



# Bio & Character Sketch of Professor/ Father of Victim **Hermann Almstedt**

December 26, 1872 – September 12, 1954

Age in April, 1923: 50    Age at Death: 81

Age when picture was taken: (est) 55

Hermann Almstedt was born in St Louis to Hermann and Mary Louis Almstedt on December 26, 1872.

He started teaching German Language at the University of Missouri in 1901. Five years later, he wed Elizabeth Mary Wilde, a native of England, in Rugby, England on August 16, 1906.

Hermann and Elizabeth had four children – all girls – Ruth, the oldest, followed by Regina, Margaret, and Elsa, the youngest.

During World War 1, the university did not offer a German Language course and Almstedt was able to compensate by teaching other courses in Sanskrit, history and music, his favorite, where he was director of the university's Glee Club and one of the founding members of the university's Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia fraternities – the first in the country at an institution without a formal school of music.

At the end of the 1943 school year, after forty-two years of teaching, Almstedt retired from the University with the title of emeritus professor. He spent part of his retirement teaching and playing chess with his grandsons.

Hermann Almstedt died in Columbia on September 12, 1954.



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## ***Character Sketch***

Hermann's German influence was evident. He was highly educated, a lover of the performing arts, especially the piano and singing, and he expected hard work from his students and his children. As much a taskmaster as he was, Hermann was also a devoted husband and loving father who doted on his children. He taught them piano lessons and Regina showed signs of being very good so he spent extra money on a professional piano teacher for her. She would walk to the teacher's home for lessons every Friday afternoon.

Hermann had a love/hate relationship with his employers at the University as well as the town, and even the country he lived in. He could see and enjoy the abundant opportunities that America had offered him and his parents and family, but he did not understand nor appreciate the intolerance of many, especially toward outsiders, foreigners and negroes. He even experienced this himself. As a Professor with more than fifteen years of experience, his German classes were canceled from the University's course offerings during WW I. It was hard for him and he survived only because he was fluent in the language of music.

Hermann was incredibly distressed by Regina's rape. He saw how it changed her from a smart and outgoing young girl to being more reserved and unsure of herself. It tore away at him. Being a very private man, Hermann did not like – even a little – all the publicity of the notoriety that the ordeal generated. It was quickly revealed that Regina was the victim and people treated her differently.

She couldn't sleep in her own bed at night. She had nightmares. Hermann and his wife Elizabeth were overwhelmed. It affected his work and his relationships with colleagues and students. Despite all this Hermann's moral compass overcame all his other feelings when he heard that Scott was about to be lynched. "NOT IN THE NAME OF **MY** DAUGHTER!" he must have thought. His passionate plea to the mob came from his very soul and it beacons all the prejudice and racism he had seen in his years in Columbia.

Most disheartening was when Hermann realized that there had been a mistaken identification by Regina. The implications of this were tremendously saddening and the entire family sought to resolve the pain by never speaking a word about the entire issue again.