

Wenk Brothers Tenant House

1211 Winnie (Avenue G)

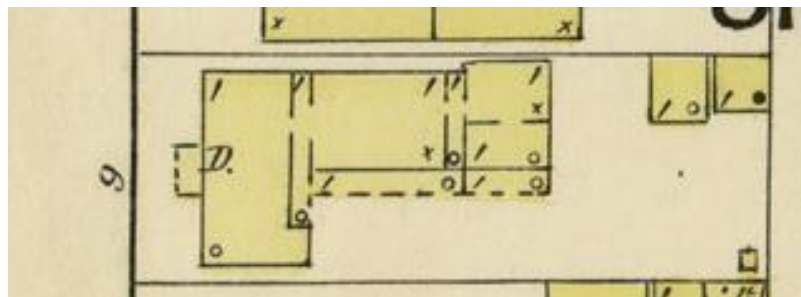
Lot 4/ Block 312

Built 1886, addition 1911

Galveston merchants Jacob and Joseph Wenk built this house in 1886 for use as tenant property. The Wenks were born in Quebec, Canada, in 1844 and 1851, respectively. City directories included Jacob's presence in Galveston by 1859 and noted he worked as a clerk at Grossmeyer & Company dry goods firm on Market Street. In 1870, Joseph was noted for the first time in the city directories. The directory recorded Joseph's employment as a clerk at Sonnenthal & Wenk, a dry goods firm formed by his brother and Jacob Sonnenthal.

In 1886, when the Wenk brothers built the tenant house on Winnie, Jacob Wenk resided on Postoffice Street between 14th and 15th. His storefront, which catered to men's furnishing goods (hats, caps, shoes, etc.) was located on Market Street between 21st and 22nd. Joseph Wenk resided on Market Street between 11th and 12th Streets and his storefront, which also catered to men, was located on Tremont Street (23rd) between Market and Postoffice.

The Wenk Tenant House was originally a one-story frame building. The 1889 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map recorded the footprint of the frame building which had a small porch at the entrance as well as a large back porch that ran the full length of the western rear elevation.



1889

In 1892, harbor pilot Captain Sebastian Drouet and his wife, Josephine, purchased 1211 Winnie and continued to utilize the property as a tenant house. Born in 1836 in France, Sebastian Drouet immigrated to America with his family as a young boy, settling in Galveston in 1843. A year later, in 1844, Josephine Chambard was born in France. The Chambard family moved to Galveston by 1859. The city directory that year lists both the Drouet and the Chambard families living just four blocks apart.

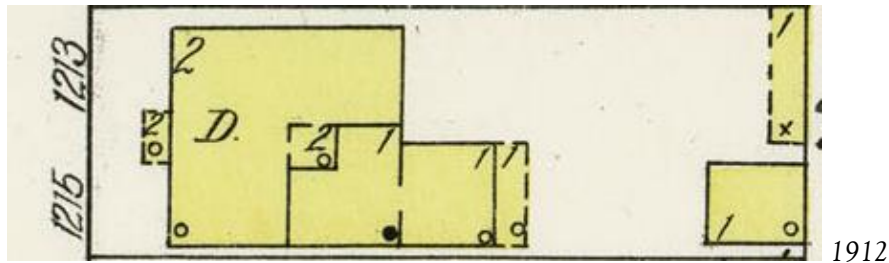
A Confederate veteran of the Civil War, Sebastian married Josephine shortly after the war ended. By 1880, they resided on the southwest corner of Sealy and 10th Street but as their family grew,

they moved to 1803 Avenue O. After Sebastian died in 1898, Josephine built a pair of houses on the southwest corner of Avenue K and 19th Street. When completed, she moved her family into one of the houses and used the second as rental property. She maintained ownership of the Winnie tenant house until 1903 when she sold it to William Knapp. Josephine later moved to Houston where she died in 1915.



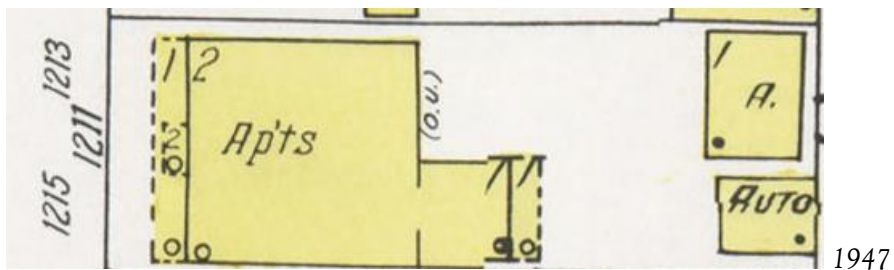
1200 block of Winnie looking southeast from 13th Street in 1906. With the M. C. Bowden house (1227 Winnie) in the foreground, the photograph also captures 1211 Winnie (far left) in the original one-story configuration.

William and Adalaide Knapp purchased the property from Josephine Drouet in 1903. Adalaide's father was Bernard Ganter, a pioneer Galveston resident and jeweler who resided next door (east). In 1911, the Knapps enlarged the house with a first floor addition. As a result, the 1886 house is interpreted today as the building's second floor. The historic insurance record for 1211 Winnie, dated 19 May 1911 noted the first floor addition was about three days from completion. The record also noted the house was elevated on new 2' brick piers and contained nine rooms, two halls, one tiled bathroom, one closet plus a kitchen pantry, and three porches. The 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map recorded the change made in 1911 and identified the frame building as a two-story dwelling with a one-story addition on the southwest side.



William Joseph Knapp was born in 1870 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He moved to Galveston in the early 1890s and married Adelaide Seraphina Ganter in 1895. Knapp supported Adelaide and their family, which grew to include four children by 1901, through his printing firm Knapp Brothers, formed with brother Oscar. Before he purchased 1211 Winnie, the Knapp family resided at 818 Church. After he purchased the Winnie house in 1903, he relocated the family from Church to Winnie and used the house as their primary residence. The growth of the family likely precipitated the 1911 first floor addition as by 1910 the Knapp household consisted of eight people and included Adelaide's elderly father, Bernard.

After William's death in 1927, Adelaide maintained the family residence on Winnie. She rented rooms to boarders during the 1930s and by the 1940s was matron of an apartment house. The conversion from single family to multi-family was completed by 1947 when Sanborn Maps released that year recorded the building's use as an apartment house. The map also illustrated the building's original address (1213-1215 Winnie) and noted the formal address of 1211 as well as the expansion of the downstairs porch and addition of a one-story automobile garage in the southeast corner of the lot, added in 1940.



Although Adelaide maintained ownership of 1211 Winnie until 1952, during World War II, she moved in with a brother and eventually relocated to Los Angeles, where she died in 1960.

Charles Bernard Ganter (1904-1971), Adelaide's nephew, assumed ownership of 1211 Winnie in 1952. Ganter and wife, Christine Sumter (1910-2002), resided on 26th Street. After they purchased the property, they claimed one apartment as their residence and rented out the other apartments to tenants. The Ganters maintained ownership until 1963. Ownership of the Wenk Tenant

House changed multiple times after 1963 with the majority of owners continuing to utilize the house as rental property.



Charles and Christine Ganter, c1955. (Source ancestry.com)

Chain of Ownership

Brothers Jacob and Joseph Wenk, original owners.

Joseph Wenk to Captain Sebastian and Josephine Drouet, 10 March 1892

Josephine Drouet to William J. and Adelaide Knapp, 5 February 1903

Adelaide Knapp to Charles B. & Cristine Ganter, 10 November 1952

Ganter to Leonard Charles & Isabell A. Howard, 17 May 1963

Howard to Steve and Martin Greenberg, 12 March 1970

Greenberg & Greenberg LLC to Jesse Albert Massengale, 7 April 1972

Massengale to George H. Childress, 4 December 1984

Childress to Thomas and Karla Wild, 13 June 1985

Wild to Stephen and Cynthia Strum, 31 August 1995

Strum to Lisa Marie Allen, 28 March 2000

Allen to Ronald Foster, 20 May 2002

Foster to Nicolas J. Knapik, 4 May 2005

Knapik to SLK & Associates LLC, 15 March 2017

SLK LLC to Current Owner, 21 May 2021

City Directory Search

City Directories did not include cross directories until 1908, so identifying early tenants of the house is difficult. Addresses also evolved over time which adds to the difficulty. That example can be seen in the address noted for Jacob Wenk- 1405 Postoffice, but identified as 515 Postoffice in 1884.

1884-1885/ 1886-1887

Jacob Wenk, gents furnishings, 165 Market btw 21st, 22nd, r. 515 Postoffice btw 14th, 15th

Joseph Wenk, gents furnishings, 153 Tremont btw Market, Postoffice, r. 665 Market btw 11th, 12th

1890

Sebastian Drouet, pilot, office over 2004 Strand, r. sw cor Avenue O, 18th

Jacob Wenk, gents furnishings, 153 Tremont btw Market, Postoffice, r. 1405 Postoffice btw 14th, 15th

1899-1900

Josephine Drouet (widow Sebastian), r. 1908 Ave K

Elbert C. Lamb, groceries 2609 Market, r. 1211 Winnie

William Williams (c), laborer, r. rear 1211 Winnie

The letter c in parenthesis meant "colored" and identified African Americans.

1901-1902

Bruno Rohner (Green & Rohner), r. 1211 Winnie. 4
Green & Rohner (William A Green, Bruno Rohner), proprs West Market bakery 2705 Market
Robert O. Dixon, city solicitor Moore Bros., bds 1211 Winnie
Moore Bros., groceries, liquor, feed 1918 Market
William J. Knapp (Knapp Bros), r. 704 10th, corner Winnie

1905

William J. Knapp (Knapp Bros), r. 1211 Winnie. 6
Knapp Brothers (Oscar, Lawrence and William Knapp), commercial printers and stationers, 2207
Mechanic

1911-1912

William J. Knapp (Knapp Bros), r. 1211 Winnie. 6. Phone 3147
Bernard Ganter (B. Ganter & Son), rms 1211 Winnie
Thomas C. Korn, asst claim clk genl pass dept GC&SF, rms 1211 Winnie

1919

William J. Knapp (Adelaide; Knapp Bros), r. 1211 Av G. Tel 3147
Miss Dolores Knapp, stenographer GC&SF RR, h. 1211 Av G
Thomas Knapp, stenographer JHW Steele Co., h. 1211 Av G

1924-1925

William J. Knapp (Adelaide; Knapp Bros), h. 1211 Av G. Tel 3147

1930

Adelaide Knapp (wid Wm. J), h. 1211 Av G.
F. Wallace Ober (Inez), ticket clerk Union Pass Depot, r. 1211 Av G

1941

Edgar J. Vela (Juanita), foreman, h. 1211 Av G
S. Earl Morgan (Emma), city policeman, h. 1211 Av G

1951

S. Gwaine Thompson (Jane), student, h. 1211 Av G

1960

Charles B. Ganter (Christine), h. 1211 Avenue G

1971

Terry Moore, retired, h. 1211 Avenue G

1980

1211 Avenue G noted as vacant in cross directory

1991

Thomas and Carla Wild, physicians UTMB, h. 1211 Avenue G

1996 (Last year directories were issued)

M. Ameen, 1211 Winnie Street

Roberta Carvalho, 1211 Winnie Street

L. Tutt, 1211 Winnie Street

Leslie Whaylen, 1211 Winnie Street