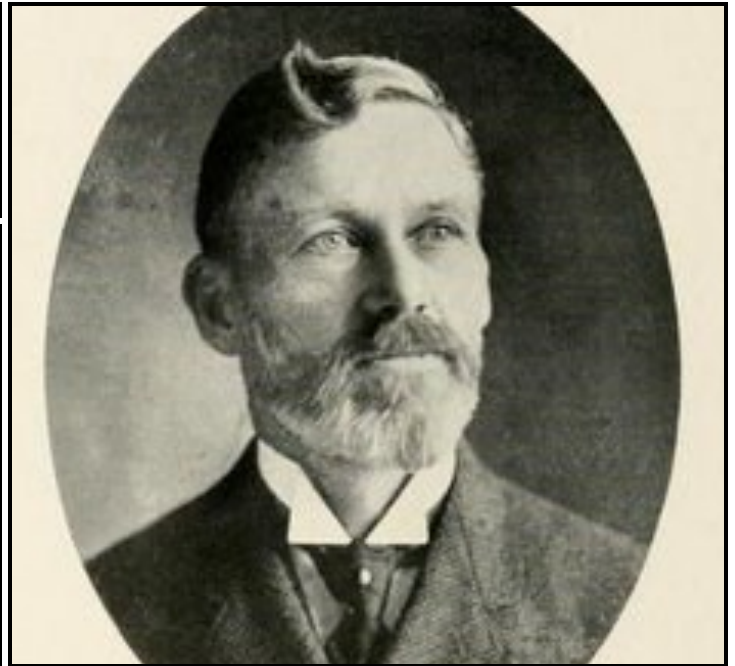
## CANAWLERS AT REST

### JOHN CLAUS PETERS

Find-A-Grave 63606010

**b. June 12, 1848**  
**d. December 1, 1922**

**By Carolyn I. Schmidt**



John Claus Peters was born on June 11, 1848 to Claus and Caroline Eberlin Peters in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. His mother Caroline was born December 14, 1829 in Munich, Germany. His father Claus Niklaus was born July 14, 1822 in Hanover, Germany. Claus and Caroline came to Fort Wayne in 1841 and were married on October 5, 1847. Claus was a builder and contractor in this city until his death in 1849. He was buried in Concordia Lutheran Cemetery in Ft. Wayne.

John was about a year old and needed a father. On July 16, 1850 his mother Caroline married William B. Paul, a boat captain on the Wabash & Erie Canal. The 1850 census spells Paul as Powell and lists John Peters age 2. William and Caroline Paul had eight more children. John's half siblings were:

- Paul, Henry C. (1851-1933)
- Paul, Caroline (1853-1931)
- Paul, Charlotte C.W. (1855-1940)
- Paul, Friederika (1858-1909)
- Paul, Christina W. "Anna" (1863-1916)
- Paul, William (1865-1902)
- Paul, Charles A. (1868-1947)
- Paul, Augusta (1870-1937)

John received his early education in Ft. Wayne. The 1860 census shows him at age 12 living with a farmer named Charles Legand. Then in 1862 he began learning the trade of piano and cabinet maker. In 1865 at age 17 he went to New York City and was employed in this occupation for four years until 1869.

He came back to Ft. Wayne and in 1870 was living in a hotel run by Henry Rudelshaner according to that year's census that also lists him as a cabinet maker with \$5,000. Then he started in the hardware business in 1872. Prior to 1873 he was also a partner with Charles Paper and Joseph Schaffer in the Peters Box and Lumber Company. It sold oak, ash, walnut and poplar as well as veneers, wood pulleys and furniture.

On June 12, 1873 John Claus Peters, age 25, married Mary Myers, age 20, of Ft. Wayne. Mary, the daughter of Frederick Myers, was born on June 22, 1853. Between 1875-1889 the Peters had eight children:

- Peters, Frederick Christian (1875-1936)
- Peters, William Frederick 1878-1941)
- Peters, Otto John (1879-1906)
- Peters, Arthur Henry (1882-1957)
- Peters, Flora Wilhelmina Caroline (1883-1961)
- Peters, Paul William (1885-1957)
- Peters, Bertha Sophia Caroline (1887-1975)
- Peters, Helen Julia (1889-1967)

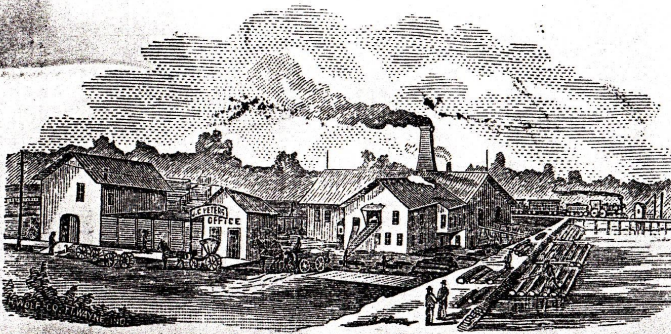
The Ft. Wayne City Directory of 1875 lists John's residence as 16 W. Jefferson and shows him as owner of a saw mill and lumber yard on the corner of Osage and the Canal Basin. The saw mill received rafts of logs via the Wabash & Erie Canal and St. Joe Feeder until the canal was sold in 1876. It shipped its finished products by rail or canal until the canal was closed. A bill of sale with a drawing of this establishment can be seen on the next page.



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N. B. - Examine carefully, and if not correct report immediately, or claims will not be allowed.

## CIRCULAR AND BAND SAW MILLS.



Fort Wayne, Ind., March 2 1897

M Clifford Bros

Bought of JOHN C. PETERS

Manufacturer of all kinds of

Quartered Oak and Ash, Walnut, Poplar

CABINET AND RAILROAD LUMBER.

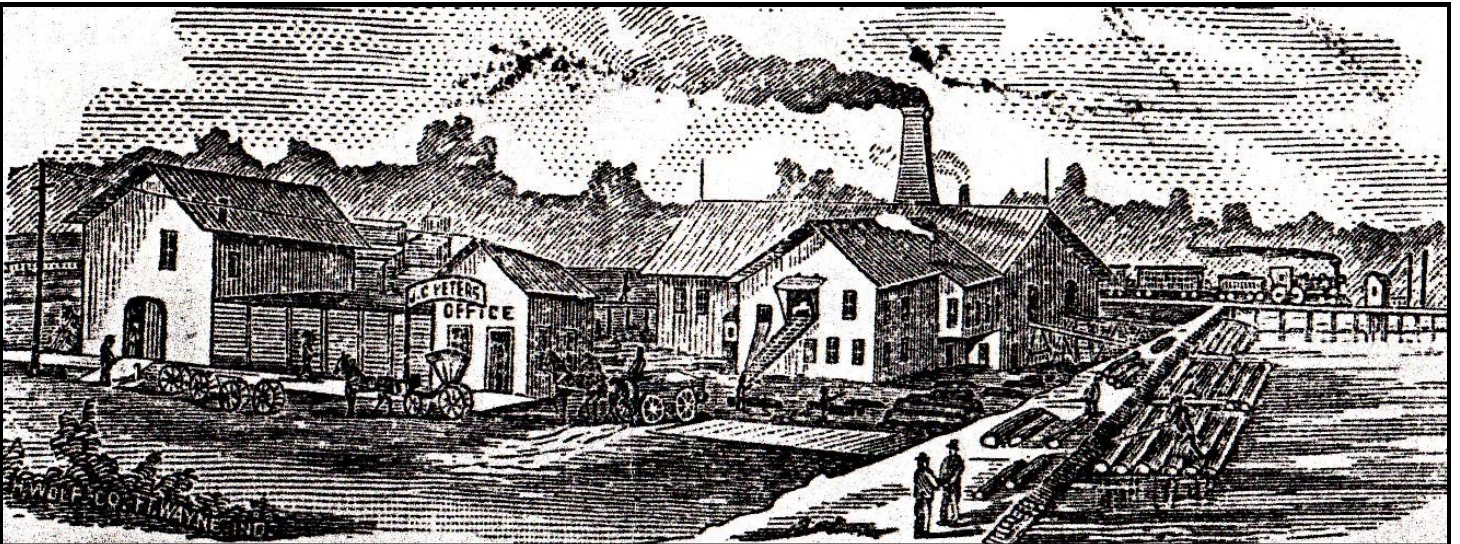
TERMS CASH.

Office and Mill, Cor. Osage Street and Canal Basin.

SAWING DONE TO ORDER

|        |    |        |              |    |             |
|--------|----|--------|--------------|----|-------------|
| Feb 28 | 20 | 12     | 6 cords Wood | 70 | \$8.40      |
| "      | "  | 60 3/4 | "            | "  | 42.50       |
| "      | "  | 23 1/3 | "            | "  | 16.34       |
|        |    |        |              |    | <u>\$67</u> |

Old letterheads and bills often have engravings of businesses on them. They give us clues as to what was located along the canal. As seen here the Clifford Bros. ordered \$67 of cord wood from John C. Peters in Ft. Wayne, Indiana on February 28 and were billed on March 2, 1897. The saw mill received rafts of logs via the W & E Canal and St. Joe Feeder as seen on the right of the picture. It probably shipped the lumber it produced by the railroad seen in the back of the picture or by canal boat until the canal was sold in 1876, filled in, and railroad tracks laid on it. The mill was located on the Canal Basin at Osage Street west of the St. Marys Aqueduct. It says J. C. Peters Office on the small building in the center of the engraving by H. Wolf Co. of Ft. Wayne, Ind. A wagon loaded with lumber is near the office while another one is being loaded to the right of the office. A horse with carriage awaits its owner.



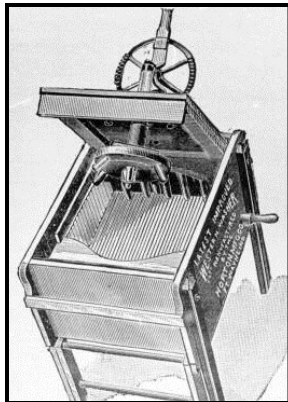


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He sold the Peters Box and Lumber Company. He then started the John C. Peters Lumber Company where he specialized in quartered oak lumber.



John then became the manager of the Horton Manufacturing Company, which was incorporated in 1883 with a capital stock of \$30,000 and which used space in his lumber company. He, along with others, began manufacturing the area's first mechanical washing machines. This venture was so successful that by 1924 Horton Manufacturing supplied half the washing machines sold in the world.



The architectural firm of Wing & Mahurin designed a Richardsonian Romanesque house for John and his family and it was built in 1885 for \$8,000 at 832 W. Wayne St. in Ft. Wayne. It had a stone foundation with brick walls accented by rock-faced stone lintels and string courses and a Syrian-arched entrance on its outside. It had seven intricately carved wooden fireplace surrounds, moldings and stair rails, hardwood floors, and stained glass windows on the inside. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 17, 1980.

In 1886 John acquired the Wayne Hotel on Columbia Street in Ft. Wayne. It had 128 rooms that were furnished with the finest accessories of the day. It became the city's leading hotel at the time. He managed it for a number of years and owned it until his death. He was the president

Peters Home built in 1885 Photo Bob Schmidt



of the Peters Hotel Company.

In 1887 the Indiana Machine Works was organized and incorporated. John was its president.

In 1903 Mrs. John Peters was a delegate to the Public Welfare meeting in Indiana. In 1904 John was on the State Board of Agriculture representing Fort. Wayne.

The 1920 census lists John's occupation as president of a Washing Machine Company at age 71. Living with him are his wife Mary and children Fred, Arthur, and Paul.



John Claus Peters died at 4:15 a.m. on December 1, 1922 at his home on 832 W. Wayne at the age of 74. He had been in poor health the last year to a complication of diseases.

He had risen honorably as one of the foremost citizens of Fort Wayne through his character, his unfailing reliability in business ventures and his energy and enterprise as a manufacturer. He was a director of the Old National Bank and was associated with many other businesses in the city. He was a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

He was survived by his wife, Mary Peters; four sons, Frederick, Arthur, William and Paul all of Fort Wayne; and three daughters Mrs. Philip F. Bursley and Mrs. Arthur Boak, of Ann Arbor Michigan and Mrs. Neil Aldrich McKay of Ft. Wayne; two half-brothers Henry C. Paul and

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Charles Paul; and three half-sisters Mrs. Caroline Storm, moved her to Los Angeles. Mrs. Charlotte Kern and Mrs. Henry Lepper.

Funeral services were held in John's home at 3:30 p.m. on Christmas Day, Monday, December 25, 1922 with the Rev. William F. Moll officiating. He was privately bur-



ied in Section I Lot 15 in Ft. Wayne's Lindenwood Cemetery.

His wife Mary Susan (Meyers) Peters passed away on March 18, 1925. She is buried in Section I Lot 15 of Lindenwood Cemetery.

John and Mary's son, Frederick Christian Peters, and his wife Elizabeth, were parents of three children. Their youngest, Jane Alice Peters (12-6-1908, 1-16-1942) was better known as Carole Lombard, the zany actress who appeared in screw-ball comedies and was the highest paid Hollywood star in the 1930s. She was born in Ft. Wayne. When her parents' marriage became strained, her mother

At age 12 Jane had a small part in a film. At age sixteen Jane was discovered, signed a contract with Fox Film Corporation, and changed her name to Carole Lombard. Fox dropped her after her face was scarred in an accident. She then contracted with Paramount Pictures.



"Carole Lombard"  
Jane Alice Peters

She began appearing with William Powell in films. She married him in June 1931. In 1932 she was cast in a film with Clark Gable. Even though she kept appearing with Powell in films, they had marital problems and were divorced in 1933.

In 1936 Carole and Clark Gable were reunited at a Hollywood Party and their romance began. Carole left Paramount Pictures and became an independent actress. In 1938 she made her only Technicolor film. Gable's wife Rhea Langham finally agreed to divorce him for \$500,000. On March 29, 1939 Carole and Clark were married.

Although most of Carole's roles were comedic, she did have a few serious ones. During World War II Carole returned to Indiana for a war defense bond rally where she was able to raise over \$2 million in one night. She, her mother, and Clark's press agent were scheduled to return to Los Angeles by train, but Carole was anxious to get home. She decided to fly. Her plane crashed into "Double Up Peak" in the Potosi Mountain on January 16, 1942 and she

### Sources:

Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center, Lindenwood Cemetery Burials 1800-1975

Ancestry.com Public Member Trees

Peters, Arthur Henry

Peters, Bertha

Peters, Frederick C.

Peters, Flora W.

Peters, Helen J.

Peters, John Claus

Peters, Otto J.

Peters, Paul William

Peters, William Frederick

Find-A-Grave

Paul, Caroline Eberlin (Peters)

Peters, Claus

Peters, John Claus

Peters, Mary Susan (Meyers)

Fort Wayne City Directory 1875

Fort Wayne *Daily News* May 18, 1905

Fort Wayne *News-Sentinel* December 1, 1922 obituary John Claus Peters

U.S. Federal Census 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1910, 1920

Wikipedia

John Claus Peters House

Lombard, Carole (Jane Alice Peters)

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| John C. Peters's Family                      |            |               |            |               |            |              |
|--|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Name   | Birth      | Place         | Death      | Place         | Marriage   | Place        |
| Eberlin, Caroline Catherine                  | 12-14-1829 | Munich, Ger   | 9-26- 1908 | Ft. Wayne, IN | 10-05-1847 | Allen Co. IN |
| m1. Peters, Claus Niklaus                    | 7-14-1822  | Hanover, Ger  | 1849       | Ft. Wayne, IN | 10-05-1847 | Allen Co. IN |
| <b>Peters, John Claus</b>                    | 6-12-1848  | Ft. Wayne, IN | 12-01-1922 | Ft. Wayne, IN | 6-12-1873  | Allen Co. IN |
| m. Mary Susan Meyers                         | 6-22-1853  | Adams Co. IN  | 3-18-1925  | Ft. Wayne, IN | 6-12-1873  | Allen Co. IN |
| Peters, Frederick Christian                  | 10-28-1875 | Allen Co. IN  | 2-20-1936  | Allen Co. IN  | 4-02-1902  | Allen Co. IN |
| m. Knight, Elizabeth K.                      | 1876       |               | 1942       |               | 4-02-1902  | Allen Co. IN |
| Peters, Frederic Charles                     | 1902       |               | 1978       |               |            |              |
| Peters, John Stuart                          | 1905       |               | 1956       |               |            |              |
| Peters, Jane Alice " <u>Carole Lombard</u> " | 1908       |               | 1-16-1942  | Clark Co. NV  |            |              |
| Peters, William Frederick                    | 12-02-1878 | Allen Co. IN  | 5-07-1941  | Ft. Wayne, IN |            |              |
| m. Booker, Florence Mallory                  | 1890       |               |            |               |            |              |
| Peters, Otto John                            | 10-00-1879 | Allen Co. IN  | 12-13-1906 | Ft. Wayne, IN |            |              |
| Peters, Arthur Henry                         | 2-02-1882  | Allen Co. IN  | 2-01-1957  | Cook Co. IL   |            |              |
| m1. Houck, Idell M.                          | 1878       |               | 1958       |               |            |              |
| m2. Babcock, Mary                            | 1897       |               | 1968       |               |            |              |
| Peters, Flora Wilhelmina Caroline            | 9-18-1883  | Allen Co. IN  | 7-20-1961  | Ann Arbor, MI | 9-10-1910  | Allen Co. IN |
| m. Bursley, Philip Everette                  | 1880       |               | 1968       |               |            |              |
| Peters, Paul William                         | 10-01-1885 | Allen Co. IN  | 1-29-1957  | Indiana       |            |              |
| Peters, Bertha Sophia Caroline               | 8-02-1887  | Allen Co. IN  | 1-00-1975  | Ft. Wayne, IN |            |              |
| m. McKay, Neil Aldridge                      | 1886       |               | 1971       |               |            |              |
| Peters, Helen Julia                          | 9-08-1889  | Allen Co. IN  | 3-09-1967  | Tucson, AZ    |            |              |
| m. Boak, Arthur Edward                       | 1888       |               | 1962       |               |            |              |
| m2. Paul, William B.                         | 1824       |               | 1907       |               | 7-16-1850  | Allen Co. IN |
| Paul, Henry C.                               | 1851       |               | 1933       |               |            |              |
| Paul, Caroline                               | 1853       |               | 1931       |               |            |              |
| m. Storm                                     |            |               |            |               |            |              |
| Paul, Charlotte C. W.                        | 1855       |               | 1940       |               |            |              |
| m. Kern                                      |            |               |            |               |            |              |
| Paul, Friederika                             | 1858       |               | 1909       |               |            |              |
| m. Diederich                                 |            |               |            |               |            |              |
| Paul, Christiana (Anna) W.                   | 1863       |               | 1916       |               |            |              |
| m. Baade                                     |            |               |            |               |            |              |
| Paul, William                                | 1865       |               | 1902       |               |            |              |
| Paul, Charles A.                             | 1868       |               | 1947       |               |            |              |
| Paul, Augusta                                | 1870       |               | 1937       |               |            |              |
| m. Lepper                                    |            |               |            |               |            |              |