

JACOB PHILLIP JUNG (1850-1933)

Jacob Jung was born in 1850 in Nauvoo, Illinois to German immigrants and was one of ten children. He left home at the age of thirteen and his travels took him to many places. Initially, Jung went to Keokuk, Iowa, where he worked for a banker before being hired to move horses from Missouri to Illinois for one summer during the Civil War. Afterward, he returned to Keokuk for a short time, and then moved on to Quincy, Illinois where he apprenticed in the medicine business. After more than two years in Quincy, Jung moved on to St. Louis, briefly returned to Nauvoo, then moved to Bloomington in 1869. He was still only 19 years old! In Bloomington Jung worked as a stonecutter for a few months, then accepted an **apprenticeship** as a **marble cutter** at Haldeman's Marble Works. Haldeman's was a company that specialized in making cemetery monuments and grave markers. He earned \$3.50 per week, and received \$4.50 per week for board. Today, this combined wage of \$8 per week would be equal to \$190 per week. To earn more money, Jung took on odd jobs like sawing wood and carrying luggage for guests at a local hotel.

But Jung's travels weren't over yet. After he completed his apprenticeship he spent time in St. Louis, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and another two years in Nauvoo. From there he went to Alabama, and eventually made his way back to Bloomington for good.

Jung walked all the way from Alabama to Bloomington, and arrived without a penny to his name. According to a later interview, when Jung arrived he had "not sat down to a table for a meal nor slept in a bed for more than five weeks." Soon after, he ran into a former friend who offered to loan him money for some new clothes. Jung refused, saying "No, these rags are mine and paid for. I might not be able to repay you." Instead, Jung approached a woman who owned a boarding house and offered to work in exchange for food and a bed; she accepted his offer.

After fourteen months of working and taking on other small projects, Jung's finances began to improve. In 1878 he was partnered with Hamer Higgins, who owned H.J. Higgins & Co. This company was the most recent **iteration** of Haldeman's, the marble works at which Jung had apprenticed almost ten years prior. Higgins was also a former apprentice at Haldeman's, and he had worked there with Jung from 1869 to 1873.

H.J. Higgins & Co. had faced some early financial troubles but, by the time Jung became a partner, things were improving and Higgins and Jung worked hard to make the business a success. They added a new showroom and a wooden plank sidewalk outside the building. In 1886 they built a new three-floor, marble-fronted building at their East Front Street address. The new building was beautiful, with decorative marble **pilasters** and elaborate carvings on the outside, and it was meant to remind people of the wonderful carvings they could have on their tombstones.

H.J. Higgins & Co. usually employed around 20 stonecutters, paying them about \$3.25 a day (which today would be about \$11.40 per day). By 1889 the business was selling \$50,000 worth of goods (which is well over one million dollars in today's money) across eight or nine states each year.

In 1890 Charles A. Kleinau, a stonecutter employed at the firm since 1878, joined in partnership with Higgins and Jung. In 1902, Hamer Higgins died after a brief illness. The company was renamed Higgins, Jung, and Kleinau, and reorganized with Jung as president, Kleinau as vice president, and former bookkeeper Ada Maxwell as secretary-treasurer.

The firm was in good hands both before and after Higgins' death. The partners were active in promoting their business outside of Bloomington and the company created monuments for people in places as far away as Los Angeles, New York City, and Winnipeg, Canada.

In order to make it harder for their competition, H.J. Higgins & Co. did not advertise their prices. Instead, sketches of the monuments were coded with letters that stood for numbers that indicated the prices. For example, one of the company's codes was based on the phrase "HOPEANDTRY." In this case, the numbers one through nine, plus zero, represented each of the ten letters in the phrase. "H" equaled one, "O" equaled two, "P" equaled three, and so on. Therefore, if the code "HED" appeared next to a sketch, the cost of that monument equaled \$147.

Some of the company's more **notable** local works include a monument for internationally known opera singer Marie Litta and the John Jackson Kemp mausoleum. Marie Litta's monument was **commissioned** by a group of Bloomington residents after her **premature** death and was placed in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery. It stands seventeen feet, five inches high, is **embellished** with a songbook and musical notes representing her career, and is topped with a four-foot draped urn symbolizing eternal life.

The Kemp mausoleum still stands in Lexington Cemetery in Lexington, IL. It is twenty-two feet high, and covers a plot of land as big as a house! It has a marble angel **flanked** by two life-sized stone dogs, large curved sections, marble columns, and a gated entrance. When it was finished, Jung's partner Higgins declared it to be his favorite of all the monuments the company had created.

Not every monument created by Higgins, Jung, and Kleinau **memorialized** a notable figure. However, the circumstances surrounding the purchase of a monument for one ordinary citizen made quite a story! On November 16, 1910, the body of Chris G. Friedrich was found at the entrance to Bloomington Cemetery with a bullet hole in his head and a revolver in his hand. The *Pantagraph* reported that, prior to his suicide, Friedrich had purchased a grave plot from the cemetery and a monument from Higgins, Jung, and Kleinau. There was an **inquest** where Jung was required to **testify**. He said that on October 25 Friedrich had come to the marble shop. Jung asked Friedrich what he wanted and received the reply that it was none of his business. Friedrich left, then returned to purchase a monument and asked that it be **erected** on October 29 on the Bloomington Cemetery plot that he specified.

Not only had Friedrich arranged for his own plot and monument; he had also left a letter for the superintendent of the cemetery to open after his death, enclosing checks both for the burial and for a donation to the Salvation Army!

As a well-known local businessman, Jung was once interviewed by the *Daily Bulletin's* Madame Annette. In the interview he said that, although he had taken a **circuitous** route toward his career, he didn't regret his early rough experiences because they made him appreciate his success.

His private life was equally successful. Jung married Mary Cannon, a widow with two sons, three years after he went into business with Higgins. Together, Jung and his wife had two daughters and a son of their own. The family lived on Front Street in Bloomington until Mary's death in March 1901; afterward, Jung built a "foursquare" house on Clinton Street composed of blocks that he made using sand harvested from the Mississippi River and a block-making machine he purchased from Sears and Roebuck. He lived there with his two daughters for the rest of his life. Neither of them ever married.

Jung died in 1933 at the age of 83. His business partner, Kleinau, passed away that same year. In his will, Jung bequeathed his house and its contents to his daughters and also made arrangements for a house for his son, Jacob Phillip “Phil” Jung Jr.

The company continued on after Jung’s and Higgins’ death, and many of their children were involved with the business. Higgins’ children were stockholders, and one of Jung’s stepsons was a stonecutter for the firm. Jung’s son Phil worked for the firm from 1907 to 1936, then returned to the company in 1940 as Director and President. In fact, **descendants** of the three original partners continued to run the business until it closed in 1956.

Discussion: What would it be like to be on your own and looking for a career at age thirteen?