



KNOW YOUR ROOTS

A Family That Doesn't Know Its Past Doesn't Understand Itself

VOLUME VII Issue 4 KUHNERT/WIGGENHORN

October 2002

NEW DISCOVERIES



OH! JOYOUS DAYS OF THE SPRINGTIME!
 When everything blossoms anew
 And every one's glad and lighthearted
 Except just your good wife and you!
 But why ponder longer the picture?
 Or recall things you'd rather not say?
 The next time you get up against it
 Keep cheerful and try *the new way.*

Be wise and send for me when you want up-to-date Wall Papers at lowest prices, or wish good work done.

LOCAL AGENT FOR **REMIEN & KUHNERT** OF CHICAGO
 THE GREATEST WALL PAPER HOUSE IN AMERICA.



THE SPACE ABOVE IS RESERVED FOR POST MARK

POST CARD

THE SPACE BELOW IS FOR ADDRESS ONLY

STAMP
HERE

POST CARDS USED AS ADVERTISING
 FOR REMIEN & KUHNERT
 NOTE THE MONOGRAM IN THE UPPER
 LEFT HAND CORNER

REMIEN & KUHNERT

I came across these postcards when I was surfing the net for Kuhnert and was pleasantly surprised. Perhaps the name Remien doesn't mean anything to you but I had always known that Minnie's brother Louis was in the wallpaper business. These are a part of his company that would have been lost to us if I hadn't purchased them.

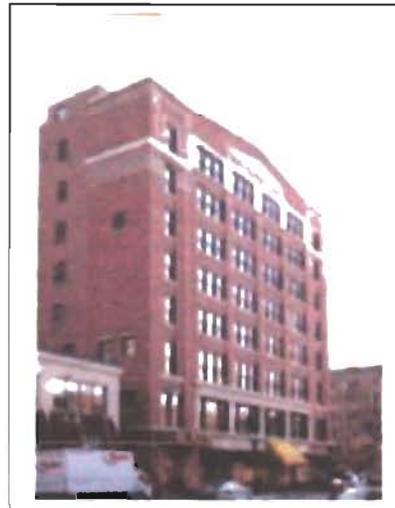
There is a story about Louis Kuhnert in the 2000 Kuhnert issue. Louis is also identified in the Reunion picture. In that picture the women are wearing ankle length dresses. I placed the time of that photo as taken in 1906 because of the death of Joe Heimer, which occurred in 1908.

Taking the above information into consideration, along with the dress length of the women, about 1910 seems a fair assumption as to the time the cards were used.

The card on the front cover and the next three illustrate a part of our social history of the time. I'm sure they were the forerunner of the do-it-yourself era. The humor in them is certainly contagious.

As I continued with my search of the company I found some other very interesting details. Unfortunately there was nothing more on either of the men or what happened to the company but the name Remien & Kuhnert has remained in Chicago history.

At 57 West Grand Avenue in Chicago, there is a very formidable building that was erected especially for the company of Remien and Kuhnert. It stands today and has a very interesting background.



The architectural firm of Heuhl & Schmid designed this large loft building in 1912 specifically to house the division of the paint supply and wallpaper firm of Remien & Kuhnert. Its façade shows the influences of Chicago's creative architectural movement of the turn of the last century. However the ground floor was remodeled in 1945 to give it a distinctive modern treatment executed in fluted terra cotta to match the original.

Not only did this building exemplify the Chicago architecture of the time but also it housed the works of the Chicago artist George Frederick Schultz. Remien & Kuhnert were avid patrons of his art, exhibiting over 100 works alone by him.

Today the building is still known by the name of Remien & Kuhnert and space is available for rent.

This is another legacy from one of our Chicago ancestors. We know the building's history but there was no mention of the artist's paintings.

MORE POSTCARDS



.....

"PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT" they tell us,
 But what is he practicing at?
 High diving? Aerial tumbling?
 Or a new circus stunt for the cat?
 That's where you're wrong again, neighbor,
 He's a man of a former day
 Striving to make himself useful
 Before he had learned *the new way.*

Be wise and send for me when you want up-
 to-date Wall Papers at lowest prices,
 or wish good work done.

.....

LOCAL AGENT FOR **REMIEN & KUHNERT** OF CHICAGO
 THE GREATEST WALL PAPER HOUSE IN AMERICA.



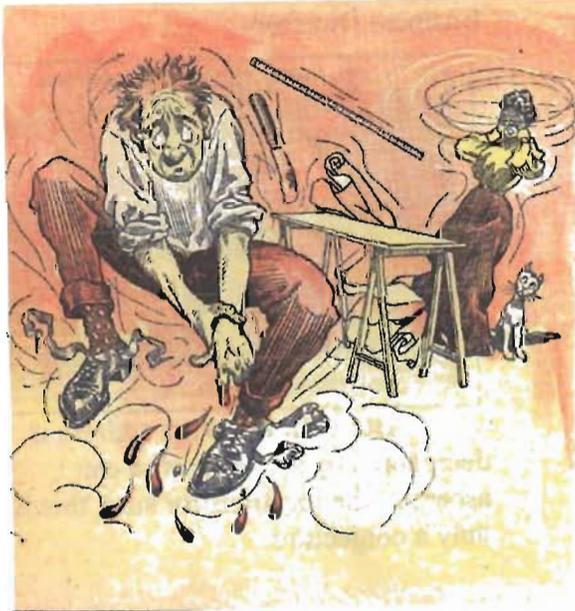
.....

"KEEP EVERY MAN TO HIS CALLING,"
 The philosophers wisely suggest,
 As the proper procedure for getting
 From each one the thing he does best.
 This man once tried *hanging*, but finding
 That really the stunt didn't pay,
 Has gone back to his former vocation—
 His walls are now hung *the new way.*

Be wise and send for me when you want up-
 to date Wall Papers at lowest prices,
 or wish good work done.

.....

LOCAL AGENT FOR **REMIEN & KUHNERT** OF CHICAGO
 THE GREATEST WALL PAPER HOUSE IN AMERICA.



.....

'TIS THE WILLING HAND, they tell us,
 Makes light the hardest toil;
 But the careless finger, often,
 Contributes much to spoil
 That fine enthusiasm
 That makes our work seem play
 And then we wish, regretfully,
 We'd tried *the safer way.*

Be wise and send for me when you want up-
 to-date Wall Papers at lowest prices,
 or wish good work done.

.....

LOCAL AGENT FOR **REMIEN & KUHNERT** OF CHICAGO
 THE GREATEST WALL PAPER HOUSE IN AMERICA.

THE MAN WHO FOMENTS CONTROVERSY CHARLES KUHNERT

Charles Kuhnert continues to be as controversial as always. When I found his Naturalization Record in which he said he abjured his allegiance to the Duchy of Brunswick, and subsequently his obituary that gave me his birth date, I was sure I could find his mother and father in Germany.

How wrong I was.

In the obituary Bertha, his second wife, gave his birthplace in Germany as *BLADENBURG*.

Very excited, I immediately contacted my German friend to give him the good news. He had been working for years looking for the parents of Carl Kuhnert for me but until I had the birth date, it was a useless task. Now, I felt we had a chance.

Alas, in Brunswick there is no Bladenburg; however, in Brunswick there is a *BLANDENBURG*. I thought there might have been a typo in the name in the newspaper article.

Naturally Ulrich set about trying to get the information in Blandenburg or Blankenburg, and anything remotely looking like the name, which could have been misspelled in the obituary. No luck. Then I learned there was a Brandenburg but not in Brunswick. It is close to Berlin. He tried that but no child with that birth date was registered. So the search continues.

I tried to get the death certificate of Charles Kuhnert at the Woodstock Courthouse because he did die in 1895 in McHenry. Finding it would have been too easy. It seems I am doomed because there is no death certificate. He is buried in Waukegan so again I have to go to the Lake County Courthouse with

the correct death date, which I will do in the future.

However, I did want to find the location of the Vinegar Factory and his residence in Waukegan mentioned in the Waukegan, IL Business Directory when he lived there. So off we went, Janet Smith and I, to track down these buildings. Once again I was thwarted. The locations noted in the Business Directory of Waukegan in 1874 were so confusing we couldn't be sure of the exact locations or buildings. His name and that of his son were given with the addresses but over the years everything is changed.

There was no building that could possibly be the Vinegar Factory. What would a Vinegar Factory look like anyway?

Nevertheless, Janet took a picture of the house shown below. It could be 125 years old. The gingerbread exterior and the stone foundation all pointed to the possibility of a house being erected in that time period. And the location also could be the one mentioned in the Business Directory.



But until the exact address is deciphered by someone who can ascertain the locations for sure, this is only a conjecture.

Our next stop was at the store, which I knew for sure Charles Kuhnert owned in Johnsburg, IL. This was a fun venture. We struck gold. Again Janet took pictures. The building is still in good shape. It probably is all brick construction even though the front has siding.

Inside, we found that the insurance agent, the current tenant, was very, very interested in the building. He insisted we even go down to the basement to see some of the old beams and doors. It was an eerie feeling to walk in the steps of my ancestor.

The building is for sale for \$250,000 as Johnsburg today is a thriving community. He shared the picture below with us, which he dated as having been taken about 1910.



Can you see the white horse? I remembered my mother telling me her grandfather, Charles Kuhnert, had a team of white horses. I also knew that he had sold his property in Johnsburg prior to moving to McHenry where he planned to open a hardware store. He died in 1895 just before he was to open it.

I set out to prove that that white horse could have been his white horse. No matter that the picture was arbitrarily dated as 1910. No matter that another man owned the horse.

Here are my findings after speaking with a horse authority. White horses were rare at the turn of the last century and not generally used to draw a carriage. They were also quite expensive and I know that Charles Kuhnert was a man of means. And the clincher was that horses live from 20 to 25 years normally. Some even live longer. Here are my conclusions. Knowing that Charles Kuhnert was a very ostentatious man, he had his picture taken often. Knowing that Elvera Schueneman talked about the white horses of her grandfather, Charles Kuhnert.... Knowing that Charles Kuhnert did have money but sold his property in 1895 preparing to move to another location and assuming that the horse was part of the deal.... Knowing that the lifespan of horses was at least 20 years or possibly longer.... Knowing that the age of the picture was arbitrarily set as 1910.... My conclusions are that this white horse, at one time, belonged to Charles Kuhnert. Anyway, it makes a good story!



This is the way the building looks today. The inside has been entirely changed but the old doors and the brick wall are still there.

I will look for the layout of the upstairs where Grandma Minnie and Grand Aunt Jo lived at the time of their marriages in 1882. See the next installment in the Kuhnert issue of 2003.

THE BUENA VISTA HOUSE A FAMILY SURVIVOR

After 155 years, The Buena Vista House still stands in Watertown, Wisconsin. It has had a long and colorful past stemming from the days when William Wiggenhorn bought it unfinished from Henry Boegel in 1848. There were 16 rooms to rent, plus the dining room, ballroom, tavern and of course the kitchen. It seems the building was destined to become a place in history from the beginning, for its name alone had historical significance.

Mr. Boegel, the man who began to build it in 1847, named it from the time he served under Zachary Taylor in the two-day battle of Buena Vista against Santa Ana in the Mexican War. Boegel originally built it for the "Latin farmers" but when William Wiggenhorn bought it in 1848 it soon became a mecca for German immigrants known as the German Speaking 48ers.

Probably the hotel's notoriety began on May 10, 1848 when new arrivals from Germany gathered together to celebrate the Revolution in Germany. There was a parade to celebrate the occasion with the procession culminating at the Buena Vista House.

The hotel itself was decorated in black, red and gold in keeping with the German colors. A sumptuous meal was served by the Wiggenhorn family and later there was dancing in the ballroom. This glorious activity cemented the reputation of what was to become in the future one of the finest German restaurants almost without equal. The only other that had such a reputation was one in Milwaukee.

William Wiggenhorn, who was 51, at the time of the purchase became

the owner with his wife and his eight children. He was the entrepreneur to lead this long history. It is said that the Buena Vista House quickly acquired an outstanding reputation not only for its good food and lodging, but also for the graciousness of the owner.

It became the popular gathering place for German intellectuals and "young men about town." It was the meeting place for "the first men's club for the nobility or related to nobility from Europe."

It even became a makeshift church, which had a direct influence on our personal history. For a long time the record below was a mystery.

WISCONSIN STATE BOARD OF HEALTH BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS Certification of Marriage Record	
1. Full name of husband,	Charles Coonheart
2. Name of the father of husband,	
3. Name of mother of husband before marriage,	
4. Occupation of husband,	
5. Residence of husband,	
6. Residence of wife,	
7. Full name of wife previous to marriage,	Wilhelma Wiggenhorn
8. Name of the father of wife,	
9. Name of the mother of wife before marriage,	
10. Residence of wife,	
11. The color of the parties,	White
12. Sex and date of license,	
13. How and where license was procured,	
14. The place, name of community, and county where marriage was performed,	
15. By what ceremony contracted,	
16. Name of officiating clergyman,	
17. Name of person performing marriage,	John Healy
18. Residence of person performing marriage,	
19. Date of certificate in relation to marriage,	June 10 1850 (1850)
20. Date of registration,	

COPY

RECEIVED
MAY 10 1850

I was quite sure that Wilhelma was our Wilhelma Wiggenhorn, the eldest daughter of William, but the Charles Coonheart was a real enigma. Who was he? I knew her husband was Charles Kuhnert.

In the certificate of marriage the priest was John Healy but no church, and nothing more. I knew that Kuhnert was a Lutheran and Wilhelma a Catholic. Could they have married in secret at the Irish Church?

This was all cleared up when we visited the Irish church office recently for some directions to the cemetery.

At that time, I was told that the Buena Vista House served as a church until a German church was built in 1853.

Aha! The mystery was solved. The Irish priest Fr. Healy who spelled Kuhnert phonetically as Coonheart married our ancestors Wilhelma Wiggenhorn and Charles Kuhnert in 1850 in that wooden structure without a roof!

I think Rosalia, sister of Wilhelma, married Rudolph Diesel also at the same time in the same makeshift church. Then the two couples took off for Woodstock, Illinois. The Woodstock story is in a previous issue.

Over the years, the Buena Vista House served many purposes. When Methodism came to Watertown the followers met there regularly. Finally they built their own log cabin.

A German singing group became the prestigious Concordia Singing Society in 1862. They met at the Buena Vista House and presented concerts there every month during the winter.

There were weddings, christenings and a myriad of social events held during the years.

Some of the Wiggenhorn brothers began making cigars when they were not busy helping their father in the Buena Vista House. That business soon blossomed to a three-story building.

The illustrious Watertown Forty-Eighters would meet informally to discuss lofty ideals and mundane problems. There they could shoot billiards, drink beer, smoke cigars and have formal debates from time to time.

In later years, William Wiggenhorn, as he was now known, rented the building to his son Eugene

Wiggenhorn. Eugene sold it to Franz Gebhardt who later sold it to another and through the years there have been many other owners.

However, today the Buena Vista House still continues operating in the same manner as it did 154 years ago when William Wiggenhorn started its long history. It looks much the same except it now has siding. Different types of functions still take place but it is no longer used as a church.

Although there are no Wiggenhorns left in Watertown, Wisconsin, our Wiggenhorn family left its mark on the town's history and is commemorated today not only for the prestige that the Buena Vista House brought to Watertown but also for the family who began its illustrious ascent into the future.

The first photo below from 1935 is the oldest one I could find of the structure and the photo below it is the way it looks today in 2002, 154 years from the time William Wiggenhorn invested his \$1680, a goodly sum in 1848, to become the proprietor of the Buena Vista House.



MARY'S MESSAGES



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Jerry Larkin, Copy Editor

In researching for this Kuhnert issue I thought I would try and find what I could on the Internet. Would you believe that a search on the name brought back 16,800 entries, all pertaining to Kuhnerts in the U. S. and all over the world, but mostly in Germany! Among the entries were scientists, professors, artists, and many more professionals too numerous to mention. A German friend had told me that the Kuhnert family was a large and prosperous one in Germany and now I find that it is also a name of many professionals and intellectuals.

This Kuhnert/Wiggenhorn issue was ready to go except for the story of Charles Kuhnert. This story proved to be more detailed than the space I had planned so I apologize for having to continue it in next year's issue. Needless to say, I am determined to unravel all of the mysteries of this ancestor.

In his day, he must have been a very colorful character. At every turn I discover something new about him. Now I find from the death certificate of his eldest son Charles, that Charles was born in Belvidere, Boone County, IL. How does Belvidere fit into the picture? When Charles Jr. died, Grandma Minnie

was the one who signed the death certificate and gave his birth as Belvidere. All the other four siblings were born in Woodstock according to their death certificates.

Needless to say, Charles Kuhnert's life in the United States was one of movement. My first record of him shows he was in McHenry County in 1848, then Watertown, WI where he married Wilhelma. The next place is the birth of his first child, Charles Jr. in Belvidere, Boone County, IL. Then on to Greenwood, extracted from a deed, and Woodstock for the birth of four more children. He moved his family to Waukegan, IL where Wilhelma died, and then he remarried and moved to Johnsburg. Finally his life ends in McHenry.

Without a doubt, the hours I have spent researching Charles Kuhnert are of gigantic proportions and my files are bulging with information. I have no idea when it will all end!

For fun, another origin of familiar, but strange sayings from the 16th century: "It's raining cats and dogs." 16th century houses had thatched roofs-thick straw, piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all pets-dogs, cats and other small animals like mice and rats-lived in the roof. When it rained, that area became slippery. Sometimes, animals would slip and fall off the roof, creating the saying, "It's raining cats and dogs."

I've decided to include my snail address and email address in case any of my subscribers wish to send me information or requests. Also, note the new title of Jerry Larkin.

As you probably noticed, this issue was about the places our ancestors lived. I hope you enjoyed it.