



KNOW YOUR ROOTS

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OUR ADVERTISING MOGUL LOUIS C. KUHNERT

The saga of Louis C. Kuhnert, one of our ancestry uncles, and it is a saga, begins with the 1870 census which shows that he lived with his father and mother, Charles and Wilhelmina in Waukegan, IL. The C in his name stands for Constanza, and is often written Constance, named after a brother of his mother. His father had a vinegar factory at this time. Louis was 16 and from then on I find information on him at various ages until he found his niche in the Remien & Kuhnert Company. But I need to start at the beginning.

The book of Chicagoans of 1905, which includes our Louis, says he began his business career in 1868. This is the beginning of the saga. In 1868 Louis was only 14 years old. I can only assume he was working with his father in the vinegar business and he used that experience for the Chicagoan. This same book said he married in 1869. That means he was fifteen and yet I have his marriage as 1883, and that is not correct either because on the 1880 census in Chicago he was already married to Lena. However, his first child was not born until 1884.

The next notice I found for Louis was a Dun & Bradstreet rating in Chicago for the grocery business. That did coincide with the 1880 census and the Chicagoan entry which said in 1888 he was engaged in the grocery business.



The next entry listed his business with the Lartz Wallpaper Co. in 1893. That was the year of the Chicago World's Fair and so he must have switched from the grocery business to the wallpaper business, but along the way he opened his own bank called the New Era Bank of which he was owner and president.

Louis stayed with the Lartz wallpaper company sometime after the 1900 census because he then became a partner in the company of Remien & Kuhnert, which was incorporated in 1902, and the bank ceased to exist because I could find no further record of it. I would only guess that he invested his money in Remien & Kuhnert.

I tried to find whether or not the company was

publicly traded but there is no record of that. Nevertheless, some of the family of Louis invested in his company, namely his brother August and his brother-in-law Joe Heimer.

Louis did very well in Remien and Kuhnert and the company flourished. Louis Jr. was born in 1884 and a daughter, Carrie, in 1886. He belonged to the prestigious Chicago Athletic Club and the Washington Park Club.

Because the company was so successful, eventually Remien & Kuhnert built their own building which became the epitome of Chicago's creative architectural movement and it became a depository for a well known Chicago artist, George Frederick Schultz. The building remains standing today after having been remodeled in 1945 at its original location of 57 West Grand Avenue. Both partners were avid patrons of the arts and one could find over 100 works alone of the artist they sponsored.

Unfortunately, the success of the wall paper company was overshadowed by a tragedy. His son Louis Jr. committed suicide, leaving a wife and a small child. The death certificate stated the cause "while temporarily insane." It must have been a terrible blow to the family. I can't find any connection that the son had with his father's company but I did find a patent in his name for "an internal combustion engine" filed May 10, 1910. Perhaps this failed. This is only conjecture on my part.

However, his daughter Carrie became quite successful as a golfer. She was a member of the Women's Western Golf Association of 1925. She also won a medal at the Miami Conference scoring 89, and played in other 1925 golf events. She was playing for the Glen View Country Club at these events. She never married.

Louis Sr. was only 66 when he died of pneumonia. Enjoy some of his advertising below and in my message this month.

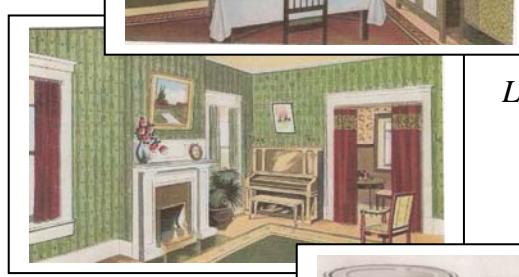
FROM THE NEWSPAPER

FROM THE CATALOGUE

Dining room



Living room



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