



## *Anton Albert Lausmann*

**1889-1978**

As a young boy growing up in the later 1800's in the musical instrument paradise of Graslitz, Bohemia, Anton Albert Lausmann longed to be a musician or an actor. But his father, although a musician and musical instrument repairman, wanted something more for his son. Tony, as he was nicknamed, recalls his father's admonition, "Die musikanten sind immer hungrig!" (Musicians are always hungry)

"To validate his dictum, when I was older, dad saw to it that I did not learn to read music. In addition, he paid a fine gentleman to teach me how to play a concertina – totally useless in a formal band, they both asserted, because there was no score written for such an instrument. My dad had very definite ideas."

Although Tony plunged wholeheartedly into the timber and lumber business once he was introduced to it, his avocation was always music. He loved it and people loved him for it. Many people in the forest industry have fond

memories of Tony playing the concertina. A keen businessman, Tony used his talent for music to create a better understanding between his friends and business associates.

In 1893, when Tony was four years old, Vinzenz Lausmann, Tony's father, was selected to represent the combined musical instrument makers of Bohemia and Austria as custodian for the display at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Vinzenz liked Chicago so much that he moved his family there. Because of the language barrier, Tony had difficulty with school and dropped out in the eighth grade. He began his entry into the business world at age 15 by working as a stenographer and office boy for a lumber broker, William E. Barrett. Through his association with Barrett's business, Tony had contact with visiting mill representatives from all over America and Europe. He began to get

restless and yearned to see some of the forests and lumber mills that he had heard and read about.

So in 1907, at age 17, he boarded a train for Hood River, Oregon, where he began working as a stenographer for the Stanley-Smith Lumber Company. He bought his first “timber rights” in 1908. In 1915, he formed his first corporation under the laws of Oregon.

Tony Lausmann was an innovator who constantly sought ways to improve production and performance of his operations. His interest in telephones enabled him to adapt textbook circuitry to meet the needs of a logging camp. He shinnied up trees and strung lines. Then he wired a homemade switchboard that he plugged into a telephone line that went to the “central” number in town. Tony was probably the first to install a PBX system in an Oregon logging camp with access to cross-country connections.

In 1916, he married Grace Ellen Stewart, a schoolteacher from Hood River, and by 1919, Tony had started several corporations. He moved to Portland where he maintained “operations headquarters” for more than twenty years. It was during this time that he and Grace adopted two children, Jerry and Carol.

Timber stands in 1940 had become unavailable to him within easy reach of his Portland office. His brothers, Joe and Bob, spotted a lumber mill deep in the timber of Southern Oregon on the Rogue-Umpqua divide. They bought the mill and named the enterprise KOGAP – Keep Oregon Green and Productive.

Another event in which Tony played a significant part during the 1940’s was a meeting of the Joint Committee on Forestry Conservation. As a member of the Joint Committee, he was one of the thirteen men who launched the first tree farms in America. The program grew and there are now hundreds of millions of acres of private forests throughout the United States that are growing trees under the tree farmer banner.

After World War II Tony reworked his corporate structure and became involved in politics. He was elected to the presidency of Oregon Republican Clubs and he became “Mr. Republican” in Oregon. He declined the suggestion that he run for governor, but he did serve as political advisor to an ambitious broadcast journalist, Tom McCall, who later was twice elected to the governorship.

Although he never personally felled a tree, labored in the woods, or worked in a lumber mill, paperwork expert Lausmann was crowned “Timber Baron” in 1972 by the Southern Oregon Timberman’s Association.

William D. Hagenstein, former executive vice-president of the Industrial Forestry Association, remembers Tony with a great deal of fondness. “I have never known anyone who emulated the spirit of the Golden Rule better than Anton Lausmann. He radiated goodness and consideration for the other fellow in everything he did.

“I often think of Tony sitting in his swivel chair (wherein he received the name ‘swivel chair logger’), with a cigar clenched between his teeth, pouring over his books as the master bookkeeper. Almost every time Tony twisted that chair – and very often it was squeaky because he was too busy to grease it – he started other wheels turning that ultimately provided hundreds of people with jobs, produced lumber and other wood products for thousands of homes. All in all, he made a great social and economic contribution to our nation.”

Tony’s interest in public service extended to many areas. With the continuing success of KOGAP, he created the Lausmann Foundation through which dozens of organizations were beneficiaries.

KOAP continues to run as a family enterprise manned by Tony’s son, Jerry Lausmann, and cousin, S.V. “Duke” McQueen.