

## Theodore Verkuilen

My name is Theodore Verkuilen. Everyone called me “Red” Verkuilen. I was born on May 31, 1911 in Little Chute. My parents are Antone and Anna Verkuilen.

I am the oldest of 3 children; having one brother and one sister. Our father, Antone operated a barber shop somewhere on Pine Street. In 1928, he bought into the furniture and undertaking business with his wife, Anna. Shortly after obtaining this business, my father died of a heart attack at 36 years of age. My mother, Anna, was left alone with 3 children and two businesses to operate. Mother then decided it was time for me to leave school at age 16 and help her run the businesses. About a year later, she sent me to embalming school in Milwaukee. After a couple of years, I obtained my license to become an embalmer and funeral director. Mother and I continued to run the business together until 1933 when I took over.

Mary “Fleischman” Verkuilen and I were married on October 24, 1933. Together we had 6 children; 3 boys, Ted Jr, Richard, and Michael and 3 daughters; Janice Jansen, Mary Beth Vanden Bloomer and Margaret Ann Verkuilen.

In 1940 I purchased a building on Canal Street and made it into a Funeral Home with living quarter for my mother and sister. My sister, who was suffering with tuberculosis for many years, died in 1961. She was 45 years old. My brother, Harold ran a tavern in Kaukauna and died at an early age in 1946. He was 33 years old.

In 1942, disaster struck. The furniture business and livings quarters were destroyed by fire. Early in 1943, I rented a building on Grand Ave, next to Bunny Driessen’s barber shop and ran the furniture business from there until I could get some credit from the bank. Money and building materials were hard to come by during the war. Later in 1943 things began to happen. By the end of the year I had my new store.

In 1950, I had Jansen Construction build a block building with warehouse space and living quarter above. In 1951 I moved my family from Jefferson Street back to where we started from in 1933.

After the war, I would do some volunteer work bringing food and clothing to the Indian reservation along with other people from Little Chute. I also volunteered for the American Legion helping them maintain their camps in northern Wisconsin for many years. I was extremely proud when the legion made me an honorary member.

Mary and I have 22 grandchildren all of whom we are very proud. I passed away in 1987 at the age of 76. Mary followed in 1997 at the age of 85.

My name is Dick Verkuilen and I am Theodore Verkuilen's son.

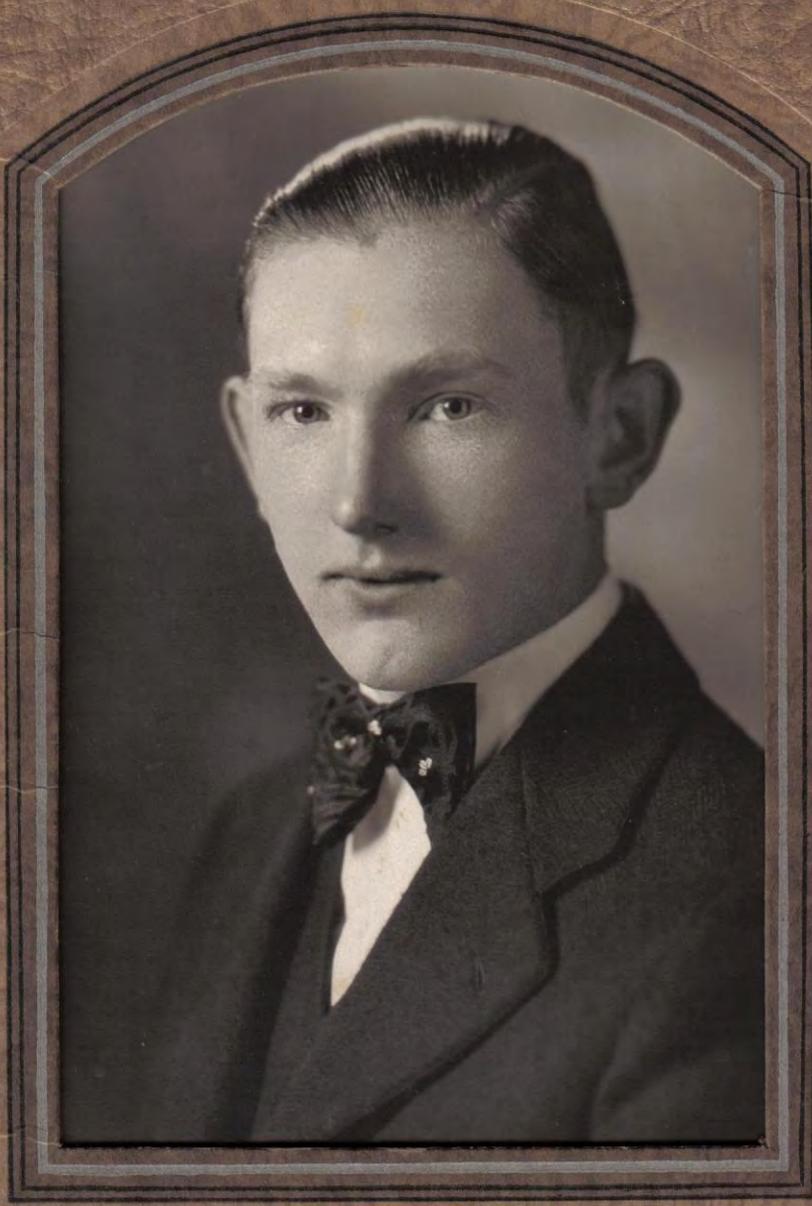
Thank you for coming and have a great day.

Little Chute Historical Society Cemetery Walk 2008









Kohler Studio  
FINE ARTS BUILDING  
49 EAST WELLS ST.  
MILWAUKEE