

Dr. John L. Roemer*
President Lindenwood College, 1914 —

"Dr. John L. Roemer, president of Lindenwood College, was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, May 2, 1865.... John Roemer, father of Dr. Roemer was born in Germany September 5, 1829, and came to America with his father when eight years of age...."

"After crossing the Atlantic he first lived at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, subsequently removed to Ohio and later to West Virginia, where for many years he was a leading dry goods merchant of Wheeling...."

"On the 17th of February, 1853, he was married to Sarah Ann Donnell, who was of Scotch descent. ^{Sixteen} ~~Eight~~ children were born to this union, and Dr. Roemer, a brother ^{and sister} ~~Charles~~, and sister ~~Sarah (Mrs. J. W. Averett-Thomas)~~, are now living.

"The early education of Dr. Roemer was acquired in the fifth ward school of his native city, after which he attended the Linsly Institute, a military school for boys, at Wheeling. He had the good fortune of having to "work his way" through college and became acquainted with the ways of the business world. At one time he was assistant to the circuit court clerk of Ohio county. Later he became a bookkeeper for the American Insurance Company. During his summer vacations he was engaged by insurance companies and manufacturing plants to look after special accounts and their adjustments, and returned to the University of West Virginia in the fall with enough money saved up to pay his expenses for the school year. Before going to the Western Theological Seminary, after completing his university course, he became the private secretary of the gentleman who

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later became his father-in-law. Upon completion of his first year at the theological seminary he spent four months among the cowboys of the West as a Sunday school missionary. The three years of seminary work finished, he became pastor for a short time of the Fairview Presbyterian Church at Thomas, Pennsylvania, ^{twenty-five} ~~thirty~~ miles out of Pittsburgh. He next went to Cleveland, Ohio, as pastor of the new congregation known as the South church, and later he went to the old and fashionable First church of Chillicothe, Ohio.

Called to the Tyler Place Presbyterian church of St. Louis, Missouri, he ministered to the young church for over nine years and witnessed its development into one of the largest and most active congregations of St. Louis. While pastor of the Tyler Place church, the presidency of the Lindenwood College was offered him. Reluctant at first to enter a new field of labor, upon the earnest solicitations of the late Dr. Samuel J. Nicolls and Colonel and Mrs. James Gay Butler, he accepted the position and entered upon the work May 12, 1914....

"On June 2, 1892, Dr. Roemer was united in marriage to Miss Lillie Pickenpaugh, daughter of Thronton Pickenpaugh, of Morgantown, West Virginia, a leading dry goods merchant in that city for forty-five years. He was a public-spirited man, interested in various pursuits, including the cultivation of timber lands and farming. For twenty-five years he was the president of the city school board. His ^{father} ~~daughter~~ was Nicholas Pickenpaugh, who was born in Morgantown, West Virginia, and his father came from Germany, where his family had long been prominent. He died August 18, 1902. Mrs. Roemer's mother was Mary Frances Wagner, who departed this life in 1919. She was a native of Morgantown, West Virginia, and her father was William Wagner, a native of Shermans town, Pennsylvania, soldier in the Revolutionary army, and starved to death as a prisoner."

John Wagner, the first American member of the family, came from Wales. He was the father of William Wagner, who for many years was a cashier of the First National Bank of Morgantown, where he was a prominent and influential citizen. His wife was Lydia Dunstan Wagner, whose grandfather, John Waterhouse, was a soldier in the Revolutionary Army and starved to death as a prisoner on an English man-of-war.

"John L Roemer takes an active interest in the social amenities of life, belonging to the Missouri Athletic Association of St. Louis, the University Club, the Sunset Club of Chillicothe, Ohio, and numerous social and scientific associations. He has membership in Ellsworth Lodge, No. 505, A.F. & A. M. , of Cleveland, Ohio; Hillman Chapter, No. 166, R.A.M., of Cleveland, Ohio; and Ohio Consistory No. 8 of Chillicothe. He is also a member of the United States Chamber of Commerce and the Missouri Historical Society.

"Of the four who consecrated themselves in 1914 to a greater Lindenwood--Dr. Niccolis, Colonel and Mrs. Butler and Dr. Roemer-- but one remains. To Dr. Roemer is committed the responsibility of bringing to fruition the dreams of those who gave themselves and their means that the great southwest should have a college for young women equal to the best in the country. The college property and endowment are now valued at ~~over three~~ ^{over two} million dollars. To Mrs. Roemer her husband pays the highest tribute for his success. Giving themselves in the trying hours of the history of Lindenwood, they expect when their work here is finished to have realized to some small degree at least the dreams and hopes of all the noble ones who since the beginning of the college have looked forward to a greater Lindenwood. Throughout Dr. Roemer's whole life, whatever

his hand was found to do, in his official duties or in any other sphere, he has done with his might and with a deep sense of conscientious obligation. Well versed in learning and with a deep knowledge of human nature and the springs of human conduct, together with a strong mentality, an invincible courage and determined individuality, he has become a natural leader and a teacher and director of opinion."