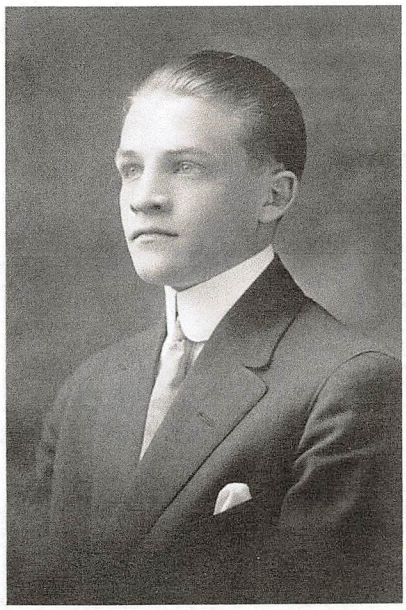


Alfred John Schneeman

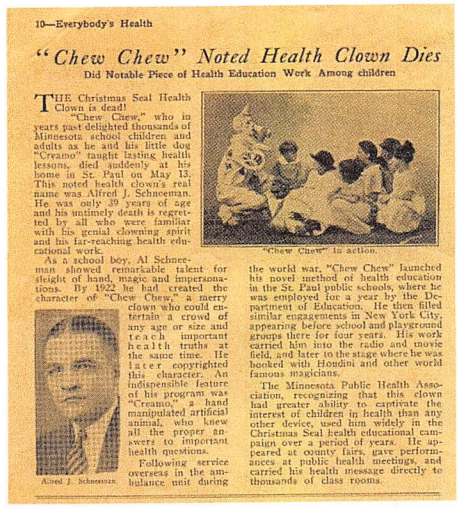
Alfred Schneeman was born on October 15, 1895, in St Paul, Minnesota to Charles Johann Schneeman (1857–1917) and Mary Rosalla Minea Schneeman (1868-1940). Charles was a successful business man that emigrated from Germany. He operated Schneeman's Barber Shop for many years and later was a successful real estate broker. Alfred was the oldest of five children. The family owned a large five bedroom home on Hall Street in West St Paul where Alfred lived most of his life. Educated at St Mathew's Catholic School and Cretin Military High School. Albert was a "showman" at an early age. He had what is described as a remarkable talent for magic and impersonations. While still in High School he performed locally and had established his own entertainment company called the Park Amusement Company. Unfortunately, his career was interrupted by the Great War.

He registered for the draft on June 5, 1917 at age 21. He and enlisted in the National Guard Ambulance Company No.135, 34th Division on July 15, 1917 and by October 1st, he was training at Camp Cody, New Mexico where he was promoted to Private First Class. Unfortunately, his father died that November, making his absence more difficult. He shipped out from Hoboken, New Jersey on September 17, 1918 on the SS Cretic and arrived in Liverpool, England on September 29th. His unit then trained in Bordeaux, France for a month and another month in LeMans, France. Alfred was fortunate, and did not see action. The Armistice Agreement was signed on November 11, 1918 and his unit was lucky to be one of the first to leave. He sailed for home from Pauillac, France, arriving in Hoboken, New Jersey on December 12th. He was discharged from Camp Grant, Illinois on January 20, 1919. He applied for and received a college bonus in the amount of $285.

Returning to his boyhood home and his career as an entertainer, Alfred was looking for creative ways to enhance his business model and build a good revenue stream. At this same time, Tuberculosis was having a devastating impact on our nation's children. Schools and especially the public health departments in each State wanted to do something. They believed that eating the right foods and having good hygiene could eliminate the dreaded disease. By 1922, Albert had created his signature charter, Chew-Chew the Clown who had a little invisible dog named Creamo, who always had all the answers. He first launched his novel method of health education in the St. Paul School District where he was employed by the Board of Education. This was followed with several years working with the City of New York public schools. His work was so successful that it carried him into a radio and movie career, and later to the stage where he was booked with Houdini and other world famous magicians. The Tuberculosis Association of New York was quoted as saying "Chew-Chew has accomplished more in forty minutes than one can in weeks of classroom instruction." Returning to Minnesota, Chew-Chew began working with the Twin Cities Christmas Seal Health Education program. He also appeared at public health meetings, county fairs and continued to carry is health message directly to thousands of class rooms. At some point he copyrighted the charter.

Alfred never married. On May12th, 1935, at the age of 39, Alfred died from a fall down the stairs. He suffered a fractured skull and severe brain damage. He is buried in Calvary Cemetery in St Paul, Minnesota.

The name Schneeman is also spelled Schneemann and his family appeared to use both spellings.



10—Everybody's Health

"Chew Chew" Noted Health Clown Dies

Did Notable Piece of Health Education Work Among children

THE Christmas Seal Health Clown is dead!

"Chew Chew," who in years past delighted thousands of Minnesota school children and adults as he and his little dog "Creamo" taught lasting health lessons, died suddenly at his home in St. Paul on May 13. This noted health clown's real name was Alfred J. Schneeman. He was only 39 years of age and his untimely death is regretted by all who were familiar with his genial clowning spirit and his far-reaching health educational work.

"Chew Chew" in action.

As a school boy, Al Schneeman showed remarkable talent for sleight of hand, magic and impersonations. By 1922 he had created the character of "Chew Chew," a merry clown who could entertain a crowd of any age or size and teach important health truths at the same time. He later copyrighted this character. An indispensible feature of his program was "Creamo," a hand manipulated artificial animal, who knew all the proper answers to important health questions.

Following service overseas in the ambulance unit during the world war, "Chew Chew" launched his novel method of health education in the St. Paul public schools, where he was employed for a year by the Department of Education. He then filled similar engagements in New York City, appearing before school and playground groups there for four years. His work carried him into the radio and movie field, and later to the stage where he was booked with Houdini and other world famous magicians.

Alfred J. Schneeman

The Minnesota Public Health Association, recognizing that this clown had greater ability to captivate the interest of children in health than any other device, used him widely in the Christmas Seal health educational campaign over a period of years. He appeared at county fairs, gave performances at public health meetings, and carried his health message directly to thousands of class rooms.