

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

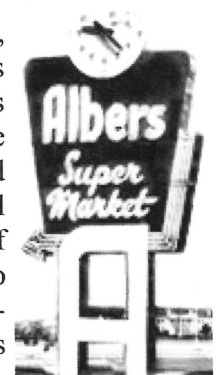
A Look Back at William H. Albers

Born in Cincinnati on May 23, 1880 to Henry and Anne Albers, William Henry Albers was educated at St. Joseph Parochial School and Hughes High School. He entered the grocery business by working as a clerk at his father's market (1902), and later (1908) became associated with the Kroger Grocery and Baking Company. Albers married Caroline Plogman in 1902, and they had two daughters, Irene and Jeanette. His first wife died in 1908, and in 1913 he married Dorothy Brown of Chicago.



In 1928, Albers became President of the Kroger chain and quickly started expanding the company. That same year, 138 Piggly Wiggly stores were acquired in Ohio and Kentucky, and 166 grocery stores were added from Michigan. By 1930 Kroger had expanded from 190 to 5600 stores. There were differences between Albers and the company's Board of Directors however, so in 1930 Albers resigned. In 1933 he founded Albers Super Markets, Inc. The flagship store was located at 4500 Montgomery Road. It was the first grocery store to use the name "supermarket", and had many innovations as well as lower prices than independent grocers. This appealed to Depression era shoppers. Albers was the first chain to use florescent lighting and provide grocery carts for customers. Fully self service, with wide aisles, the stores had a variety of nationally recognized brands (rather than private label merchandise), which saved money for housewives. Albers stores were the first to price every item so customers could see exactly what the cost was. Another innovation was cash registers with one-half cent keys. The grocery chain was a phenomenal success.

William Albers was a civic minded citizen, and served the Community Chest, CYO, Xavier University Lay Advisory Committee, and Lay Committee on Scouting. He was awarded the Silver Beaver, Silver Antelope, and Silver Buffalo Awards by the Boy Scouts of America, and served on the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts for 11 years. He was active in the Mt. Alverno Home for Boys, and served on numerous food boards and supply control committees during World War II. He was a director of the Second National Bank, Board Chairman of Sperti, Inc., and a member of the Art Museum, Ohio Chamber of Commerce, the Historical and Philosophical Society, the Queen City Club, and the Camargo Club. He was a Knight Commander in the order of St. Gregory XVI, a director of the National Council of Catholic Men, and the Cincinnati chapter of the Conference of Christians and Jews awarded him for his contributions to mutual understanding of peoples.



Mr. and Mrs. Albers resided primarily in their majestic estate, Alberly Manor. Their home, at 9200 Shawnee Run Road, was built between 1926 and 1928 in a stately English style. Situated on 100 acres, the Tudor house had an extraordinary slate roof and 23 rooms, several of which contained religious embellishments, including a chapel. On the grounds were two cottages, a detached garage, a 7 stall stable, tennis courts, a swimming pool, bath house, and 3 themed gardens. Mr. and Mrs. Albers hosted their housewarming party concurrent with their youngest daughter Jeanette's debutante party in June 1927. The pleasant and gregarious couple invited guests to their estate for numerous charitable events and private parties.

Dorothy Albers died in 1951, and William passed away June 6, 1954. He earned the nickname "Mr. Supermarket", but his life's work encompassed much more.