

## THE HISTORIC STRATER HOTEL PRESENTS

# ROOM 303: THE WEINIG FAMILY

A PIONEERING COUPLE: KILLIAN WEINIG 1841-1914

ANNA MARIA HARTKORN WEINIG, 1851-1915

BOTH FROM PROVINCE OF BADEN, GERMANY, MET IN NEW YORK, MOVED TO SILVERTON & THEN TO DURANGO

## THE ORIGINAL WEINIG FAMILY IN DURANGO

This pioneering family has earned a room at the Strater because of their ambition, their charity, and their fearlessness in coming to Durango at the very beginning.

Imagine workmen living in over 100 tents throughout the downtown area, sleeping in them when it was far below zero at night. Bar room brawls and country-justice hangings were just part of the scenery. The smell of sawdust was in the air as the brand new town of Durango was under construction. The time was October, 1881. Enter Killian and Anna Maria Weinig, with their two young children. They were to have two more sons in these early days of Durango.

The couple was originally from Germany. Killian, an orphan, travelled to New York at age 14 to stay with acquaintances. There he met Anna Maria who had come to New York earlier. Once married, they traveled west for his health and he found work as a pastry chef in Silverton. On a family trip to Durango he was offered a job as a chef in the Centennial Hotel. Killian made up his mind to stay in Durango and open his own restaurant and bakery which he called the Vienna Restaurant.

Business progressed and so did the Vienna until a fire in 1889 destroyed the property. After it was rebuilt as a stone structure, the tables



were laid in linen and the restaurant featured beautiful lighting and large windows full of blooming flowers. The Vienna became a place of fine dining for the young town.

Killian died suddenly in 1914 and Anna Maria just a year later. Several years after that the final chapter of this fine restaurant came to a close.

Donald, a retired U.S. Army LTC and Vietnam veteran maintains the old family home on 13th Street. Donald's son William is a Durango resident and William's children Susan, Ryan, and Cameron Weinig are part-time residents. The Weinig family is truly one of the earliest pioneer families in the area and important contributors to making the town what it is today.

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- During a local dispute over missing cattle, a gunfight ensued on the street, leaving bullet holes in the Weinig home. For a short time after, Killian had the children sleep in the brick bake oven in the back of the house for their safety!
- The Vienna Restaurant did so well that Killian built a large two story structure with family rooms above. They had 65 regular boarders, and served meals daily. Anna Maria and her children took care of everyone.
- July 1st, 1889: A sweeping fire took the Vienna Restaurant and everything in it. Killian swiftly replaced it with a stone building at 1045 Main Avenue and re-opened the restaurant.
- Killian Weinig Jr. was a drinking buddy in Telluride of Jack Dempsey, circa 1915.
- Edna Novella Weinig, wife of Arthur II started the first kindergarten in Durango.

## FIVE GENERATIONS OF WEINIGS IN DURANGO

Killian and Anna Maria had three sons, Joseph, Arthur, and Killian Jr. Joseph became a prospector, Arthur was a mining engineer and Killian Junior was a miner. Daughter Louisa married Ulysses Grant Morgan and moved to Northern California. She wrote about her family history which was included in the book *Pioneers of the San*

*Juan County*. Joseph's son Arthur II became a bank officer, was Durango High School senior class president and a star athlete. He worked his way up to vice president with the First National Bank and later became president of Citizen's Bank in Farmington. His son Richard became an attorney who argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, and his son