

[DeCant, Lincoln Grant]

LINCOLN G. DECANT DIES IN LOS ANGELES HAD LIVED IN WATERTOWN PRACTICALLY ALL HIS LIFE [somewhat abridged]

Lincoln D. [G.] DeCant, president of the board of public safety, and well known resident of this city, died early Christmas morning at his apartments in Los Angeles, Cal., following a long illness of Bright's disease and diabetes, aged 55 years. Telegrams received by friends and relatives this morning announced his death... Several friends received Christmas cards Thursday from Mr. DeCant in which he expressed optimism concerning his condition.

Mr. DeCant had been in poor health for several years, and each winter had gone south to recuperate and escape the severe weather of northern New York. He went to California two years ago and last winter went to Florida. He and Mrs. DeCant left for California this year on Oct. 15, and had since been in apartments in that city. They expected to sail for Hawaii about Jan. 15, where they would spend the remainder of the winter.

Mr. DeCant's health became rapidly worse after going to Los Angeles and three weeks ago he was operated upon in a Los Angeles hospital for removal of a toe, diabetes infection seeming to center there. He appeared to improve after the operation and returned to his apartments. His condition became critical early this week. The announcement of his death came as a surprise to many of his friends, who did not know that his condition was serious.

Born in Watertown.

Lincoln G. DeCant was born in the city of Watertown, May 31, 1864, son of the late Theodore and Marietta Wood DeCant. He was christened Abraham Lincoln Grant Decant, but in later life was known only as "Lincoln G. DeCant" and familiarly to his friends as "Lenn DeCant." The family name "DeCant" was formerly "DeQuindre," but was changed to DeCant to be more adaptable to the English tongue.

His father came here from Detroit, Mich. His mother, Marietta Wood DeCant, was a sister of the late Abel Davis' wife. The DeCant family residence was in Coffeen street, located in the first block off Court street.

He found employment as a young man as painter and carriage trimmer in the carriage factory of the Watertown Spring Wagon company, under the Seeber brothers. Later he was employed for a short time in the Davis Sewing machine company and for a time worked in Syracuse for the firm of Hotchkin & Wilder.

Mr. DeCant had an unsatiated ambition to become proprietor of a circus, having a strong liking for entertainments and amusements, but he never owned any substantial holdings in a circus. He was engaged as stage manager for the City Opera house, a position which he held for a number of years.

About 25 years ago when E. S. Goodale was manager of the Watertown Traction Company and the line to Glen Park and Brownville was opened, in order to popularize this trolley line the company decided to establish an amusement

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resort and Lincoln G. DeCant was engaged to operate it. The resort was located south of the present community, Glen Park, a large bridge since destroyed, linking the park and the mainland, and spanning Black River.

The attractions which included merry-go-rounds, swings, and similar amusement devices, were selected by Mr. DeCant and his brother, I. Wood DeCant. The park was operated for several years and proved to be a financial proposition. After the purpose of its establishment was realized, that of popularizing the trolley line, the park was abandoned, and the bridge was torn down. This was about 20 years ago.

Got Option on Traction Co.

About ten years ago Mr. DeCant secured an option on the Black River Traction Company, successor to the Watertown Traction Company, during the period when there was so much activity on the part of the chamber of commerce to get new capital interested in the purchase of the company in the hope of securing extended service inside the city as well as outside. The option did not materialize as was expected, however.

Upon the death of Abel Davis, Mr. DeCant was bequeathed a sum which approximated between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000, Mr. DeCant being a nephew of Mrs. Abel Davis. Mr. Davis had acquired \$50,000 of this money through the sale of his interests in a foundry...

Interested in Paper Mills

Prior to receiving this inheritance Mr. DeCant was associated with his brother, I. W. DeCant, in conducting a grocery business in Court street, this city. After receiving the inheritance Mr. DeCant became interested in paper mills and was connected with the old Le Ray Pepr Company, and was at one time a heavy stockholder as well as treasurer. This company was merged a few years ago with the Carthage Sulphite Pulp & Paper Company.

For many years both he and his brother, I. Wood DeCant of Carthage, who is now one of the officers of the Carthage Sulphite Pulp & Paper Company, having been interested in the James A. Otterson mills. In fact they were among the first to associate themselves with Mr. Otterson in financing and operating his paper mills. The Carthage Sulphite Pulp & Paper Company is one of Otterson's projects.

The De Grasse paper company at Pyritee in which Mr. DeCant was heavily interested, was a third Otterson mill and was controlled by him for a few years, up to the time that it was taken over by the New York World. This is one of the largest independent newsprint mills in this section, having a daily output of about 175 tons, all of which goes to the Pulitzer publications. Mr. DeCant was also interested in the Wilna Paper company, the Champion paper company and the Malone paper company, being a director and officer in the latter.

Mr. DeCant was interested in politics and was a staunch Republican. He was appointed clerk in the senate by the late Senator Joseph Mullin and later during Senator Elon R. Brown's term... He served as deputy index clerk for six years in

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the last period of Senator Brown's term in the senate, and was sergeant-at-arms for the Laxo committee in the sensational investigation of this committee.

He was appointed commissioner of the board of safety of ex-Mayor James F. Pappa in 1903 and had served continuously as a member of that board... He was the second and last president of the board, being the successor to the late John Carpenter. Prior to his election as president he had served as chairman of the police committee of the board and took an active interest in both the police and safety departments of the city.

The city hall bell was tolled this morning in announcing his death as a city official. The bell tolled 55 times at minute intervals.

Mr. DeCant held a life membership in Watertown Lodge, No. 496, B.P.O. Elks and was active in this organization. He was a past exalted ruler of the lodge. He had managed the street fairs given under the auspices of the lodge, including the Public Square street carnival of several years ago. He had served as a member of the entertainment committee of the lodge for many years.

Chauncey W. Gray and Mr. DeCant were owners of one of the first automobiles in Watertown, the late W. H. Moore being the first. The car, a Locomobile, was of the buggy type with high wheels and a crank located on the side. It was chain driven.

In 1905 Mr. DeCant organized the Watertown Auto & Supply company with himself as president and chief stockholder... The company disposed of its holdings to Elmer E. Worthen in 1918...

Mr. DeCant married Miss Mabel Engert of Rochester about ten years ago. For a number of years the DeCant residence has been at 1202 Academy street.

Surviving besides his widow are a brother, I. Wood DeCant of Carthage, and a sister, Mrs. Persis DeCant Johnson, who married a son of Levi Johnson, now a resident of Los Angeles, Calif.; three nieces, Mrs. Benjamin Barber of Philadelphia, Pa., formerly Miss Bessie DeCant; Mrs. R. H. Jones of Carthage, formerly Miss Persis C. DeCant; and two nephews, Abel Davis DeCant of Carthage, and Arthur DeCant Johnson of Los Angeles.

Besides being a member of the Elks lodge, Mr. DeCant was a member of the Black River Valley Club of this city.

Probably the most picturesque phase of Mr. DeCant's life was his leaning toward amusements and desire to participate in the management of them. When circuses and fairs came to this section, during the time he was manager of amusements at Glen Park, the hack men and Traction company vied with each other in bidding for the attractions. Mr. DeCant always took a prominent part in the bidding battles and his diplomacy and business ability netted large returns for the company he represented.

As presiding officer of the board of safety he proved to be an ideal executive. He gave opportunity for (free expression?) on the part of the members but discouraged long discussions and snipped red tape wherever it appeared to interfere with the efficiency of the board.

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Mr. DeCant served one year as president of the Jefferson County Agricultural Society and the fair that he promoted with its varied attractions and amusements stands out prominent in the offerings of this organization.

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Daily Times, Watertown NY, Fri. 29 Dec 1919

BELL TO TOLL FOR FUNERAL TRAIN
HONOR PAID TO LATE L. G. DECANT

The city hall bell will be tolled from the time the special train leaves Richland bearing the remains of Lincoln G. DeCant until the train arrives here about 2 p.m. Sunday afternoon, according to an announcement made today.

The committee appointed by Watertown Lodge No. 498 B.P.O. Elks to go to Syracuse to meet the remains upon arrival in Syracuse and accompany the body to this city, will leave at 6:35 this afternoon. [The long list of committee members' names is omitted here.]

Owing to the uncertainty of train schedules because of heavy snows and extreme cold weather it is impossible to know definitely when the remains will arrive in Syracuse, but it will be early Sunday morning, it is expected...

The bell [in the city hall tower] will be tolled until the train arrives...

The remains will then be escorted to the DeCant residence, 1202 Academy street, where the body will lie in state until Tuesday afternoon at 1:30, when the prayer service will be held. The funeral will be at 2 Tuesday afternoon from All Souls' Universalist church. Rev. Harry Westbrook Reed, D.D., pastor of All Souls' Universalist church, will officiate. Interment will be in the family plot in North Watertown cemetery. The lodge of Elks will conduct a short ritualistic service, probably at the grave.

[Other details about transporting the remains are omitted here.]

Daily Times, Watertown NY, Sat. 3 Jan 1920

Transcribed on 5 Apr 2024 by Karen E. Dau of East Rochester, NY