

The Wernig and Kohlhepp Family

Baltimore Heritage Centennial Home
Since October 1918 - Designated November 2019

3704 Greenmount Ave., Baltimore, MD

Guilford Neighborhood



1897 - Wedding day photo of Joseph S. Wernig and Caroline C. Hauhn
1918 Owners of 3704 Greenmount Ave.

Baltimore Heritage Centennial Homes

The Wernig and Kohlhepp Family

Over 100 years ago, on October 22, 1918, two Baltimore natives of German ancestry purchased a house with ground rents at 3704 Greenmount Ave. on the eastern border of the Guilford neighborhood of Baltimore. The couple, Joseph Simon Wernig, Sr. and Caroline C. Hauhn Wernig, were the maternal great-grandparents of Edmond Francis Kohlhepp who presently lives in the same house. The Wernigs of 1918 had three children - Mary Evelyn, known as Evelyn or M. Evelyn (Edmond's grandmother), Harry Bernard and Joseph Simon, Jr. The property has remained occupied and in continuous ownership by a family member since 1918, for 101 years.

The family patriarch, Joseph S. Wernig, Sr., owned the Joseph S. Wernig Transfer Company, one of the largest transfer companies in Baltimore City in the early part of the twentieth century. He had one hundred and seventy-two horse-drawn wagons that rolled over the cobblestone streets of Baltimore. They transferred products from the train station such as paper goods, merchandise and furnishings to local businesses. The company also moved entire businesses such as McCormick Company, Inc. and Maryland Casualty Insurance Company to other locations in Maryland.



**Circa 1905-1915 - 1918 owner of 3704 Greenmount Ave.
Joseph S. Wernig, (Edmond Kohlhepp's great-grandfather)**

JOSEPH S. WERNIG

B. 1876 - D. 1944

General Express and Transfer Company

106 WEST LOMBARD STREET
BALTIMORE, MD.



This business was established January 1, 1897, by Joseph S. Wernig, at the age of twenty years, beginning with one team, which he drove himself. By personal solicitation he found hauling work for his one sorrel horse and truck—he secured later a contract from McCormick & Co. to do their hauling. This necessitated the purchase of a second team, and probably the proudest distinction in Mr. Wernig's successful career is that he has retained the hauling and confidence of his first customer to the present day. From this time on business grew by leaps and bounds until reaching the mark of "1 to 61" teams, which to-day has been increased to 101 teams—the largest equipment of any transfer company in Baltimore—and have on hand any kind or style of wagon. On September 6, 1909, Mr. Wernig made a contract with the New York and Baltimore Transportation Co., and since then with the Maryland & Pennsylvania

Railroad and the Chesapeake & York River Lines, to do all their transferring of freight, and these contracts likewise he has retained unto the present time.

The business grew so large that it became necessary to incorporate it under the title of "The Jos. S. Wernig Transfer Co.," consisting of Jos. S. Wernig and the business of Wernig Bros. The policy of this business has been "to give the best transfer service possible to the merchants of Greater Baltimore." The stables, which are owned personally by Mr. Wernig, cover a half acre of ground and accommodate one hundred and twenty-five head of horses. Mr. Wernig operates his own paint shop, blacksmith shop and feed mill.



TWO LITTLE WERNIGS TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE
JOS. JR. AND HARRY B.

Circa 1910 - Article, featuring Joseph S. Wernig's business (provided by Edmond Kohlhepp)

Over the years, Joseph S. Wernig, Sr. would throw elaborate parties for his clients and friends at his summer estate called **Poplarhurst**, which was on 23 acres of land on the Middle River next to the Baltimore Yacht Club. Among the invited guests were Mr. Hochschild and Mr. Kohn, owners of the Hochschild-Kohn Co. Department Store in Baltimore City, as well as many other prominent owners of well-known businesses throughout the Baltimore area.

In 1942, two years before his death, Joseph S. Wernig, Sr. purchased the ground rent to the property in a Revision Deed for \$1,600.00 as documented in Baltimore City Records. This action kept his family from having to deal with this detail in future property ownership transactions.

Upon his death in 1944, he conveyed the property at 3704 Greenmount Ave. in a Life Estate to his wife, Caroline C. Wernig to own and live in the property until her death and to his heirs thereafter in fee simple ownership. Unfortunately, Caroline Wernig only lived in the house 5 more years until her death in 1949. Caroline had buried one of her sons, Harry Bernard, in 1931 at the age of 29. Prior to her death she decided that the house would be left to her daughter, Mary Evelyn because her only living son, Joseph S., Jr., had inherited the family business.

Mary Evelyn, the only female heir, known by family as M. Evelyn, married Martin G. Schrufer in 1922 and they had a daughter born on June 19, 1923, also named Mary Evelyn, but known by family as Mary E. The couple separated and M. Evelyn chose to give the child her surname, Wernig, instead of the surname of the absent father, Martin G. Schrufer.



1923 - Edmond's grandmother, M. Evelyn Wernig, with Edmond's mother, Mary E., as an infant



1940 - Poplarhurst, Wernig family summer home, on the banks of Middle River



1940 - Family in Front of Poplarhurst, summer home of the Wernig family, (back, left to right) Caroline C. Wernig, Joseph S. Wernig, (front, left to right) Mary E. Wernig, M. Evelyn Wernig

As a single mother M. Evelyn worked at her father's business, Joseph S. Wernig Transfer Company, as a bookkeeper. Occasionally she travelled on arranged bus tours with her daughter and friends from a local club she belonged to called The Women's Traffic and Transportation Club.

In the early 1940's when Mary E. Wernig was in her late teens, she met Edmond James Kohlhepp. Edmond J. was working behind the counter at the drug store located at the corner of Chestnut Hill Avenue and Greenmount Ave. When Mary E. would cross the street and order some ice cream, Edmond J. would always give her an extra dip, indicating even then, that he had a crush on her.

Edmond J. and Mary E. began dating in December of 1946 and in May of 1948 they were married in the Blessed Sacrament Church located in the 4200 block of Old York Rd. According to Edmond F. Kohlhepp, presently living in the house, three generations of family members were married in this church over many years: M. Evelyn Wernig married Martin G. Schrufer in 1922, Mary E. Wernig married Edmond J. Kohlhepp in 1948, and Mary Ann Carol Kohlhepp married Robert Winfield Bacon in 1978.

Edmond J. Kohlhepp also attended grammar school at this same church and school. One of his classmates was John Steadman, who later became a well-known sportswriter for the Baltimore Sun.

Later, Edmond J. Kohlhepp joined the Navy during World War II to serve as a gunner on the Destroyer Escort, the USS Hissem. Years later his name was inscribed on the Destroyer Escort Memorial Plaque located in the main hall of the War Memorial Building in downtown Baltimore City.



1945 - At 3804 Greenmount Ave. Kohlhepp family home, Edmond James Kohlhepp with his 2 brothers and father (left to right) brothers - William, Raymond, father - William Valentine and Edmond James Kohlhepp



May 15, 1948 - Mary E. Wernig and Edmond J. Kohlhepp's wedding (parents of Edmond F. Kohlhepp)



May 15, 1948 - Mary E. Wernig on her wedding day (on right) with her mother, M. Evelyn at 3704 Greenmount Ave. in living room in front of fireplace and standing clock



Sept. 16, 1978 - At Blessed Sacrament Church on Old York Road, Location of 3 generations of Wernig & Kohlhepp weddings. Pictured is third generation to marry in the church - Mary Ann C. Kohlhepp (sister of Edmond Kohlhepp) wed to Robert W. Bacon

An interesting fact about this couple is that a great uncle of Edmond J. Kohlhepp, named James O'Hara, purchased a house one block north of 3704 Greenmount Ave. at 3804 Greenmount Ave. sometime between 1915 and the early 1930s. According to Edmond F. Kohlhepp, the family knowledge was that James O'Hara was a founder and a majority stockholder of Bowie and Marlboro thoroughbred racetracks in Maryland. He purchased the house for two of his older sisters. Mr. O'Hara's niece, Mary O'Hara and her daughter, Marie, respectively the mother and sister of Edmond J. Kohlhepp, looked after and cared for Mr. O'Hara's two sisters until they died. For their loving and generous care, the sisters left the house to the Kohlhepp family. Kohlhepp family members occupied 3804 Greenmount Ave. until it was sold in the early 1950s.

Mary E. and Edmond J. Kohlhepp occupied the 1st floor of 3804 Greenmount Ave. while Edmond J's brother, Raymond, his wife Helen and their two daughters, Joyce and Anne Marie, occupied the 2nd floor of the house. Mary and Edmond's two oldest boys were born while they lived in this house, Edmond Francis in 1949 and Michael Terrance in 1951. Shortly thereafter, the house at 3804 Greenmount Ave. sold, consequentially Mary E. and Edmond J. moved to 432 Kenneth Square a block south of Lake Ave. in Baltimore.

The couple separated in 1962, and Mary E. moved into the Wernig house at 3704 Greenmount Ave. with her four children to live with her mother. By 1965 the couple divorced, and 3704 Greenmount Ave. was the permanent residence for Mary E. and her children. In 1970, M. Evelyn Wernig's brother, Joseph Simon, Jr., who was in his late sixties died. Three months later in the same year of 1970, Edmond F.'s grandmother, M. Evelyn Wernig, died suddenly and left the house to her daughter Mary E. and her heirs, the four children.



1950 - Edmond Kohlhepp at age 1 with his mother, Mary E. Kohlhepp



1961 - Edmond Kohlhepp's siblings and his mother at his confirmation



Sept. 16, 1978 - (left to right) Mary Ann C. Kohlhepp on her wedding day with her mother, Mary E. Kohlhepp in living room at 3704 Greenmount Ave. Photographed in same spot Mary E. Wernig Kohlhepp stood with her mother 30 years earlier.



1978 - Mary Ann C. Kohlhepp (Edmond's Sister) with bridesmaids in front of family home at 3704 Greenmount Ave.

Edmond F. and his mother had many fond memories of the house and the neighborhood. He recalled the time she would take the streetcar to La Paix Lane located in the Towson area to visit her great uncle and aunt. From her relative's house, Mary E. could look over to the Turnbull Estate and see the famous writer and novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald walking around in the backyard or swimming in the pool. Edmond F. also remembers his visits to Sherwood Gardens - the first time in 1956 after his First Holy Communion at St. Mary of the Assumption in Govans, and again in 1962 when he and his friends actually met Mr. Sherwood in an exchange where he related to them the history of Sherwood Gardens.

Edmond F. recalls as a young boy in the early part of the 1950s, Disney's Peter Pan at the Boulevard Theatre which once operated at 33rd St. & Greenmount Ave. Later in the early 1960s he enjoyed watching the Edgar Allen Poe movies at the Waverly Theater.

He remembers how he would take the streetcar to the grammar school he attended at St. Mary of the Assumption in Govans, the same church that in 1956 baptized Edmond's sister, Mary Ann C., and her future husband, Robert W. Bacon, on the same day. Little did they know that seventeen years later they would meet again to begin a dating relationship and eventually marry in 1978 in the Blessed Sacrament Church on Old York Rd. This was the same church where three generations of the family women were married in 1922, 1948 and in 1978.

Some of Edmond F.'s fondest memories are of visiting the famous sculptor, Grace Hill Turnbull, twice a year for seven years from 1965-72. She lived in his neighborhood on Chancery Rd., a few blocks north and west of their house on Greenmount Ave. Although in her eighties, she was sharp as a tack and very knowledgeable about so many topics. She always insisted before he left that Edmond play her one of his recent musical compositions on her grand piano.

Mary E. Kohlhepp passed away in 2005 and the grand old house became the possession of the next generation. Upon the decision of the children of Mary E. Kohlhepp, the eldest son, Edmond F. Kohlhepp would occupy the house and is presently residing in the house to date. In the recent past, Michael Terrance Kohlhepp passed away in 2018.

The remaining family members are:

- Edmond F. Kohlhepp
- Angie Kohlhepp and Alex Kohlhepp (wife and son of deceased family member, Michael T. Kohlhepp)
- Harry G. Kohlhepp - wife, Denise Kohlhepp. Their daughter Nicole Kohlhepp Dyson, her husband Jarred Dyson and their son, Indiana Dyson
- Mary Ann C. Bacon - husband, Robert W. Bacon. Their son, Tim Bacon and his wife, Jackie Bacon and their two sons - Liam Bacon and Caleb Bacon. Their daughter, Lisa Bacon Adamo and her husband, Jason Adamo and their daughter, Brooklyn Adamo

Edmond F. Kohlhepp, has written an account of the history of the house in an article called, "A Tale of Two Houses" that was published in March of 2018 in the monthly magazine for Guilford residents called, Life Among the Tulips. This Guilford magazine has published several of his poems over the years. Edmond published a book of poems in 2017 called, "Poems of the Third Millennium" and is presently working on another book of poems. He is a self-taught musician, who played piano and composed music in his youth. In his spare time he likes to bet on thoroughbred horses on the computer and play trivia with friends at neighborhood restaurants.

By Lisa Doyle -
For Baltimore Heritage, Centennial Homes Program

NOTES:

Interview with Edmond Kohlhepp in August, 2019. Edmond Kohlhepp granted permission to use his article "A Tale of Two Houses".

"A Tale of Two Houses", Life Among the Tulips (Guilford Neighborhood Magazine), March 2018, p. 8-9.

Maryland Land Records website, Baltimore Records

Photos and Article courtesy of Edmond Kohlhepp