

# Our Family News Letter

Issue 18

Greendale, Wisconsin

September, 1997



1997 Heck Family Picnic

## 1997 Heck Family Picnic ....

On July 20, 1997, the 30th annual and consecutive Heck family picnic and reunion was held at the Light House at Wind Point, near Racine, Wisconsin. Special T-shirts were made to commemorate the three decades of family fun.

Each branch of the family had a unique color combination to help identify which of the children of Robert Steven Heck (1879 - 1923) and Margaret Frederica Henningfeld (1880 - 1963) they were descendants.

The events began at 7:00 AM with an outdoor breakfast served by Cel and Dick Heck at their home. I can't even begin to describe how good the food tasted. Ham and eggs, French toast, pancakes, fruit, cakes, muffins, juice and coffee hit the spot as we were getting ready for a family round of golf. Most of us that attended would have just as soon stay there and eat for the rest of the day.

I'm sure that I speak for all of us when I say thank you, to Cel and Dick for their unselfish and outstanding hospitality. We don't seem to spend enough time thanking them for all that they have

done over the years in keeping our families together through these family picnics.

At 8:00 AM we began a friendly golf tournament at Shoops Park. The greens were fast and the breeze off of Lake Michigan kept most of us cool. There were several contests during the round and one of them merits mentioning here. On the second hole an award is given for the longest drive. In my foursome were Bill Heck, Steve Pfeiffer, and Jim Speidel, all long ball hitters. Steve Pfeiffer and I both drove about 200 yards straight down the middle. Bill Heck out drove us by an additional 75 yards, but Jim Speidel drove a solid 300 Plus yards. Needless to say, Jim won the longest drive of the day.

There were seven foursomes or 28 family members out there golfing together. Since we had block reservations there were a few non-Hecks who tried to lay claim to our family name just to get a tee time.

By noon the golfing had been concluded and the family began to show up at the Light House just north of Shoops Park. The grills were fired up and the food was set up inside the old Light House. Chairs and tables were bunched together under the apple trees along with the beer coolers. Books of

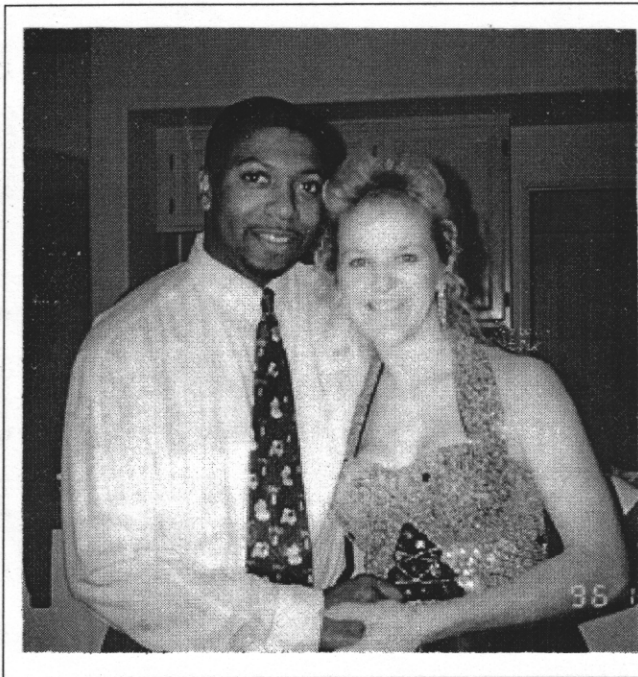
family pictures and family histories were available for all to see. Calendars were handed out with each of the birth dates and ages listed for the descendants of Robert and Margaret Heck. At the top of the calendar was a large picture of Margaret and her children and their spouses taken on her 55th birthday in 1935.

Over 100 people attended the picnic which lasted all afternoon. There were games for the kids and for the adults. Many just sat around and talked with cousins that they only see once or twice a year.

If you haven't been to a family picnic recently you should consider attending next July.

## Memorial

We were all saddened by the tragic death of Harlan McGhee, age 35, who died as the result of a motorcycle accident on June 29, 1997, at Victorville, California. Harlan was the husband of Marjorie Heck McGee and a son-in-law of Bob and Lorraine Heck of Fort Meyer, Florida.



**Harlan McGhee and Marjorie in 1996**  
Our sympathies and prayers go out to the family during this tragic time.

## More pictures from the 1997 picnic...



.... **The tall and the short of it.** Dave and Bill Heck surround cousin Jodene Pfeiffer from Georgia. Jodene was heard asking, "Who are those giants?"



Alvin and Bernice Heck relaxing at the 1997 picnic.

The following article appeared in the German newspaper from the village of Henrichenburg in 1997, and was sent to me by the author, editor Martin Kriszio. I "met" Martin on the Internet while researching the village of Henrichenburg, home of the Henningfeld family in the late 1600's and early 1700's. He also sent quite a few pictures that he took at Henrichenburg, Vinnum and Olfen, Germany. These were the places where our Henningfeld ancestors lived.

**"Valuable hints come also out of the Saarland.**

## **Name "Henningfeld" appears in 1698 in records.**

**Henrichenburg - Research hints of the family Henningfeld have come in meanwhile.**

A few weeks ago this newspaper received an inquiry of Bob Heck from the United States. Heck was looking for his ancestors from Henrichenburg. He is descendant of a Henningfeld, that immigrated to America in the past century.

### **Restaurant Henningfeld**

The looking into this house at Henrichenburg, stated Henry Berkel, has brought me also, old things of clutter. There a pedigree of the family Kleinalstede from Vorschein was found, in which a few Henningfelds were recorded. So Wilhelmine Kleinalstede and Franz Henningfeld had married.

### **Name vanished 1950**

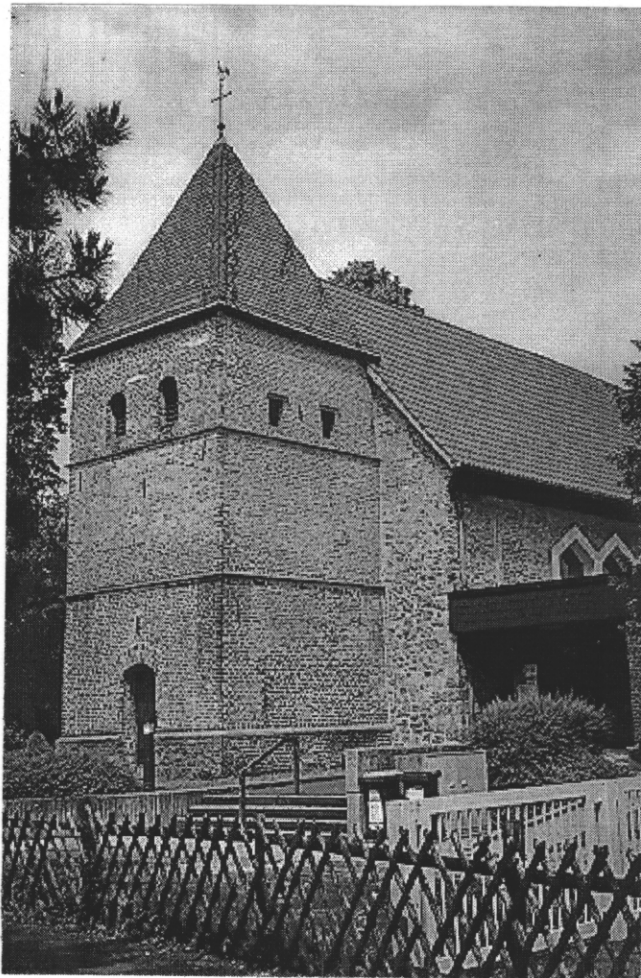
Franz Henningfeld led yet until into the 1930's the restaurant Henningfeld, which was previously opposite the restaurant where Alt-Henrichenburg stood. The next yard belonged to Rensmann-Sonntag. The site of the Henningfeld house has been replaced by highway B - 235. With Franz Henningfeld's death in 1950, the name of the family in Henrichenburg died. The daughter Maria married Henry Berkel. Their son, also with the forename Henry, is our "informant." His brother Franz lives no longer in Henrichenburg. Franz

Henningfeld's second daughter, Wilhelmine, married Albert Dunkmann.

Incidentally I didn't only look in Henrichenburg for ideas. So I also notified Dr. Arnold Kempkes out of Perl, Saarland, who has in his family a Henningfeld marriage.

### **Hint out of Saarland**

Dr. Kempkes authenticates, that the name Henningfeld in Henrichenburg no longer exists. There is though altogether four branches of the family. The first are mentioned by name in the records from the year of 1698."



The old Catholic Church at Henrichenburg - 1690

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..... A detailed map of Henrichsburg from 1818. Note that house number 11 is the Henningfeld home. The house is shown at lower left in 1997. It was built in the 1600's and was probably the birth place of our Henningfeld ancestor, Johann Henrich Wilhelm Henningfeld on April 12, 1779. He was the great grandfather of Margaret F. Henningfeld Heck, and was my great-great-great grandfather..

..... The article in German is translated on page three.

## Meet some of your distant cousins....



Back row L-R: Jennie (Christie) Clark, Clara McNelty, Lawrence McNelty, Janet McNelty, Clara (Christie) McNelty, Helen (Davis) McNelty, Kathryn McNelty, Jane Jones (a cousin of the McNelty family), and Mamie Davis.

Front Row L-R: Patience McNelty, Marion Roberts, Prudence McNelty, Robert Reed McNelty, and Roberta McNelty.

Robert Reed McNelty, while in the Air Force, changed the spelling back to McNulty. His son, Robert Reed McNulty lives or lived in Redmond, Washington. This photo was taken on the farm of Lawrence McNelty in Springwater Township (Wild Rose, Wisconsin) about 1921 or 1922.

Lawrence McNelty was the brother of Mary Ann McNulty, wife of Henry Heck. The reason for the name change is unknown but it would be interesting to research the story behind the change.

**Clara Heck (1843 - 1919) and Vincent Brunner (1836 - 1920)** as written by Howard W. Heck in his book "The Hecks From Alendorf, Germany", published March, 1991. Library of Congress number 91-91844.

"Clara was the daughter of Johann Heck and Anna Barbara Schaefer. She was born on July 18, 1843, in Alendorf, Prussia (now a part of Germany). Clara lived with her father and stepmother on their

farm near Swan Lake, Minnesota. At the age of nineteen she married Vincent Brunner, a farmer from West Newton Township. They were married on May 15, 1862, in the old log Church of St. George in West Newton, the first Catholic church in the area. The officiating priest was the reverend Valentine Sommereisen, a missionary priest who served mission churches in a fourteen county area. He established the St. George parish in 1857.

Vincent was born on November 21, 1836, in Erbach, Wurttemberg (now part of Germany) to Jakob Brunner and Maria Anna Walser. He came to America on March 24, 1854, and settled in Illinois. According to "A History Of The Church Of St. George Of West Newton", Vincent arrived in the area in 1856. He purchased his homestead from the Federal Land Office for \$1.25 per acre. Four of his brothers and a sister also came to America. His brother, Ferdinand, married Josephine Stuetz, who married Joseph Heck after Ferdinand's death. Joseph Heck was a brother of Vincent's wife, Clara.

Clara and Vincent settled down on the homestead but their new life together was soon interrupted. On August 17, 1862, just three months after their marriage, the Sioux Indians, under the leadership

uprising. The following account is also taken from the History Of The St. George Church: "An Indian named Dickinson asked Vincent Brunner to take him to New Ulm, telling him of the outbreak and saying he wanted to procure soldiers. He promised to pay him well for the trip. Brunner agreed but on the way there heard the report of firearms and told the Indian he was returning to warn his wife. Dickinson then ordered him to continue to New Ulm at the risk of death. On the way back to his farm, Brunner warned his neighbors of the uprising."



**Vincent Brunner and Clara Heck with one of their children about 1866 at Menomonee, MI**

Vincent volunteered his services during the Uprising and became a "citizen soldier" by joining Captain St. Julien's "Frontier Avengers" which was organized in St. Peter on August 22, 1862. He served in the unit as a corporal. The Frontier

Avengers marched to the relief of New Ulm, which was under siege by the Indians, and arrived there on August 24. Vincent applied for a state pension and was awarded one on March 12, 1907. He received a pension of twelve dollars a month until his death in 1920. His application for the pension stated that he ruptured his right side while warning the settlers and helping them escape from the Indians.

After the Sioux Uprising the Brunners resumed their life on the farm. An interesting story about them also comes from the History Of The St. George Church. "Around 1868, another school district was erected in the area, Number 16, which was located some four miles west of St. George, across the road from Fred Gleisner's farm. The organization of this district posed a problem for Vincent Brunner, since his homestead was directly on the dividing line between the two districts on today's William Palmer farm. He preferred to belong to District 15, yet the door of his house led into District 16 territory. If his children would have to go to this district, they would be required to cross a dangerous ravine, often filled with water. To solve the dilemma he cut a door on the east side of his house, and with the entrance to his house then in District 15 territory, he felt justified in sending his children to this school."

Clara was very knowledgeable about concocting medicines and home remedies from the plants and trees that grew wild in the area. She made a salve by boiling the buds from the cottonwood trees which was used to treat burns, scratches and bruises. She also made tea from the leaves of a wild flower called chamomile. It was claimed by her grandson, Arthur, to be very good. She most likely learned of these recipes from the Indians who befriended her parent's family (Johann Heck and Susanna Zehren) when she lived at home near Swan Lake.

Clara and Vincent spoke only German at home and more than likely knew very little English. The area around St. George and New Ulm was heavily populated by German-speaking people, so there was no need to speak anything but German.

Vincent and Clara farmed the homestead until May 5, 1883, when they sold it to George Bastian. They bought the Wilfred Bushard farm, near St. George, on August 17, 1886, for 300 dollars. They turned the farm over to their son, Alfred, when they retired and moved into St. George. Vincent volunteered for the job of "bell ringer" at the St. George Church. All of their children except their youngest, Frank, were born on the homestead and they lived to see all of them married. They moved to New Ulm about 1912 where Clara passed away on October 4, 1919. Vincent lived on in New Ulm until shortly before his death when he made his home again in West Newton with his daughter, Lucy, and son-in-law Frank Altman. Vincent passed away on September 29, 1920. His obituary read: "He lived to see his hopes and ambitions gratified,

The children of Vincent and Clara were: (1) Anna, born March 25, 1864, died December 24, 1943. (2) John, born July 14, 1866, died September 18, 1946. (3) Joseph, born April 11, 1868, died February 27, 1961. (4) Ferdinand, born March 25, 1870, died June 11, 1954. (5) Alfred, born October 24, 1873, died September 18, 1943. (6) Josephine, born March 23, 1876, died October 12, 1948. (7) Lucy, born June 3, 1880, died January 3, 1958. (8) Frank Henry, born July 21, 1883, died November 2, 1972.

I would like to give a special thanks to Howard Heck, from Minneapolis, who gave me permission to use some of the stories of our family history from his wonderful book.

## Black Sheep....

While touring the Alcatraz prison in San Francisco, Robert and Lorraine Heck from Fort Meyer, Florida, ran into this display in one of the cells, and were kind enough to send a copy for the news letter. George Heck is not a known relative as far as I know, unless his paintings are worth a million, in which case .....



**The Vincent Brunner Family in 1884**

for his declining years were spent in peace and plenty. Through his many good traits and righteous life, Mr. Brunner gained respect of his fellow men."

### George Heck - AZ #619

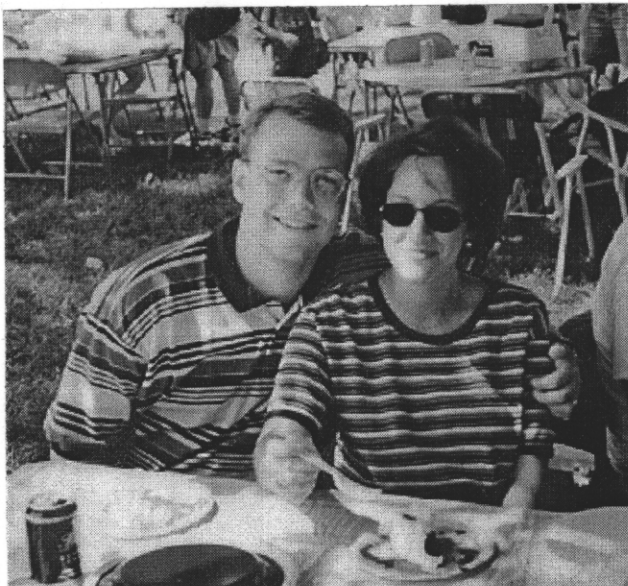
Kidnaping - 18 years  
Received at Alcatraz March 19, 1944  
Transferred to McNeil Island,  
Washington on April 22, 1952

Work Duties at Alcatraz:  
Laundry, Kitchen  
Brush Shop, Incinerator  
Hobbies:  
Painting & Sketching

In 1949, while still an inmate at Alcatraz, George Heck had some of his works in a show in San Francisco. Four of his paintings were sold.

These photos of George Heck's sketches and paintings (done while an inmate at Alcatraz) are copies of the originals donated by George Heck, Jr.

## More Pictures From The Picnic....



Above: The descendants of Clarence Heck attending the 1997 family picnic.

Below: Adam and Amy Tappen enjoying desert at Wind Point.



Above: Family members registering at the golf outing at Shoops Park.

Below: Mary Heck reviewing the birthday calendar with her great niece and nephew while her son Gary Heck tests the beer.