

Rebuilding the Home of Jacob and Louisa Regez

According to Monroe Evening Times on January 25, 1901. the morning after the Jacob Regez home at 2121 7th Street was destroyed by fire, the house had been built at a cost of \$7,000 and had been elegantly furnished. It was practically burned to the ground along with most of its contents. The loss was expected to be more than \$10,000, while the house was insured for \$8,500 and the furniture for \$1,200. The editor added, "The house at the time it was built was the finest in the city."

The family of three immediately moved in with their daughter and son-in-law, John and Ida Strahm, who lived across 7th Street on the west end of that block. Jacob had moved his cheese office into his brother Rudy's home. It was announced on the second day after the fire that Regez expected to rebuild even though he might not hear back from the insurance adjusters for several days.

It was shared on August 1 that F. Herr, senior member of the Herr & Sons architecture firm from Dubuque, had been in Monroe to meet with Jacob to look over the ground and prepare plans for a cottage to be built on the site of the former residence.

Two insurance adjusters, G. E. Page, of Milwaukee, representing the Germania of New York, and J. E. Davis, of Racine of the Aetna, were in town on August 1 to make an adjustment for the fire loss. The amount of insurance that was taken out from those companies on the residence was \$3,500. The household goods were insured in the North British and Mercantile for \$1,200.

Regez made settlement with the adjusters on August 7. The adjusters made deductions amounting to \$190, offering to pay him \$3,310, which Mr. Regez accepted. He was paid the full insurance for the contents of the home. The foundation, cellars, and furnace were as good as \$1,000 to him and were to be used by him when he rebuilt.



This photo from the family collection of Sue Wegner Veazey, great-granddaughter of Jacob Regez, shows the home at 2121 7th Street that was built in 1901. The house remained in the family for 75 years with four generations living in it during that time.

Construction of the house must have progressed quite quickly as E. J. Manning gave him a \$560-estimate and received a contract for a new steam heating outfit. According to Ida's letter, they were able to move in during Christmas week.

It sounds like many good memories were made in this house as some parties were reported in the Times. They entertained their neighbors “in a most hospitable manner at their elegant home” on June 3, 1904 as an “appreciation for the many favors extended” during the illnesses of Mrs. Regez and Herman. The ladies were invited for the afternoon and were joined by the gentlemen in the evening. “An elaborate supper was served and a most enjoyable time was realized.” All three of their children were living in the neighborhood at this time; Jacob and family were across the street in the block south of his parents while John and Ida were just west of them. Herman, of course, was still at home. The neighbors who attended numbered 17.

A smaller party was held at the home to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary in January 1906. “Their immediate relatives, numbering a dozen, shared with them the joys of the happy anniversary and made the event one long to be remembered. An elaborate supper was the feature of the celebration.”

The younger Jacob had joined his father in the cheese business, which was listed as Regez & Son in the 1900 city directory. Herman also chose the the same career. However, the father retired from that business in 1909 and by 1917 Jacob was the assistant general manager of Badger Cheese Company; Herman and his cousin Rudi were operating Regez Cheese Co.

Jacob passed away in the house on July 3, 1914 at the age of 64. He had been in failing health for more than a year, but had only been confined to his bed for three days. “The end came quite unexpectedly to the family. Friends were not aware that his condition was serious and announcement of his death was received with surprise as well as regret throughout the city.”

His obituary also said, “Since becoming a citizen of the United States Mr. Regez made the most of his opportunities in a business way and by industry, energy and thrift, which appear to be characteristics of his family, his advance and substantial, presenting a series of successes such as few attain.” What a fitting tribute to this man who had also suffered several hardships.

Herman purchased the dwelling and three lots from his father’s estate at a public auction on Saturday, October 24. The family continued to live in the home for decades. Louisa lived in the family home until she passed away in 1933. Herman, and his wife, Marie, were also residing in this house at that time. They had three children, and the couple lived there until he passed away in 1954. Marie continued to live here until at least 1976; she passed away in 1978. Since then there have only been four owners of this property, all of whom lived there. The current owner took possession on March 31, 2021 and has made many improvements to the home.