

Lentz

Continued from page 5

with Solomon and Rozella becoming part of the social network and civic clubs, and they joined a local church. Solomon's daughter Caroline, or Carrie as she was often referred to, came to live with her father, stepmother, and sister Leone.

Carrie was an intelligent girl, she graduated from Arcola High School and then completed a four-year course at the University of Illinois in Urbana, where she was an active and engaged student and graduated in 1898. She quickly went to work as an assistant principal of schools in Farmer City. In 1899, she was hired to teach in Arcola and was set to begin her new vocation on Monday, September 11. But her story would end in tragedy.

On Sunday, Sept. 10, 1899, young Carrie Lentz, age 23, committed suicide while her parents were attending church. Newspaper accounts of the day said that her demeanor that morning gave her family no indication of her distress or her fateful decision.

The September 15, 1899, Effingham Republican, reported the findings of the inquest which revealed the last words exchanged between Carrie and her father that terrible Sunday morning. Rozella and Leone left for the Presbyterian Church at 10:30 to attend Sunday School, leaving Carrie at home. (One newspaper account said Le-

one remained at home while her parents went to church and that she was home but oblivious to the events that unfolded, but that seems unlikely.) It was customary for Carrie to wait for her father to come home from work at the train station at 11:00 and they would go to church together. However, that morning, when her father came home, Carrie said she was suffering from a headache and "did not care to go."

Solomon did not insist his daughter attend church, and just before he left, he handed her a copy of the Chicago Tribune, telling her that "Dreyfus had been convicted."

The comment referred to a French scandal, L'Affaire Dreyfus, or the Dreyfus Affair, named after a French artillery officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, who was convicted of treason in 1894 and sentenced to life imprisonment. He spent five years in a French prison and was re-tried in 1899 and was again convicted, no doubt prompting the comment by Solomon. Dreyfus was later exonerated. The fate of Captain Dreyfus was played out on the world stage due to press coverage and public opinion, creating international headlines and interest.

Upon hearing the news of the second conviction of Captain Dreyfus, Carrie told her father, "Poor Dreyfus, isn't that too bad." They were the last words her father ever heard her speak.

After her father left, Carrie went to her bedroom, barricaded the door, and shot herself through the chest with her father's revolver. Upon returning from church, Rozella went to check on Carrie and found the door barricaded and called for Solomon to help her get into the room where they found their daughter on the floor. The shot had passed directly through her heart, and the inquest determined that death was instantaneous.

The Arcola community was shocked and saddened by the death of young Carrie Lentz.

The Effingham Republican reported that "Arcola was indeed a city of gloom, the sympathy of all going out to the bereaved home. The Lentz home was one of the most pleasant in the city. It is a sanctuary of kindness and a cross word was never spoken within its precincts. The talented young lady was the pride of the home."

News reports also speculated that the reason for Carrie Lentz's action was the death of a young Mattoon man named Arlington "Arley" Hughes one day prior. Arley Hughes was the victim of a senseless shooting when he was accosted by a young while he was walking home on Western Avenue. The young man, who was not known to Arley, pulled a revolver and continued to stalk Arley for a few blocks until Arley had a chance to try to wrestle the gun away, but he was shot and mortally wounded in the process. He died the morning of September 9.

Carrie Lentz and Arley Hughes attended the University of Illinois and were said to share a friendship that many felt had developed into a closer relationship with a marriage in the future. The truth of that speculation will never be known, but the deaths of these two bright, young people are an undeniably tragic tale.

Carrie's younger sister, Agnes Leone Lentz, met Carlos Dickson Renfrew, possibly through their mutual association with Thornburn High School or its alumni, or their mutual connections to Arcola, and the two were wed on Aug. 19, 1909.

After the United States became involved in World War I, Carlos enlisted in the United States Army at Urbana on June 14, 1918, and shipped out for France aboard the RMS Pannonia, departing from Quebec on September 12, 1918. Private Renfrew served with Company C, 326 Machine Gun Battalion, 84th Division.

Mechanic Carlos Renfrew, later serving with the Military Police

Corps, USA Hospital No. 4, returned home from France in July 1919.

On Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1919, Leone Lentz Renfrew passed away at Burnham Hospital in Champaign, after surgery the previous morning, leaving her husband and three small children. She was just 28 years old. She was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Urbana.

Carlos Renfrew remarried and he and his wife had a son named Robert in 1921. Carlos passed away on July 20, 1854, and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery with his second wife, Rose.

After 42 years working for the Illinois Central Rail Road, Solomon retired and he and Rozella left Arcola for Santa Ana, California, possibly as a way to try to escape their grief. With the death of their daughter Leone, Solomon and Rozella had outlived all five of their children.

Rozella passed away in Santa Ana in 1920. In 1921, Solomon went to live at a national home for disabled soldiers in Sawtelle, California. He passed away on Aug. 19, 1931. He and Rozella are buried in the Santa Ana Cemetery in California.

As for the erroneous prince, Juedan Ton-Shou Zhen, Zhen also attended the University of Wisconsin, the University of California, and graduated from the University of Illinois with an engineering degree in 1911. Zhen worked for a railroad, which was his area of interest, in the United States before returning to China. In the 1916 University of Illinois school catalog, he was listed as working for the Chinese Ministry of Communications in Peking, China.

Whether he was able to witness the wedding of Leone Lentz and Carlos Renfrew is not completely clear, but he did leave his U of I college classmates something to talk about for years to come. In a May 14, 1910, article in the Champaign Daily News, it was reported that while Juedan Zhen and his college roommates at 603 S. Lincoln Avenue in Urbana were doing stunts one day, Zhen, who was described as athletic and fearless, decided to outdo his roommates' efforts by jumping from a second story window. The stunt landed him at Burnham Hospital with a compound fracture of his left leg, but he continued to maintain that, "it is possible for a man to jump from the second story of any house in town without breaking his leg, provided he lights just exactly right."

And that is princely advice, indeed.

ENDS HER LIFE.
No Known Reason For the Rash Act.
Miss Caroline Lentz, Prominent Arcola Young Woman, Dies by Her Own Hand.

At the home of her parents in Arcola, Miss Caroline Lentz, a well known young lady, committed suicide last Sunday morning. According to the story told at the coroner's inquest, Miss Lentz, while seeming to be in her usual good spirits Sunday morning, was affected with a headache, at least she so stated to her father when he came home from the Illinois Central depot at about 11 o'clock to go with her to church to join Mrs. Lentz who had left the house earlier to attend Sunday school, and for that reason Miss Lentz did not go to church.

As soon as her parents returned from church, Mrs. Lentz went to her own room to change her dress and while up stairs tried to open the door into her daughter's room but found it fastened. She immediately called her husband who at once forced the door. On the floor in the center of the room lay their daughter still in death. Within a few inches of her hand lay a revolver and a small powder burned hole in her garment immediately over her heart told the whole story. An examination later showed that the bullet had passed through the heart and of course her death had been instantaneous.

Miss Lentz was 23 years of age and had been graduated at the Arcola high school and had taken a four year course at the University of Illinois. She had taken up teaching and was to have been in charge of Room Six in the Arcola schools Monday morning. She was a bright, vivacious and highly cultured young woman and her parents and friends are at a loss to imagine what could have caused her to take her life. Several stories are in circulation to the effect that grief over the murder of Arley Hughes was the incentive for the rash act but those best acquainted with the young lady give no credence whatever to the reports as circulated.

S. B. Lentz, the father of the young woman, is the Illinois Central ticket agent at Arcola.

Willard Howell

MATTOON JOURNAL GAZETTE report of Caroline Lentz suicide, Sept. 15, 1899.

CHINESE PRINCE TO SEE WEDDING

Miss Lentz and Carlos Renfrew of Urbana to be Married in Arcola.

At 11 o'clock, Aug. 19—Miss Leone Lentz and Carlos Dickson Renfrew, of Urbana, will wed at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Lentz, on North Locust street this afternoon at 3:30 o'clock in the presence of about fifty relatives and friends.

Among the guests will be Prince Zhen Juedan Ton-Shou Zhen, May 14, 1910

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