

German Chancellor helps start Central Oklahoma ASHRAE Chapter

As Oklahoma approaches its 100th birthday, it is interesting to look back at not only our state history, but our industry history, including our chapter history. (For a real treat, go to our chapter website www.ashraecok.org and click on "Chapter History") Although our Central Oklahoma chapter was the first to be established in this entire southwest region, being chartered in 1935, our story starts much earlier.



Otto von Bismark

In the beginning...would you believe that German Chancellor Otto von Bismark (the powerful Chancellor of the German Empire from 1862-1890) had a part? Bismark had made some promises to the southern German states to do certain things if they would join him in the war against France (Franco-Prussian War 1870-71). A young German man from Bavaria by the name of Franz Loeffler fought in the war on behalf of Germany. But after the war was over, Franz and others spoke out against the mighty Bismark for not fulfilling his promises. Franz had to flee the country to avoid becoming a political prisoner. He and his wife moved to the USA about 1880, settling in Chicago.

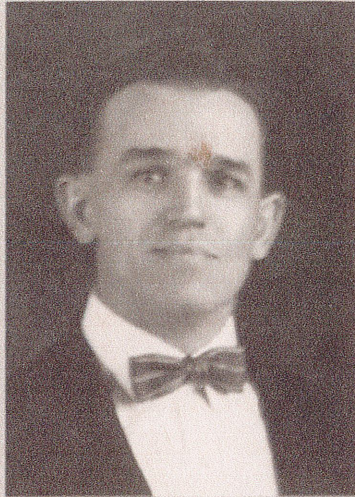
Franz and his wife had four sons, but Franz died at the early age of 46 in 1893, leaving the boys and their mother to fend for themselves. Two of the four sons (Louis and Frank) in time learned the steam heating business. Louis, the older, worked at the Pullman Company helping install steam heating systems in the sleeping cars produced on the south side of Chicago. Later, both brothers worked with a sales company called Consolidated Engineering Co. selling steam specialty products for commercial buildings. Because the brothers were traveling in the Oklahoma, Kansas and Arkansas area for their company, when the business closed its doors after the death of the owner, they came to Oklahoma City and started their own company, Federal Steam Specialties in 1918.



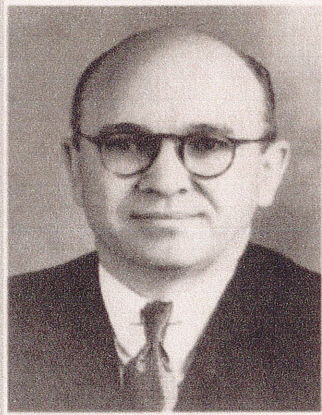
Franz Loeffler
(approx. 1882)

Frank, the younger brother, had gone to engineering school at the U. of Illinois, and later in 1914 became a member of an upstart engineering society called ASHVE (American Society of Heating & Ventilating Engineers, which began in 1895) before moving to Oklahoma. Both brothers were excellent sales engineers, and found a ready market in the new state of Oklahoma for both their knowledge of steam heating and their products. In 1924, Frank started his own company which later became Loeffler-Greene Supply, leaving Louis to grow the original business. (Louis, Sr. should not to be confused with Louis, Jr. who was just honored as "ASHRAE's oldest active member" at 94 years old during our October, 2006, chapter meeting.) Federal Steam Specialties became Federal Supply in 1935, then Federal Corporation in 1954, its present name.

Cont.



Louis Loeffler Sr.
(approx. 1924)



Frank X. Loeffler, Sr.
Founder of Oklahoma Chapter, ASHVE
Chapter President 1935-1936, 1936-1937



Frank X. Loeffler receives 50-year member
certificate from Bill Collins

1964

Frank worked to bring ASHVE to Oklahoma, and in 1935 during the Great Depression was successful in gathering together a handful of fellow vendors, contractors and engineers and utility people to form a chapter. The Oklahoma Chapter was chartered as the 18th chapter in the society. As our history book states, Frank served as president for the first two years, then others followed. The name of our society changed from ASHVE to ASHAE, then combined with ASRE to finally arrive at our present name, ASHRAE. (See the history section of our website for details.) Other Loefflers followed later as officers in the chapter, including Frank, Jr., Louis Jr., and Alan Loeffler.

As we look back at our chapter's history, there seems to be lessons for us all. Happenings in remote places with governments have their rippling effects around the world. Our chapter has benefited from many emigrants (Cuba, India, Mexico and many other countries.) Also, what you and I do matters. Each of us should realize as we write "our own history" that our actions will affect others either for good or ill.



Alan Loeffler
Chapter Historical Committee Member