

GEORGE WASHINGTON CONRAD
1876 - 1957



GEORGE WASHINGTON CONRAD was born at Easton, Pennsylvania, in the Country's centennial year of 1876. Two of Grandma Loeffler's brothers - Henry and George - befriended two of her children - Mary and George. George Loeffler was befriended by his Uncle, George Conrad. Mom says:

My brother George got his start with my Uncle George - he went to Canada with him and Uncle George sorta took him under his wing. George went to college when he was living in Canada.

While interviewing Mom in 1977, we often got sidetracked and didn't get back to some of the people I wanted her to talk about. Granduncle George Washington Conrad was one of those. But thankfully Uncle George took up the story as follows:

While it may not be of much interest to others, I would like to append a further record of Uncle George Conrad as he and I had a special relationship. When he was about 16 years old, he was permanently blinded in his left eye by a cartridge explosion during a Fourth of July celebration. About the same time my father, Joseph Charles Loeffler, sustained powder burns in his face which may have been from the same incident. At the age of 18, Uncle George became my Godfather and he always took his sponsorship seriously, so much so that I considered him as a second father.

After finishing high school, he became an employee of The Woodstock Company, located at either Hoboken, Jersey City, or New York, who were in the lumber and millwork business. George lived with his parents in Newark and was one of the early commuters. He became an expert reader of building plans and millwork estimator. He later took a position in this line of work with a concern in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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While there he contracted a very serious case of typhoid fever but managed to get to his parents' home at 71 Murray Street, Newark, New Jersey. His mother [Mary Anna Werkheiser Conrad] and a practical nurse friend of hers, Kate Colbath of Easton, Pennsylvania, worked as an around-the-clock team and brought George safely through this illness. For this, George's parents were well repaid, as he always saw that they were properly provided for.

After that, George operated for a couple of years as an independent millwork contractor in Newark, New Jersey. He gave this up and joined a lumber and millwork company in Norwich, New York. There he became a member of the Masonic fraternity and never transferred his membership to any other lodge. Years later I visited in his lodge.

Leaving Norwich, George took a position as manager of the millwork division and factory of The W. C. Edwards Co., Ltd., at Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. William Cameron Edwards was a follower of Canadian Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier, a lifetime Senator and a very influential person. His holdings and operations were from forest to delivery of its products to the building site from his New Edinburgh Mills at Ottawa. George Conrad was entrusted with every phase of the Edwards millwork division.

He brought to Ottawa from Norwich, New York, three very able assistants: Simon Devilla (Dick) May, whom he made factory superintendent; Arthur Legnard, and Jude Merritt, whom he made section foremen. He also had an Englishman and several Canadians on his supervisory team which all worked out very harmoniously. Aside from Dick May, Uncle George's closest working associate at Ottawa was U. E. LaBelle, a French Canadian who was an expert on listing shop work from building plans.

Into this situation, Uncle George invited me, and on April 8, 1913 [at age 19], I accompanied him to Ottawa and was hired by Dick May to work in the door manufacturing section at the New Edinburgh Mills. After learning that, I was transferred to sash and, when the opening occurred, was made shipping clerk, in which I had had experience before leaving Newark. Uncle George's chief office clerk, Walter Idington (son of a Canadian supreme court justice) quit to join the army, as World War I was then on, and I succeeded to his job.

I was with Uncle George in Ottawa from April, 1913, to April, 1917. I know he watched me and also my close pal and contemporary--Oscar Desjardins-- who also worked in his office, but he gave us free rein to make our own decisions and still was ever ready to help both of us with his advice. He encouraged both of us to attend the Ottawa Collegiate Institute to study architecture, which was of great benefit to us both in our careers. I always kept in touch with Oscar Desjardins until his death in 1961 and he revered Uncle George much as I do.

While I was with him in Ottawa, Uncle George made some important business contracts. One was the furnishing of prefabricated buildings for the Canadian railways on many miles of new lines. He pioneered the furnishing of prefabricated wood silos for Canadian farms. At the time of World War I, he worked closely with the Imperial Munitions Board and furnished them with a mass of woodwork material, including thousands of cases for shipping artillery shells. For this, Uncle George, and those who worked with him, received official citations.

While residing in Ottawa, Uncle George received some advanced degrees in Freemasonry at Montreal, Quebec. I do not know just what these were.

George remained a bachelor into his 40's when he married Beulah Gates Buchan (widow of James Buchan) in 1920. She had a 12 year old daughter, Doris Buchan (Doris married Huot Sternberg in 1932.). At about the same time that George and Beulah got married, George either got laid off or was transferred from his job in Canada. George, Beulah, and Doris moved to Poughkeepsie, New York. Also living with them was Beulah's maiden sister, Christina Gates, a librarian. Tina died November, 1973, of leukemia. The family remained in Poughkeepsie until George took a position as office manager with a Stamford, Connecticut, lumber and millwork dealer who did no manufacturing. When George was 49 years old [1925], he and Beulah had a daughter, Nancy Conrad. After several years he retired and spent his last years quietly at home with his family. Nancy was only 16 when her mother died on January 20, 1941. George Conrad died of cancer in Stamford, Connecticut, on May 11, 1957, and was buried at Stamford, as was Beulah.



Nancy says:

I've honestly never known much about my father's immediate family, for some reason. He never discussed those things with me. Actually, he was a very quiet, withdrawn man. We never discussed much of anything, so its been especially rewarding to listen to the tapes [that I sent her of the interview I had with Mom in 1977].

What a shame! That whole generation seemed to be very close-mouthed! - except for my darling Mom! But then again, we children were generally too busy with our own lives to ask our parents about their lives.

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An odd thing about this family relationship is that Mom got to know her Cousin Nancy's step sister, Doris Buchan, better than she knew Nancy because they were closer in age. When Granduncle George moved back to New Jersey, Doris became (it seems) one of Granduncle Henry's "gang" as witnessed by these pictures. This current generation only got to know about Nancy by accident.



*Unidentified Man
Laura Conrad (Tom's Wife)
Mary J. Loeffler
Joe Runton (Mom's "Sweetie")
Doris Buchan (Nancy Conrad's Half Sister)
Others not identified*