**KHERSON AND ITALY: IS THERE ANY CONNECTION?**

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One of the main streets of Kherson – Soborna – is adorned with an amazingly beautiful mansion. It was built in 1905 and belonged to the Vice Consul of Italy and the Consul of Peru – Angelino Anatra. Today this gorgeous estate is the home of the Chess and Checkers Club. And it is not the only gift of the well-known Italian family – the Anatras – to our city.

The history of the noble and outstanding clan traces its origins back to the nineteenth century. Since then the members of the Anatra family held their leading positions in the development of industry, aviation and culture, they were in the forefront of implementing innovations in life. But how did they appear in Kherson, a small and unknown town at that time?

In the second part of the nineteenth century the Anatra family played an important role on the marine freight market and gained a worldwide repute. Initially, they dealt with grain shipping, but with the growth of their profits the Anatras decided to expand their business, and started steamship production and flour manufacturing along with buying lands in Kherson, Odessa and Crimea. Thus,by the will of fate, Kherson was lucky enough to be the Anatras’ field of activity and, as a result, the history of our city was changed forever. It is difficult to list all the shining merits of this family our city has to be thankful for. That’s why in this article we will mention only some of them.

The Anatra family made a significant contribution to the development of entrepreneurship in Kherson, as well as to yachting sport development and even more: they were the founders of Ukraine’s national aviation! Also, it must be admitted that the Anatra brothers provided for the lives of thousands of Kherson’s residents by investing money in our shipyard. It is widely known that, though Kherson had a favourable location, it always lagged behind the neighbouring cities like Odessa and Nikolaev. Consequently, – but for the Anatras’ generous help – Kherson’s shipyard might have been ruined and, as a result, an irreparable harm would have been caused to the economy of our city.

Co-foundation of Kherson’s yacht Club can easily be added to the list of the great deeds of the Anatra family. Angelino Anatra was the Honorary Commander of the club. He was repeatedly elected speaker of Kherson’s parliament, while his cousin Arthur organized an aeronautic club and sponsored the trainings of its students in France, who later became the first pilots of the Russian Empire. Moreover, thanks to Arthur's determination and creativity, Kherson was honoured to be involved in the most important events of the time: the Aero Club (the first in the Russian Empire!) was created here. Soon after, an outstanding event in the history of our national aviation took place: at the industrial exhibition in 1910 in Odessa the first airplane flight was shown in the Russian Empire and, as you can easily guess, the first passenger was the well-known Arthur Anatra. Needless to say, it was a real breakthrough for that time. The tireless Arthur continued his work, and in 1913 he founded an aircraft manufacturing plant in Odessa, thereafter he became the sole and undisputed leader of the national aircraft industry. Furthermore, thanks to the active and productive work of the Anatras, an airmail connection was established between Odessa, Nikolayev and Kherson. The connection of such kind was one of the first in the world. Isn’t it a proof that due to the efforts of the Italian family Kherson was in advance of its time?

Thus, we can see what a powerful impact the Anatra brothers made on the development of our city. Why do we know so few facts about their deeds? Shouldn't the history of our native city be revered, especially when we have something to be proud of? In our opinion, it is true that while contemplating the past, we understand better who we are at present. We strongly believe that Kherson’s residents should be aware of the fascinating history of their homeland.

**Based on:**

***Хмель В.А. Херсонские истории, предания и были. - Херсон: Наддніпряночка, 2014.***

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