

Hermann Albert and Franziska Hoffmann
of
GERMANY, NEW YORK, AND SAN FRANCISCO



Preface

Glorian Holston Mitchell has described the lives of her maternal grandparents, Hermann and Franziska Albert in a document she wrote about her own life in July 2006. This paper is an attempt to provide additional detail about their lives, in particular their early years in San Francisco. This research is part of an ongoing effort to document the lives of the principal ancestors of the Puente-Lindskog families, and especially, the first generation immigrants. Glorian has first hand knowledge of her maternal grandparents and has written thoughtfully and lovingly about them. In parts of this document I will use italic quotes for sentences that were written by Glorian and then comment on that information based on my research.

Country of Birth

"Hermann Albert was born on 20 August 1858 in Isenberg, Germany."

It makes a significant difference in how the town name is spelled, Isenberg or Isenburg, for they are in very different Länder (states) in today's Germany. Isenberg (post code 33397) is a small village northeast of Dortmund. Glorian states:

"(on the map it shows near Frankfurt on Main River); but I was also told that he was born in Saxony which is closer to Dresden, and also that he was born near the Black Forest – so, who knows."

If the spelling was Isenburg then there are 5 towns with the name of Isenburg in Germany today. Without knowing in which Land (state) he was born, it is difficult to search for records in Germany. The following are the five possibilities:

Rheinland-Pfalz: Isenburg (56271)

Baden-Württemberg - Horb am Neckar (72160): Isenburg

Nordrhein-Westfalen - Wipperfürth (51688): Isenburg

Hessen: Neu-Isenburg

Hessen - Offenbach am Main (63263): Isenburg-Gravenbruch

If no birth record or other document is found that can identify the exact spelling of his birthplace it may be impossible to trace his ancestry in Germany. Even if the village name is found we must then refer to the 1858 maps of Germany whose borders and states were very different than they are today. Germany, as a country, did not exist until 1871. Before then, the area that would become Germany consisted of a number of



independent states varying in size and power, ranging from kingdoms and grand duchies to principalities, cities and ecclesiastical states.

"Franziska Hoffman was born in Waldurn, Germany, north of Heidelberg in the Necker River Valley June 14, 1860."

Her first name is spelled in a variety of ways in the many documents in which it appears. I have chosen the spelling that Glorian used in her document. The full name of the town where she was born is Walldürn, Neckar-Odenwald-Kreis, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. No concerted effort has yet been undertaken to research Franziska's birth and emigration records from Baden-Württemberg, however, a cursory examination has not yielded any results to date. Additionally, when research is continued about Franziska's birthplace and parents it will be important to confirm the spelling of the surname. Hoffmann with two "n"s is more common than Hoffman.

Immigration and Naturalization

"He worked on a farm for a short time before coming to America about 1884."

From United States Federal census records we find that Herman stated he emigrated from Germany in 1881, 1882 or 1883. The year varies from one census to another. After checking hundreds of New York Passenger List records no single instance stands out as proof of his trip to the United States. The records at Castle Garden in New York, the entry point into the U.S. during this time period were also checked. Unless his emigration papers are found there may be no way to determine his exact departure date or domicile in Germany. The following is a possible record from the New York Passenger Lists¹ although some of the facts do not appear to match.

Herm. Albert born abt. 1857, arrived 13 Jun 1883, from Hamburg, nationality Prussian, occupation Porter.

Prussia was the largest kingdom in what would become Germany and most Germans were known as Prussians in the time period in which Hermann was born. However, since Glorian mentioned that he worked on a farm before coming to America I would expect that his occupation would say farmer and not porter.

In the 1920 U.S. Census² of San Francisco, Hermann Albert states that he is a naturalized citizen and that this took place in 1894. According to the 1896 California

¹ Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M237, 675 rolls); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

² 1920; Census Place: San Francisco Assembly District 32, San Francisco, California; Roll: T625_138; Page: 2A; Enumeration District: 211; Image: 614.

Voter Registration he was naturalized on August 5, 1890 in the San Francisco Superior Court. The Census indicates that his wife is also naturalized but no year is given. The 1910³ and 1930⁴ census also state they were naturalized, and again no years are given. Before September 27, 1906, an alien could seek citizenship through any Federal, state, or local court. As a result, we would need to know in which court Franziska submitted her application for naturalization. Since Hermann was naturalized in San Francisco it is natural to assume that Franziska was also. However, no early voter registration lookup is possible for her before 1911 since women didn't have the right to vote in California until after that date.

Glorian stated that he went into business in New York after he arrived. It was there that he met Franziska who was living with her sisters at the time. They later moved to San Francisco where they were married. We know that they or at least, Hermann was in San Francisco in 1890 because that was the year he was naturalized. As a general rule, naturalization was a two-step process that took a minimum of five years. After residing in the United States for two years, an alien could file a "declaration of intent" (so-called "first papers") to become a citizen. After three additional years, the alien could "petition for naturalization." After the petition was granted, a certificate of citizenship was issued. So, working backwards from his naturalization date of 1890 the latest Hermann could have arrived in the U.S. is 1885. It is likely that he was already in New York a year or two before that. However, no sources have been found that prove that they were living in New York.

Even though Hermann was in San Francisco in 1890 he does not appear in the City Directory for that year. The following year he is listed, living at 923½ Pacific Avenue and working as a laborer for the American Sugar Refinery. He was not found in the 1892 directory but it is presumed that he was living somewhere in the city. In 1893 he is listed as being employed in the wood and coal business located 5 Sherwood Place. This street no longer exists but was between Howard and Minna Streets starting at 3rd Street and heading NE. This is near today's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. It is not known whether he was employed by someone or whether this was his own business.

The following year Hermann marries Franziska Hoffmann on 15 April 1894 in San Francisco, California⁵. He is still employed in the wood and coal business at 5 Sherwood Place in both 1894 and 1895⁶. Their residence was at 8 Sherwood Place,

³ Year: 1910; Census Place: San Francisco Assembly District 37, San Francisco, California; Roll: T624_99; Page: 2B; Enumeration District: 179; Image: 350.

⁴ Year: 1930; Census Place: San Francisco, San Francisco, California; Roll: 201; Page: 14A; Enumeration District: 189; Image: 617.0.

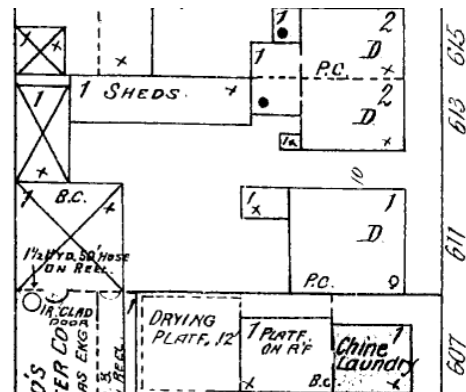
⁵ San Francisco Call, Volume 75, Number 137, 16 April 1894.

⁶ An earlier version of this paper erroneously reported that Hermann was listed as a carpenter in the 1895 City Directory.

presumably across the street from the business. Their first child, Elsa was born July 29, 1895 and most likely at the Sherwood Place address.

Sometime after Elsa's birth Hermann moved his business to 613 Turk Street, just east of Van Ness Avenue. The City Directory for both 1896 and 1897 shows Herman's business of "coal and wood" at 613 Turk Street with his residence at the same address. Their second daughter, Frances Pauline Albert was born on 22 July 1897, presumably at the Turk Street address.

In 1898 it appears that Hermann went into partnership with a man named Pohl. A business listing in the 1898 telephone book of San Francisco shows Albert & Pohl, Wood and Coal located at 613 Turk Street⁷. Having a telephone for their business was probably a necessity; however there were only a little more than 11,000 telephones in the city which by this time had a population of about 340,000 people. The Turk Street address was between Polk and Van Ness, a few blocks north of the current location of the San Francisco City Hall.



The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps⁸ of 1899 no longer show a coal yard at the Turk street address, however, on the map clip shown here there are sheds in the back of the house at that location that were probably used to store coal. There is also a stable in the rear with an alley on one side of the building, possibly for the delivery wagon to enter and exit the yard. By October of this same year we find Albert and Pohl at 1739 Waller Street⁹ with their business.

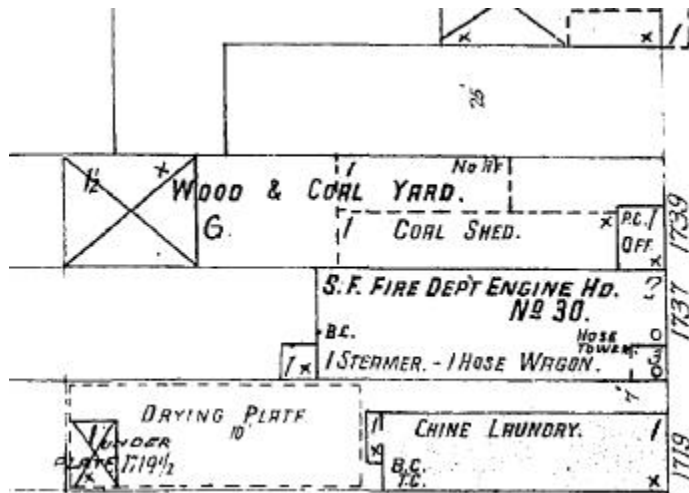
It is my belief that Herman had started the business and then took on Pohl as a partner. This assumption is based on several events that took place over the next few years which will be described shortly. However, one question does come to mind at this stage. Why did Albert and Pohl decide to move from this very desirable downtown location to the Haight Ashbury District? One possible explanation is that In the 1890s in San Francisco there were literally hundreds of coal dealers in the City and perhaps the partners saw a better opportunity for their business in the Haight Ashbury which was just beginning to develop in the 1890s and was far less expensive than the downtown location.

⁷ Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. and the Sunset Telephone and Telegraph Co – March 1898

⁸ Sanborn Perris Map Company, Ltd. 1899, Volume Four, San Francisco California

⁹ Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. – October 1898 - Page 002

A classified advertisement in the 1899 City Directory confirms that the business name is Albert & Poll (sic), Wood & Coal at 1739 Waller Street. We also find that the



1899 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (detail section displayed here) shows the Waller Street address clearly marked as number 1739 with a coal shed on the ground floor. Also shown in this block plan is the S.F. Fire Dept Engine HQ. No. 30 on one side at number 1737 and the 25 foot vacant lot on the other, presumably still owned by Pohl. Using the Sanborn map legend we see the stable

in the rear (square with X) that was one and half stories, a small office (Off.) in the front, a coal shed with a shingle roof, and an open gallery (G.), presumably for the delivery wagon and an area where the word "Yard" is which is open with no roof (No Rf.). Also seen in this block plan is a Chinese laundry at number 1719 with a drying platform in the rear. It's interesting to note that in both locations there was a Chinese laundry only 2 doors away.

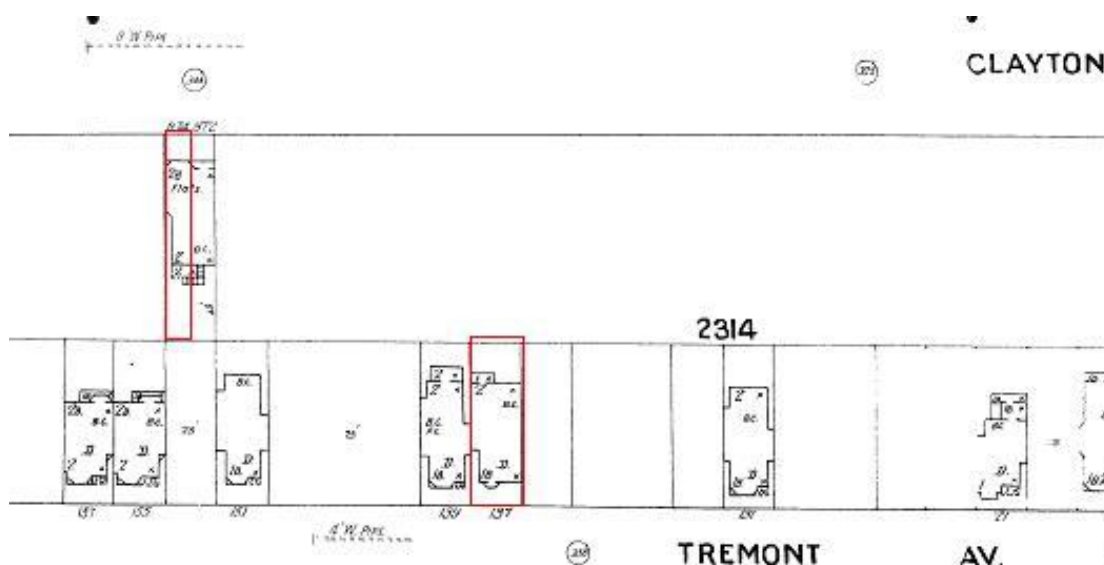
While his business was on Waller Street in 1899 Hermann and his young family were living at 137 Tremont Avenue¹⁰ in a single family home during this year. Tremont Avenue was renamed later as Downey Street which today is a wonderful tree lined street with beautifully restored Victorian houses.

The City Directory of 1900 shows the business still located at 1739 Waller, but the family is now living at 874 Clayton Street, one street over from Tremont and parallel to it. In fact, if they had walked out the back yard of the Tremont Avenue house and turned west 100 feet they would be in the Clayton Street house. It is also only 3 blocks from where Glorian would be born some 28 years later at 1215 Cole Street. Examining the Sanborn Insurance Maps we see that they have moved from a single family home on Tremont to a two family house on Clayton. I wonder why they did this because Frances had been born and they were now four people in what appears to be a smaller flat. The 1900 U.S. Census¹¹ taken on June 7, 1900 also confirms that the family was living at 874 Clayton Street and they were renting it. Perhaps they

¹⁰ 1899 San Francisco City Directory, page 172.

¹¹ 1900 U.S. Census San Francisco, 7 June 1900, Assembly District No. 36, Superior's District no. 1, Enumeration District No. 121

moved because the rent was cheaper. The people in the adjoining flat at 872 were Lloyd and Helen Bertz, a young couple in their early 20s. Lloyd was a bookkeeper for a local restaurant. Both families were truly early settlers in the Haight Ashbury



because in 1900 there were only 3 buildings on Clayton Street. The 1900 census also shows that the Alberts had a boarder by the name of Hedwig Diedtricks (sp.), a woman age 32, born Dec 1867 in Germany and emigrated in 1894. Her occupation was listed as a seamstress.

A legal notice in the July 11th issue of the San Francisco Call newspaper details the dissolution of the partnership between Albert and Poll on July 10, 1900. Diedrich Poll's name was indeed spelled "Poll" and since it was a legal notice we must assume that he formally changed his name. The notice also stated that the dissolution was by mutual consent and that Mr. Albert had purchased Poll's interest in the business¹².

On 12 July 1900 Diedrich Poll and his wife Auguste sold "half of lot on S line of Waller street, 131:3E of Stanyan, E 25 by S 137:6"¹³ for \$10. The \$10 sales price was fairly common during this time period. It was done to disguise the actual selling price. It is unclear whether Albert owned the other half or whether Poll owned the entire lot and sold the half with the business on it to Albert when they dissolved the business. The entire lot therefore was 50 feet wide and 137 ½ feet long and Pohl sold the eastern half.

However, the chronology doesn't make sense. If the real estate transaction was published on 12 July 1900 yet the coal shed and stable was already shown on the lot as published by the Sanborn Maps in 1899 then the sale should have included the

¹² San Francisco Call, vol. 87, no. 41, July 11, 1900

¹³ San Francisco Call, July 12, 1900 Real Estate Transactions

improvements, not just the land. Despite the date of 1899 as a publication date for the Sanborn Maps, researchers have determined that the maps also include the year 1900.

The 1901 City Directory¹⁴ lists Hermann Albert with a place of business at 1739 Waller Street and his residence still at 874 Clayton Street. Then in this year he contracted for a new building on the same lot. The following notice appeared in the San Francisco Call, May 25, 1901 edition:



"Hermann Albert (owner) with Christ Schweitzer & Co. (contractors), plans by owner - All work for a two-story frame building, wood and coal yard below and flat above, on S line of Waller street, 131:3 E of Stanyan, 25 by 137:6" for \$1,715 "*

** About \$45,000 in 2008 dollars*

874 Clayton Street, San Francisco is the right most apartment in the gray house above. 872 is on the left side of the house.

Unfortunately this notice does not tell us whether this was an

announcement for work to be started or that the building was completed by this date. Most legal notices published in newspapers are for work that is planned however according to the San Francisco Assessor's office, the building was constructed in 1900 and was 1,295 sq. ft. in size. The address today (2016) is 1765 Waller Street and appears to be rented to a games arcade with pinball machines.

The completed building shown on the next page would be the home of Hermann and his family for the next 18 years. The fire station already existed as shown on the Sanborn Maps and according to the assessor, the fire station (on left) in the picture was built in 1890¹⁵. The building in the center is the business and home of Hermann and his family with the office (left side of the ground floor) and the living quarters upstairs. What appears to be a garage door today was undoubtedly the entrance to the coal yard and where he kept his delivery wagon. On the right of this building was the vacant half of the lot that Pohl retained. The present very uninspired building on that lot was added in 1948.

¹⁴ 1901 City Directory of San Francisco published 1901 by Crocker-Langley

¹⁵ Office of the Assessor-Recorder, City and County of San Francisco, CA, block 1250 lot 029 address: 1757 Waller Street, San Francisco.



Engine Company No. 30 occupied this large two-story frame firehouse until 1917. It was the quarters for 27 firefighters. Chemical Engine Company No. 5 and Truck Company No. 12 were later stationed here before it closed in 1956. Truck Co. No. 12 was moved to new quarters at 1145 Stanyan Street. The upper story has four arched windows with pilasters, and the belt cornice is dentil molding. Now privately owned, it is painted in the colorful style of San Francisco's Victorian homes.

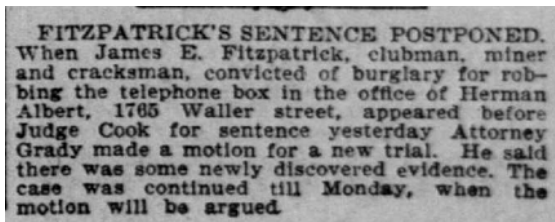
The June 1902 telephone directory listed Hermann Albert by himself without his partner, Pohl as a seller of Coal, Wood, Hay, and Grain at 1739 Waller. Therefore, it is likely that Pohl wanted out of the business or retired and helped his partner get established in this part of the City by selling him some land very cheaply. As will be seen later the address of this home and business would be renumbered to 1765 Waller. It is likely that as more homes were built that the city renumbered the street.

We know from the building notice in the San Francisco Call newspaper that Hermann was planning to build a flat above the coal yard. However, how do we know that he actually lived there? He might have been planning to rent it out. It isn't until 1910 that we have proof in the 1910 U.S. census that in fact he was living there at that address with his family. We can therefore conclude they were living in the upstairs flat and presumably from the date it was completed. He also states in the census that he owns the building which is consistent with his payment of \$1,715 to his Swiss building contractors. The fact that they were Swiss is a guess on my part, but you can't get names more Swiss than Christ and Schweitzer.

We see in the 1904 telephone directory of San Francisco that the family is still at the Waller Street address which has now been renumbered to 1765. Hermann has listed

his business in the directory as "Feed and Fuel", perhaps thinking that it is more modern and upscale description.

In 1905 Hermann was the victim of a robbery. A James E. Fitzpatrick, clubman, miner, and crackman was convicted of burglary. A "cracksman" was a term used in the 19th century for burglar or safe cracker. I'm not sure what a "clubman" is however.



FITZPATRICK'S SENTENCE POSTPONED. When James E. Fitzpatrick, clubman, miner and cracksman, convicted of burglary for robbing the telephone box in the office of Herman Albert, 1765 Waller street, appeared before Judge Cook for sentence yesterday Attorney Grady made a motion for a new trial. He said there was some newly discovered evidence. The case was continued till Monday, when the motion will be argued.

1906 was a year that no one alive at the time would ever forget. At 5:12 a.m. on April 18th San Francisco was hit by a devastating earthquake. The Albert family like many of their neighbors would be abruptly awakened by the shaking and rolling of their beds and homes.

Around the corner at 718 Shrader Street lived a seven year old boy by the name of John J. Conlon with his family. His father, shown here was also named John J. Conlon and was chief of the 9th Battalion of the San Francisco Fire



department, with its headquarters at 30 Engine on Waller Street, the fire station right next door to the Albert home and business. It is almost certain that the Alberts would have known the Conlons and young John may have even played with Elsa and Frances although they were a few years older than him at the time.



Years later John Conlon wrote an account¹⁶ of the earthquake and fire and according to him there was little structural damage to the homes in the neighborhood. However, just to be on the safe side, the family camped out in Golden Gate Park for 3 days and nights. He recalled that when his father was ".... first transferred to the 9th Battalion that it caused the usual family friction over the size of the fire alarm bell in our residence. Chiefs were permitted to sleep at home provided they lived within a block of their headquarters. Conscientious Father, fearful that he would miss an alarm, always wanted an eight inch bell. Considerate Mother, with the neighbors' ears and nerves in mind, wanted a six inch bell; we always had six inch bells." It would be interesting to know if the Alberts often heard this bell when it rang at the Conlon's house. Conlon goes on to say:

¹⁶ Selection from Tale of A San Franciscan, April 18, 1906, John J Conlon, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-6000

"About 7:30 that Wednesday morning, I heard 30 Engine leave their quarters with bells ringing and that was the last we were to see of them until late on the following Friday night. At almost the same moment, Father stopped his buggy in front of our house, got out and took Flossie, my brother and me across the street to a Mr. Levy. He told this fine gentleman that he had been ordered downtown with the remainder of his Battalion to help battle the flames now raging because of the destruction of the water mains, and asked if he could leave his family in Mr. Levy's care, which, of course, he could."

It would be interesting to know if the Albert family were friends with the Conlons.

In June, 1908 Herman Albert purchased a lot¹⁷ from F. L. Ely and his wife. The description was as follows: *In west line of Cole, 50 south of Alma, S 25 by W 100.* Each lot on this block had a front of 25 feet by 100 feet deep. 50 south then meant it



was the third lot on the west side of Cole, 50 feet south of Alma. It had a 25 foot front and was 100 deep. There were not many homes in the area as yet, but Hermann built a home (shown here) for his daughters. Elsa and her husband Edgar Vogel would live there on the bottom floor (smaller flat - 1,010 sq. ft.) after their marriage in 1924 and Frances with her family on the top floor (larger flat - 1,339 sq. ft.). It would eventually obtain a street address of 1215 Cole Street and Elsa and Edgar's would be 1217. The San Francisco Assessor's office states that the house was built in 1908. It is not known what Herman did with the house for the 16 years until Elsa moved in. Perhaps he rented it. Today (2016) the flats are owned by different people.

For the next 12 years after the earthquake Hermann and his family continued to live at 1765 Waller until 1919. We know from the 1918 and 1919 City Directories that he was still living at that address. In the 1918 directory spouses were listed for the first time and Franziska was shown as Frances.

In May of this same year there is a Herman E. Albert listed in the 1918 Roll of Honor of the Islam Temple located at Geary St., between Jones and Leavenworth. Since there is no other Herman Albert listed in the City directory of 1918, I am going to assume that Herman E. Albert of the Islam Temple is in fact our Hermann Albert. The Islam Temple, also known as the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, is

¹⁷ June 24, 1909 San Francisco Call, vol. 106, no. 24

commonly referred to as the Shriners, a men's social and charitable organization of the Freemasons. They used the building until 1970 and it is now a protected building in San Francisco which houses the Alcazar Theater. No other references have been found to verify that Hermann Albert was a Shriner and this is the only instance where a middle initial is used for Hermann in the documents found during the course of this research.

In the 1920 census we find the family living at 1733 Oak Street. This address is 7 houses away from the lot that Herman bought in 1913. It is not known whether he traded the lot for the house or whether he sold it and then bought the house.



Hermann is shown in the census as the head of the household and Franziska is listed as "Francis", Elsa was written as "Elsie" and Frances as "Francis". Elsa was 24 years old and a teacher at a high school. Frances was 22 and a bookkeeper at a Milling Company which was undoubtedly Albers Milling where she met her future

husband, Harry Lear Holston. According to this census Frances was still living at home when the census was taken on 5 January 1920. She was probably dating Harry Holston by this date since they were married on May 26th of that year.

In the 1920 census Hermann's business was described as "coal dealer" and "own shop" and "Em" indicating he was the owner of the business and an employer. However, he was no longer living at the Waller Street address. Checking the 1921 City directory reveals that a R. L. Mills is listed at the 1765 Waller Street address. Working backwards to check the 1920 census we find a Robert L. Mills living at that location with his family. In the census he describes his occupation as "owner" of a "coal yard", but interestingly, he is renting the property. However, the census also states that he is working on his "own account".

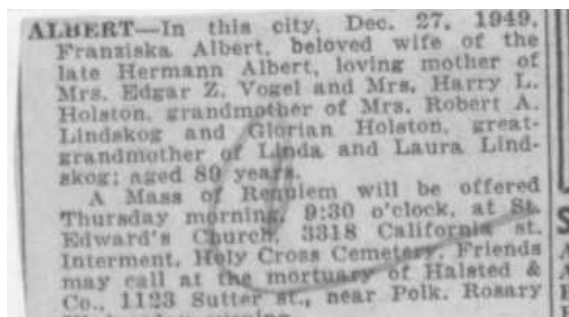
Mills immigrated to America in 1910 from Northern Ireland. He and his wife Edith are listed in the 1915 City Directory living at 435 4th Avenue. His profession is shown as a teamster. In the 1918 City Directory Mills was living at 707 Anza, about 1 mile north of the Waller street address and was listed as a driver. It is possible that Mills was actually working for Hermann as a driver and when Hermann decided to retire that he sold the business to Mills, but kept the building for its rental income. Even if Mills

had not worked for Hermann before, it is very probable that Hermann retained the building.

So, putting all of these facts together, we might conclude the following; Hermann was still living at 1765 Waller in 1918 and therefore Hermann sold the business either late 1918 or in 1919. Hermann still appears at the Waller Street address in the 1919 directory. It appears that he sold the business but not the apartment and shop and chose to rent it to Robert Mills. In the 1930 census Robert Mills is still at the 1765 Waller Street address and is renting the building. However, we don't know if Hermann still owned the property in 1930 or sold it and a new owner was renting it back to Mills.

Hermann and Frances continue to live at the 1733 Oak Street address from 1920 – 1926. They do not appear in the 1927 City Directory, but they do reappear in 1928 at their new home located at 1251 18th Avenue. The 1930 census shows that they own the house and that Hermann is retired. From Glorian's description of their house and garden, it must have been quite beautiful. It is a pity that it no longer exists. It has been replaced by a horrible concrete apartment building that was constructed in 1963.

Hermann and Franziska lived the rest of their lives at the 18th Avenue home. Hermann died on April 30, 1945 at his home. Funeral services were held on Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. at Halsted Mortuary on Sutter Street¹⁸. He was buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma, San Mateo County, California on May 2, 1945. The newspaper death notice stated that he was a member of Court Hubertus Forester's of America.



This was a fraternity named the Ancient Order of Foresters which espouses "*to unite fraternally all white males of good character, between the ages of eighteen and fifty years, to aid its sick members, bury its dead, give relief to their widows and orphans, to find employment for the unemployed, and all other benevolent purposes.*"

The discriminatory phrase "*....all white males*" simply jumps off the page in today's politically correct world. There were about 50 Courts (clubs) in California and Hubertus was one located in San Francisco. There was no mention of Hermann

¹⁸ Funeral file from Halsted Mortuary, 1123 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 - 19024 Reg. No. 120 Account No. a 877

belonging to the Shriners. Perhaps it was a different Herman Albert or Herman left the Shriners and joined the Foresters.

ALBERT—In this city, April 30, 1945, Hermann, beloved husband of Franziska Albert, loving father of Mrs. Edgar Vogel, Mrs. Harry L. Holston, beloved grandfather of Mrs. Robert Lindskog and Glorian Holston, great-grandfather of Linda Lindskog. A member of Court Hubertus Foresters of America. Funeral services will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the mortuary of Halsted & Co., 1123 Sutter st., near Polk.

After Hermann died Franziska lived with her daughter Elsa and her husband, Edgar until her death at Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco on December 27, 1949. She was also buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma, California on December 29, 1949¹⁹.

¹⁹ Funeral file from Halsted Mortuary, 1123 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 - 27023 Reg. No. 107 Account No. a 1074