

Addendum 6 ALMA VON BRANDIS



106 Dr Alma von Brandis 1859-1950.

We learn from her last will and testament that Alma von Brandis was born on July 24, 1859, in Chicago, Illinois. Her birth moment could not be provided by the Chicago Historical Society, due to a great fire in 1871 that destroyed virtually all vital records held in Chicago, but records might be found in another source like the church registry.

Apart from her picture in February 2012, the genealogist, Mr Christobal Aprato from Los Angeles, provided me with many documents in August 2003 that made it obvious, "that her maiden name was Wünsche

(Wuensche). Her father, the druggist Charles Wünsche, was born in 1826 in Saxony, Germany. There he married Dorette, born in 1816 in Hannover, Germany. They had one son, August O. who became an electrician in Chicago, and one daughter named Alma. Alma married on May 4, 1886 in Los Angeles, Gottfried von Brandis, who was born in 1852 in Germany. He was a tradesman and had an agency for cycles, and some time later a retail house, and he was an insurance agent. He died on February 18, 1904 at the age of 52 in South Pasadena from complications of chronic nephritis."

The California State Board of Medical Quality Assurance confirmed that Alma was licensed as an osteopath in California in 1905.

Mrs Von Brandis was a member of the Theosophical Society, the Los Angeles lodge, in 1904. She went to Europe in the summer of 1905 and heard Dr Steiner lecture. She was greatly impressed with Steiner who claimed to be a member of the Rosicrucian Order at that time, and she urged Max Heindel to come to Vienna, Austria. But Heindel did not respond because of a weak heart and lack of interest. She returned to America in 1907 and finally succeeded to persuade him. She paid for his

trip, after which both went to Europe. Their (more than) friendship broke up in March 1908.

In her last will and testament, made on September 12, 1946, in Los Angeles, Miss von Brandis declares to be a widow without children, brothers, sisters, or other close relatives. Faith Verhaar, her landlady and friend, would take charge of the funeral and the cremation of her body, and the Security-First National Bank of Los Angeles was nominated and appointed by her as executor. Her writings were bequeathed and given to Mrs von Sivers Steiner of Dornach, Switzerland. Mr Norman Macbeth of Springfield Valley, N.Y., who first met her in 1945, informed me via a letter of September 15, 1983, that, "About 1948 Mrs von Brandis employed Dr Arnold Wadler to work with her on the notes she had made when working with Rudolf Steiner. He found that her papers were hopelessly confused and largely illegible, and she herself was no longer clear enough to tell him anything reliable."

"She was slightly acquainted with one or two of the Los Angeles members [of the Anthroposophical Society], but never came to meetings. We assumed that she was a member, but did not really know."

"About 1948 Mrs von Brandis made a will, leaving everything to the Society, but soon thereafter she made another will in which she left everything to her landlady. When she died her property, which was only a few thousand dollars, was divided between the Society and the landlady in a friendly settlement."

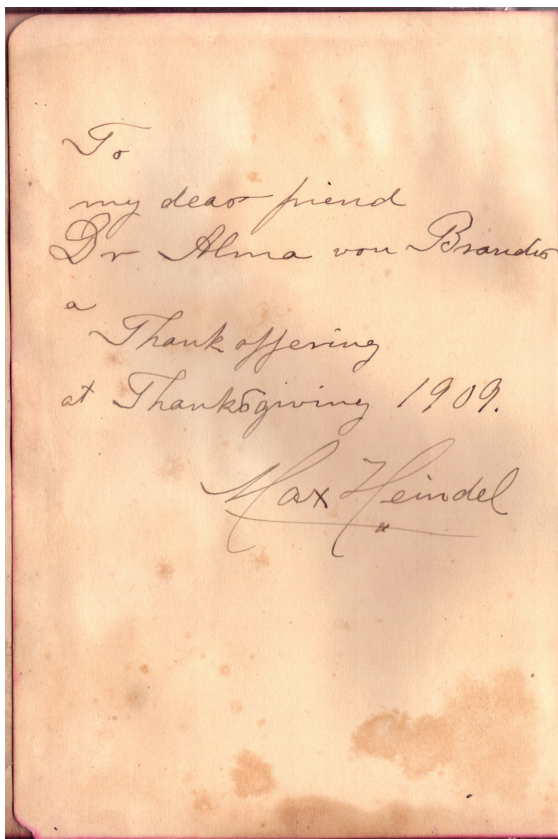
"Her papers were not preserved, and I believe they were lost or destroyed a few years before her death."

She died on November 16, 1950 at the age of 91 years, due to coma and consumption of lungs in Los Angeles.

In Rudolf Steiner's complete works no 264: *Zur Geschichte und aus den Inhalten der ersten Abteilung der Esoterischen Schule 1904-1914* [About the History and contents of the first Section of the Esoteric School 1904-1914], Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1984, we read on page 449: "Alma von Brandis (data concerning birth and death unknown) was a member of the German section since 1906 and esoteric disciple of Rudolf Steiner. At first living in Berlin, later in America and sometimes in Dornach. She, with some American friends, donated a good round for the continuation of the work on the plastic wood-group in 1919."

The illustration below is a dedication handwritten by Max Heindel from a red-leather bound first edition of *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* by Max Heindel given to Dr Alma von Brandis. It later came in possession of Mr Ernst Esch, living in Amorbach, Germany. He died in 1968. His widow

gave the book in 2004 to the husband of her niece Ronald R. Kistner in Kirchhain, Germany, who in turn donated the book in 2010 to Mrs Elizabeth C. Ray, living in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, USA.



107. To Dr Alma von Brandis.