

KOESTNER ASSOCIATES
Professional Engineering & Land Surveying Since 1914

By: Steven Koestner

It started in 1914 when George M. Foulds broke off from Lozier, Zabriskie & VanKuren to form his own engineering firm in (town), Bergen County, New Jersey. Mr. Foulds had been a civil engineer in his own right, preparing many of the detailed drawings and tax maps that are still in use today.

1914 was a good year. Business was strong and the money supply was stable since the Federal Reserve had also been formed that year. There was an aura of confidence in Northern New Jersey and across the rest of the country, as well. With the outbreak of World War I, however, business grew slowly and didn't pick up until the prosperity of the 1920s. In 1924, Mr. Foulds asked my grandfather, Frank W. Koestner, to join the firm. At that time, Mr. Foulds was the Borough Engineer of Little Ferry and my grandfather was working for Public Service (now PSE&G). My grandfather jumped at the opportunity to learn engineering and became a valued and reliable employee.

Business was great throughout the 1920s and didn't slow down until 1931. At that point, public confidence waned and work came to a near halt as the country weathered the depths of the Great Depression. It wasn't uncommon for only one survey order to come in during a week. My grandfather stayed with it, remaining on the books, but not collecting a salary. During those dark economic times, he earned his living pitching baseball games, while continuing to develop his reputation as a knowledgeable and honest engineer and surveyor.

In 1935, Mr. Foulds died, and the business passed to his wife, who had no interest in running it. Since my grandfather was owed a large back salary, he bought the business from her for a pittance. Shortly thereafter, his brother George joined him.

The remainder of the 1930s and the early 1940s remained slow due to the war effort. Bergen County was still filled with farms and lots of land ripe for development. When World War II ended in 1945, my grandfather was in a perfect position to benefit from the development boom that was soon to follow. Farms were scooped up by builders, roads were laid out, and houses were built by the thousands.

My father, F. William, graduated from Stevens Institute of Technology in 1951 and immediately joined the firm. Other family members — cousins of both my mother and father — and others were hired as well. My father added to the business by acquiring surveying and engineering records of other firms as the owners retired. These records added to our land library and helped us to provide quicker and better service. They also brought in business.

I joined the firm in 1978 after graduating from Clarkson College of Technology. My grandfather was still working then, and I was fortunate to be able to work side by side with him over the next six years. I became a Licensed Land Surveyor in 1983 and a Licensed Professional Engineer in 1987.

During my tenure as President of Koestner Associates, I've seen remarkable changes in real estate in Northern New Jersey. Farmlands have been replaced with housing, retail and industrial development. But the land is still there, and Koestner Associates is still positioned to provide land surveying and civil engineering services for all kinds of land development. Further, more stringent regulations have caused a greater demand for our services and expertise. From environmental permits to storm water mitigation to local, county and state DEP permits, DOT permits and agency permits, our services are needed.

Koestner Associates has a premiere team of professional engineers, surveyors, draftsmen, autoCAD specialists and project managers. Our clients include title companies, developers, municipalities, builders, architects, law firms, general contractors and homeowners. We utilize state-of-the-art equipment, our own field data collectors and the latest software to provide truly professional field to finishing mapping.

At Koestner Associates, we're proud of our long-standing reputation in Bergen, Passaic, Essex, Sussex, Hudson, Union, Morris, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean counties, NJ. Despite the many changes in land use, development, technology, regulations and resources, our goal today remains the same as it was back in 1914. We will always provide our clients with civil engineering and land surveying services in a timely manner, accurate in detail, in accordance with applicable regulations and requirements, and at a competitive price.