

Sidney Lenz was born in Chicago in 1873 but brought up in Vienna, from where his family originally came. Returning to the USA as a young man he entered the timber business in Michigan and was so successful in pulling off a series of spectacular coups that by the age of twenty-seven he was rich enough to retire. He decided to take a trip around the world and spent a year in India studying Hindu magic, oriental philosophy and, presumably, the Indian rope-trick. Back in the United States, he became a man of leisure and devoted himself mainly to sport, at which he excelled. He played tennis against 'Little Bill' Johnston to an almost equal standard, he was a scratch golfer who later 'shot his age' at sixty-nine. At bowls he once held the national record of an average of 244 points for twenty-one consecutive games. He was a table-tennis champion and he regularly played chess with José Capablanca.

But it was cards that really interested him and many considered him the finest Auction bridge player of his era. He came into national prominence in 1910 when he won the Minneapolis Trophy for bridge whist for the third year running. By the mid-1930s he had won so many trophies, cups and medals that he had a special cabinet built in his bachelor apartment at 240 West End Avenue in New York to display them. He was a prolific writer, noted for his classic book, *Lenz on Bridge* (1926). He contributed short stories to *Liberty* and to the humorous weekly *Judge* magazine, of which he was part-owner. He was a wit and well-known raconteur, though this was not always apparent in his dealings with Culbertson. He introduced the term 'squeeze' into bridge, borrowing it from baseball, and many of the better-known plays at bridge, which have since become standard technique, were introduced by him, though none bears his name. In later years he became known as the 'Grand Old Man of Bridge' and was often asked to act as honorary referee at tournament matches. He lived, like so many other bridge 'greats', to a ripe old age, dying in 1960 at the age of eighty-seven.