

A Pre-Indiana-Style-Reel Indiana Reelmaking Company

Steven K. Vernon

George Andrew Lemon was born on February 3, 1859, in Ohio, the son of a farmer. By 1870, the family moved to Grant County, Indiana, where George would become a drayman, someone who delivered goods carried on a flat-bed, horse-drawn wagon. In April, 1881, he married Margaret Camblin, who had given birth to their daughter Bertha a few months earlier. Their son Virgil was born in 1882.

Around the turn of the century, George was driving a moving van, as was Virgil, who was following in his father's tire tracks. As the moving business grew, George expanded into storing and selling both new and used goods, especially furniture. By 1907, G.A. Lemon & Son was running advertisements focusing on their "new and second-hand furniture, stoves and carpets."

G. A. Lemon & Son
NEW AND SECOND-HAND
..FURNITURE..
STOVES AND CARPETS
CASH or PAYMENTS
Moving Vans and Storage Room
Goods Packed to Ship
507-511 South Adams Street MARION, INDIANA

A G.A. Lemon & Son ad from a 1908 Marion directory.

Fred Nessel was born in April, 1879, in Germany, and his family arrived in the U.S. in 1880. He was a machinist when he married Bertha Lemon, Virgil's sister, in Chicago, Illinois, in 1899. By 1903, he and Bertha were living with her parents in the rooming house run by Maggie Lemon in Marion, Indiana. When G.A. Lemon & Son was established, Nessel went to work for his father-in-law, initially as a salesman. Both families moved into a home at 310 W. Fourth St.

The *Marion City Directory and Grant County Gazetteer for the Years 1908-1909*¹ announced, in bold font, that **Lemon & Nessel**, fishing reel manufacturers, was located at 507 to 511 S. Adams, the same address as G.A. Lemon & Son. In the same directory, Fred Nessel announced that he now was engaged in the manufacturing of fishing reels.

Talk about an anti-climax. Lemon & Nessel may have lasted only a year or so. My own searches and queries to local and state libraries and Grant County offices have failed to find any evidence of the company's existence after 1909. No directory listings, no advertisements, no county business records.

LEMON & NESSEL , fishing reel mfrs., 507 to 511 s Adams; Phone 192
FISHING REEL MANUFACTURERS. LEMON & NESSEL , 507 to 511 s Adams; Ph. 192
NESSEL, FRED (Bertha), mfg. of fishing reels, 507 s Adams; h 310 w Fourth; Phone 1592
LEMON, GEO. A. (Maggie M.), G. A. Lemon & Son, 507 s Adams; h 310 w Fourth; Phone 1592

Listings in the 1908-1909 Marion directory. These entries are the only evidence of the reelmaking company that I have found. The second entry is from the classified section of the directory.

Although it would be nice to think that the company made Indiana-style reels, the first patent for a reel of that type was granted in late 1908 to Charles Rider, who had applied for the patent at the end of 1907. He would establish his own firm to make the reel in Fort Wayne.² There's a very remote possibility that one of the assignees of Rider's patent, a member of a local fishing club, or Rider himself might have known Lemon or Nessel and proposed that they produce the Rider reel, but the idea seems far-fetched. Therefore, it appears unlikely that the firm made radial-arm, Indiana-style reels. In fact, we may never learn what, if any, reels the company made.

After World War I, Nessel was still working for and living with Lemon, and both families moved to a new location by 1921, as did Lemon & Son.

Maybe further research will uncover more information about Lemon & Nessel and its products. For now, all we can do is add the company name to our growing list of U.S. reelmakers and hope that someone turns up an identifiable Lemon & Nessel reel.

Notes

1. Inter-State Directory Co., Marion, Ind.
2. Vernon, S.K., *Antique Fishing Reels*. Havertown, Pa.: Stue Publ., 2018, pg. 105

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