

We are happy to name Wilhelm Krasin as the 67th inductee in the Marshfield's 150: Heroes and Leaders, Past and Present register. Wilhelm Krasin was nominated by his granddaughter, Patricia Nennig.

My Grandfather Wilhelm (Bill) Krasin left a lasting legacy in Marshfield by the buildings he built, as well as other communities throughout the Midwest. He would modestly tell people that he was a "builder" or a "brick man." Anyone that has driven down Marshfield's Central Avenue has seen his life's labors.



Bill was born in Volhynia (Ukraine) Russia in 1892.

He came to America with his family as a young child. He moved to Marshfield by way of Tigerton. He referred to his brother Gus Krasin as the "brains of this outfit" (an architect), and along with Jake and Fred, Grandpa got his start in Krasin Brothers Construction Company before starting his own Marshfield Construction Company. In their lifetimes, they built or renovated over two hundred buildings and homes in Marshfield (sometimes adding "modern conveniences" such as basements, heating systems and indoor plumbing).

I don't want this to simply be a list of all his work. Although to give you a sampling of just how many projects he worked on, here's some of the jobs he spoke of most often.

- The Purdy Junior High School (now the Aster Assisted Living, 305 S. Chestnut)
- The Parsonage for St. Joseph Hospital (now the Ronald McDonald House, 803 W. North St.)
- The Karau-Radke Building (now Sherwin Williams Paint Store, 337 S. Central)
- The Weber Building (now La Queretana, 255 S. Central, with a design featuring meat lockers beneath 4th St. It was quite revolutionary for its time.)
- The Sears Building (now Circle the Date, 400 S. Central)
- The original WDLB building (1714 N. Central) now surrounded by other businesses
- The New Adler Theater (now Rogers Cinema, 419 S. Central)
- The Consumer Store (now St. Vincent DePaul, 169 N. Central)
- Blum Brothers Box Company buildings (now Mall Furniture and parts of Marshfield Furniture, 113 W. 9th)
- Weinbrenner Shoe Factory (305 W. 3rd)
- The Deming Building (now MoJo's, Hub-City Times, and other businesses, 201 S. Central)
- Hotel Charles (now Charles Apartments and other businesses, 103 W. 2nd)
- The Armory (now The Oak Avenue Community Center, 201 S. Oak)
- My home that he built for his family (1105 S. Cedar) as well as many other homes (mostly brick)

This list could go on and on. Driving past any of these buildings with grandpa could bring on anecdotes about the building process. Oh, how I wish I would have been a smarter child and written them down!

There was so much more to him than just being a “builder.” Aside from his lasting legacy on Marshfield’s history, I only knew him as grandpa. It seemed to me that everyone knew him wherever he went. I had no idea why.

By the time I came along, Bill had “retired” from the construction business and sold Krasin Berg Vault Works, but he never stopped working. He was always tinkering with one project or another in his workshop. He was rarely alone. At least one of his grandchildren usually followed him to play in the sawdust or just watch him work. Growing up, I was his shadow. He called me his little Putschke. In years since I have found several meanings, the most fitting is that it is a common Russian term of endearment (loosely meaning fur slipper or comfortable).

I have many happy memories of being by his side at his Senior Citizen Club meetings. Since he was President of the Club, I was allowed to sit by his side, or dance or twirl in the middle of the floor.

We spent many happy hours fishing. He would laugh when I would squeal and jump up and down with every fish caught. He never seemed to mind that my antics probably scared away the fish! I don’t remember ever being cold in the ice fishing shanty he made.

He was very active in his Church, Immanuel Lutheran. He tested grandma’s nerves by being a Steeple Jack and repairing church steeples long after retirement. He said he loved working on Immanuel’s steeple the best because he could look over the town from that high view and see many of his projects. My heart sunk when I saw that steeple come down, despite efforts to save it.

Along with my Grandma Anna, they had an incredible work ethic. Together they raised four children; Alice Krasin, Don Krasin, Edna Schreiner and my Mother, Arlene Shaw. Don worked alongside Grandpa in his building projects, even supervising some, until he left to serve in the Army Air Corps during WWII.

I was inconsolable when grandpa died. What was I going to do without my grandpa, my best friend? All these years later, I feel so happy to have been his little Putschke. I like to picture him as a young man doing what he loved to do. As I drive through the neighborhoods of town and see a fine brick house with that certain look, I wonder if it might be a Krasin built house. I wish I could turn back time and have him next to me for one more drive around town, this time recording every word.