

## Miscellaneous Information Regarding Augustus Vignos, Alvin Hurford, The Canton Cutlery Company & The Novelty Cutlery Company

It is not known if and/or how the Canton Cutlery Company and the Novelty Cutlery Company were related but the following information may be useful in unraveling that mystery. Some documents, especially the Canton City Directories, circa 1890, make matters even more confusing by referring to the "Canton Novelty Cutlery Company".

According to both the 1880 census

(<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/images/vignos/1880.jpg>) and the 1920 census (<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/images/vignos/1920.jpg>), Augustus A. Vignos was born abt 1839. The "occupation" columns of the 1920 census show that Augustus was retired from the cutlery business. "Major A. Vignos" is mentioned in a Massillon newspaper of Sept. 7, 1899.

(<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/images/vignos/vignos.jpg>) This is the same Augustus A. Vignos. He enlisted with the rank of Captain in Company H, 107th Ohio Infantry Regiment of the Union Army on 06-SEP-1862 at the age of 24. He was wounded on 01-JUL-1863 at Gettysburg, where he lost his right arm. He was promoted to Full Major on 21-AUG-1863 and transferred from company H to company S. He resigned and received a disability discharge from Company H, 107th Ohio Infantry Regiment on 30-SEP-1864. His son, Charles Vignos, is mentioned in a 1906 Massillon newspaper report. (<http://www.justus.ca/Ohio/images/documents/vignos/charles.jpg>) It is said that his son, Charles Vignos Jr., developed extensive genealogical materials that he mailed to many relatives.

Regarding the cutlery business... There exists a 1949 publication of the Stark County Historical Society that states that Augustus Vignos founded the Canton Cutlery Company in 1886 and that his son, Alfred A. Vignos, subsequently continued the business under the name of the Novelty Cutlery Company. Contrary to this claim, the Canton Cutlery Company incorporated, executed a deed for a land purchase, with their corporate seal attached, on 18-MAR-1881.

(<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/documents.htm#MAR1881sale>). Clearly this transaction predates the 1886 claim of the Historical Society. However, a 21-OCT-1884 newspaper article states that the Canton Cutlery Company went out of business due to financial problems. (<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/documents.htm#CCCclosed>) On 11-FEB-1889, Augustus Vignos and Alvin Hurford signed a real estate mortgage, acting as partners and operating a business known as The Canton Cutlery Company. (<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/documents.htm#Mortgage-1889>). According to the Canton City Directory for 1888/89, the businesses of *Augustus Vignos* were "Canton Novelty Cutlery Co.; Vignos & Hurford". Three years later, according to the Canton City Directory for 1891/92, *Augustus Vignos & Alvin Hurford* were doing business as the "Novelty Cutlery Co.", operating as "mfrs of patent transparent pocket cutlery and razors; photographers" with "Office and works 58 McGregor". The 1910 census lists Alfred Vignos's occupation as "Manager" at the "Novelty Cutlery works". The 1913 City Directory lists "*Alfred A Vignos*" (this is the son of Maj. Augustus A. Vignos) as the

Treasurer of the Novelty Cutlery Company. "[Charles Vignos](#)" is listed as the "mgr Novelty Cutlery Co". "[Frank R. Vignos](#)" is listed as the company secretary. Both the Novelty Cutlery Company and The Canton Cutlery Company were involved in the manufacture of pocket knives that had photographs embedded in the sides of the knives. (<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/images/vignos/knife.jpg>) The Novelty Cutlery Company also produced other products, such as a series of baseball cards, that are widely sought after by collectors to this very day.

The Linton's (Harry, William and Edwin) are documented to have been involved in the cutlery business in Canton going back to at least as early as 1885. (<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/documents.htm#Repository>) Harry Linton is known to have been working for the Canton Cutlery Company in 1915, when his son-in-law, Charles S. Erbland, had a company Order Book assigned to him. ([http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/documents.htm#Order\\_Book](http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/documents.htm#Order_Book))

Regarding the Vignos family and the photography business... Based upon the City Directories, the Vignos photography business was being operated in conjunction with their cutlery business as early as 1891/92. The Canton City Directory for 1891/92 has an entry that shows "Augustus Vignos; Alvin Hurford" ran two businesses with the names "Vignos & Hurford" and "Novelty Cutlery Co" located with the "office and works north of Valley Passenger Depot". The City Directory for 1888/89 added additional information, saying that "Vignos & Hurford" carried on business as "photographers; proprs. Canton Novelty Cutlery Co." at "15 N. Walnut; n. of Valley Ry. Passenger Depot". Speculation might have it that in addition to general portrait photography, the photo business was used to take the photographs required in the making of the Novelty Cutlery Company's photo pocket knives and other products.

A photo of Nora Linton, Harry Linton's daughter, is marked to indicate that the "Vignos Art Gallery", was located at 108-110 W. Tuscarawas St. (<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/linton.htm#Nora>) According to the 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Canton, this address was located in the "Hurford House" hotel. (<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/images/vignos/hurford.jpg>) Note that "Vignos & Hurford" was the company name already mentioned. The Hurford House was a large hotel and occupied the entire block bounded by Court St., Tuscarawas, Cleveland Ave. and what was then W. 5th St. (Important Note: Many of Canton's Street names were changed in the early 1900's; especially the numbered east-west streets. This can be EXTREMELY confusing when looking at old maps and great care is required in order to avoid confusion.)

A final interesting observation is that "Charles Vignos Jr." was a neighbour of John Erbland at the time of the 1930 census. John Erbland was the brother-in-law of Harry Linton's daughter, Nora. Nora was married to Charles S. Erbland. John Erbland was enumerated at "1422 Plain Ave. N.E." and Charles Vignos Jr. at "1434 Plain Ave. N.E." (<http://www.justus.ca/versailles/Ohio/images/vignos/1930.jpg>) Is this just a coincidence or otherwise?

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