

CHARLES ROBERT SCHILLING

Owner of C.R. Shilling's "Big Three" stores on NW corner of Broadway and Walnut

Born: March 17, 1860 at Burning Spring, Wirt Co., VA

Died: September 10, 1925 at Long Beach, Los Angeles, CA

William Schilling, Sr. (father of Charles Robert "C. R." Schilling) was born in London, England in 1835 and came to America in February of 1849, settling in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. He was married to Elizabeth Jane Dietz on August 30, 1857 and 7 children (including 4 sons; Charles, James, Sidney, and William Jr.) were born to this union in West Virginia. William Sr worked as a clerk in a general store in Greenbrier County for some time and then was employed as a supervisor in the oil business where he made his financial start. In the fall of 1877, William Schilling and family came to White City, KS where they opened a general store with a stock of about \$2500. By 1883, the store had grown to carry an average stock of about \$10,000. William's wife Elizabeth Schilling died in White City in 1885 and William then remarried to Olive V. Lower, daughter of Solomon Lower who was a carpenter in Herington. Olive's brother also owned a feed and grain business in Herington. In May of 1889, a real estate transaction shows that William Schilling either expanded or moved his General Store to Herington. By 1892 however, William had moved away to Long Beach, California to open a General Merchandise business there, leaving his son Charles R. Schilling to run the General Merchandise business in Herington.

At 11:40 PM on a bitterly cold night in February of 1899, the Herington Volunteer Fire Department was summoned to a fire at the elegant Herington Hotel on what is now the northwest corner of Broadway and Walnut. That evening, a defective flue pipe in the barbershop in the southeast corner of the hotel basement was thought to have sparked a fire in the basement which quickly spread throughout the hotel. Because of the bitter cold, the city's water plugs were frozen and, in spite of efforts by the citizens and firemen, it was impossible to obtain sufficient water to control the blaze. The hotel guests were evacuated, but by 3:00 AM the hotel and several nearby buildings were a total loss. Less than half of the amount was insured and M. D. Herington suffered a severe loss of property.

Charles R. Schilling was born on March 17, 1860 and came with his family to the White City area in 1877 and then to Herington around 1889. Likely at the urging and perhaps backing of M.D. Herington, the Schillings built a large brick building which housed 3 stores "Schillings Big Three", a clothing store, a hardware/dry goods store, and a grocery store on the northwest corner of Broadway and Walnut on the former site of the burned out Herington Hotel. Schilling



used creative methods to draw people to his stores, including offering his customers raffle chances to win a piano from the Schilling store.

Meanwhile, the Schilling General Merchandise business in Long Beach and Los Angeles continued to grow. Charles' brother Sidney A. Schilling assumed management of the California stores and in November of 1906, Sidney Schilling built a new building to house the S.A. Schilling Department Store in Long Beach. It was around this time that Charles Schilling and his family left Herington and relocated to Long Beach, CA.



Charles was active in civic affairs in Herington and participated in

efforts to improve the streets in town, the formation of the Herington Fair Association, and was a backer of the placement of the Padilla monument in the city park in 1904. Charles Schilling was married Sarah Matilda Rathbone, daughter of Major Thomas Worthington Rathbone and Martha Wyatt Rathbone who had settled in



Morris Co., KS. Charles and Sarah Schilling were the parents of at least 8 children: Norah, Robert R., Pauline, Marcus, Rosalind, Marion, Thomas, and Martha. There is also a "Baby Schilling" buried at Sunset Hill who may have been a child of Charles and Sarah. Charles' brothers also became active in retail business. His brother James Schilling became a traveling salesman for the M.A. Packard Shoe Co, Sidney Alfred Schilling was owner of the S. A. Schilling Department stores in Long Beach, and William Schilling Jr became a wholesale merchant for Ladies' furnishings. Charles died in Long Beach on September 10, 1925 at age 65 and is buried in California.