

Our Family News Letter

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Greendale, Wisconsin

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Peter McNulty - A contributor to a new church in Dover, Wisconsin

The following article was found in "Early History Highlights From Financial Reports" in a booklet titled "100 Years - St. Mary's Church, Dover, Kansasville, 1868 - 1968."

Dover - 1867: To build the church, rectory and maintain the church property the records show the following:

Total amount received	\$3,943.35
Total amount expended	<u>\$3,940.80</u>
Which leaves a balance	\$ 2.55

Of interest, the statement shows \$10.50 for a three year insurance policy on the house and \$37.00 on the church. Other items were: digging well, \$6.00; one hundred feet of tile, \$5.00; five acres of land for church, \$100.00.

On February 15, 1870, Peter McNulty, who is buried at St. Mary's in an unmarked grave, was listed with others as having paid the first subscription toward building the Catholic Church in Dover.

News From Shirley Heck

Congratulations to DOCTOR Tom Schlesinger, son-in-law of Margie Heck Johnson and husband of Janice. Tom completed a four year doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin in Political Science. The same week he defended his dissertation, Janice gave birth to a little girl, Michaela Kristine. Tom was offered a job as professor at UW-La

Crosse. They are planning on moving in June and hope to come back for the Heck picnic.

Bobbie Heck, son of Mary and Clarence (Junior) received his degree in nursing from U.W. He's following in his mom's footsteps.

Erica Thompson, Larry Heck's granddaughter and his daughter Joanie's girl, will graduate from high school on Sunday. Congratulations to all who have achieved their graduation goals.

From: Shirley Heck

Hillesheim, a city in the Volcanic Eifel

Hillesheim is a small village located a short distance away from Alendorf, Germany, the ancestral home of the Heck family. Some of our relatives lived in Hillesheim in the 1700's. The history of wars and strife in the area can give us an idea of what life may have been like for some of our ancestors.

Sources: "Die Schöne Eifel"

Hillesheim, a city of 2700 people, is located in the geologically interesting Volcanic Eifel mountains, with an altitude of 450m, in a surrounding with

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many woods. The distance to Trier, Aachen, Koblenz and Bonn is almost equal (60 km).

The History of Hillesheim

Several Sovereigns in Hillesheim

Over the years the sovereigns of Hillesheim changed several times. A document of the year 1272, in this context, is a very important source of information: Here Gerhard von Wildenburg gave away Hillesheim for 200 Denars (a currency at that time in Trier) to the Count Heinrich of Luxembourg and swore feudal duty to him. So the ownership of Hillesheim changed from the Wildenburg Reifferscheid family to Luxembourg. In another document from the 10th of August, 1306, Johann II of Reifferscheid and Johann of Wildenburg confirm that Hillesheim is a fief (feoff) of the Count of Luxembourg.

However this ruling dynasty did not exist for a long period. Gerhard V., an uncle of Richarda of Reifferscheid attended as witness to the pawning in the year 1318 mentioned above. In the year 1332 the Wildenburg family pawned their parts to the Count Wilhelm von Jülich for 1000 Marks. The Wildenburg's claim of ownership finally ended in 1335 by a barter with the Jülich family. Now Hillesheim is fully possessed by the Counts of Jülich.

In the year 1352 Elector Balduin von Trier was asked to mediate a vendetta (feud) in the Jülich family. As a compensation for his service he asked for a promissory note about 10000 Gulden. Later this note could not be redeemed by the Jülich family and thereupon with the authorization of Emperor Karl IV Hillesheim was taken by Balduin in the year 1353. On the 4th July, 1353 Tilkin von Hillesheim and his men paid homage to Balduin von Trier as their new ruler. From that time on Hillesheim belonged to Trier until the French revolution in 1794

Bad Times for Hillesheim

However Hillesheim had seen bad and tough times till the French Revolution in the year 1794. Up

until around the year 1580, life was calm and peaceful in the city, except for some minor feuds. With the outbreak of the Dutch-Spanish War the good times for Hillesheim were over. On their platoon to the South the Dutch did not spare this region in the Eifel from robberies. So they stole whatever they needed from the people in Hillesheim.

The bad times did not improve at the beginning of the 17th century. The Thirty Years' War not only meant additional looting in Hillesheim, but the spreading of the plague made the situation worse for the people. Hunger and sickness were the reasons for a significant decrease of the population in Hillesheim, besides the pillaging of the roaming war hordes. However the people in Hillesheim had defended courageously an attack at the French in 1647. The Lorrainer had to pull back, involving heavy casualties.

Even after the The Treaty of Westphalia, the city suffered from the effects of the previous wars. The wars of conquest of Louis XIV had kept the people in Hillesheim busy. Several times the French attacked Hillesheim. For example, on August 29th, 1689, under the lead of General Marquis de Bouffleurs several buildings, towers and walls had been blasted. In 1697 again the French invaded and occupied the town for 17 days and took whatever they needed. The harvest was stolen, and the poverty of the people was great.

The next war in the series was the Spanish War of Succession. The people in Hillesheim suffered from partly hostile, partly friendly hordes roaming through the town. In the chronicle of the Augustian Cloister, you can read that in 1705, the town had been set on fire by a careless blacksmith of the army.

The consequence of all these wars was a totally destroyed town and an extremely poor population. In 1713 the deputy of Hillesheim was forced to write a petition to the Elector of Trier in which he asked for deferment of taxes payable. The Elector partly agreed upon the request and Hillesheim

could recover from the horrible effects of all previous incidents. After the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, the people in Hillesheim could live in peace, till the French Revolution.

The French Period

With the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 again a period of unrest began for Hillesheim. Because of the incidents in France in 1792, Austria and Prussia went to war against the revolutionaries. They had to pull back soon, but as a consequence the revolutionary army came in to the electorate of Trier, but did not stay very long. They started a war again in 1794 with the result that the electorate of Trier ceased to exist.

The complete area west of the Rhine had become French. On the 4th Pluiose in the year VI (Jan 23, 1798) Hillesheim became a Mairie (district council) in the canton Gerolstein, which was part of the Prüm arrondissement in the Saar department. All existing authorities were closed, and all civil servants were removed from office and replaced by French people exclusively. These French authorities could never gain the trust of the local people, because the difference in culture and language was just too great.

Furthermore the property situation had been revised: bondage and feudalism had been abolished. The clergy and the nobility lost their power and a free and independent farming community could develop. In 1804 the legislation and the administration had been changed through the Civil Code by Napoleon. The first time official registers of births, marriages and deaths had been set up. But even with the French occupying power, and all adversity coming with this situation, the trade and economy in Hillesheim slowly started to grow.

The Prussian reclaim the Power

The situation changed again, when on New Year's Night in 1814, German troops crossed the Rhine coming from the west. Napoleon lost his power. After the Summit of Vienna in 1815, the borders

of France had been adjusted to those which existed in 1792. The French occupation time was over for the people of Hillesheim. The former electorate of Trier became part of Prussia.

The Prussian State supported the building of the economy. When in 1816, because of a crop failure, a famine threatened, the Prussians provided a grant of 2 million Thaler for promotion of the agriculture. This specific support of reforestation can be seen as the reason for the prosperity of many villages, later on, in this region. Hillesheim in one of these villages as well.

In 1824 the Prussian Rhine Province was founded with the capital city Koblenz. The building of roads had been continuously supported - transport and communication improved significantly with the railway line Cologne - Kall - Gerolstein, built in 1870, and the line Trier - Gerolstein in 1871. Hillesheim developed into a prosperous trade center, important for the whole region. In 1861, a mail delivery service was in place between Hillesheim and Gerolstein, Daun and Stadtkyll. In 1867 a telegraph office was opened, in 1903 the first phone could be used. The traffic link to the Rhine river was implemented later, by building another railway line between Jünkerath - Adenau - Remagen. The requirements for good economic growth in Hillesheim were completed.

Market Town Hillesheim

It is unknown when exactly Hillesheim got the town charter. In a document from the time of Charlemagne, in 1376, Hillesheim is mentioned specifically as a town. Coupled with the town charter are always the market rights. Although the people in Hillesheim have had economic bad times, caused by many wars, as for example the Thirty Years' War, nevertheless this town had become a prosperous trading place.

The French limited the number of markets to only one. In 1852 there was a weekly market. In 1866 a new market place was built. Since that time, there were two horse markets in a year - one in the

spring and another in fall. In 1888, the total number of markets per year was 12, in 1936 sixteen - and today there are 24 markets in Hillesheim during the year, every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month.

The Frank V. Heck Story

In July, 1992, Frank V. Heck, from New Ulm, Minnesota, finished and published a book about his life. The book is #92-90360 Library Of Congress number. I ordered the book on an interlibrary loan which took several weeks to be delivered. The wait was worth it.

I had the pleasure of meeting Frank at the Heck-Lang Family reunion in 1982, at New Ulm. He was a remarkable individual, educator and public servant. He was the type of person that one does not forget. I picked out a few lines from his book that I wanted to share with Our Family News Letter readers.

From his book: "I have been fortunate in the fact that I have had many friends throughout the years. They always have been very supportive of me and often I feel that I never can repay them. Ever so often, however, I am reminded by friends of things I had done which proved to be valuable for them. Teachers with whom I worked often would remark that although they sometimes did not agree with my decisions they felt that I was fair and they always knew where I stood. At times I am reminded by them of things in which I was of help to them. My pupils quite frequently tell me that as their teacher I worked them hard but they liked me because I was fair. The secretaries with whom I worked always tell me that I gave them confidence in doing their work. Also, I have many friends as a result of decisions which were made after we looked at alternatives. All I can say is that I just was lucky.

All of my life has been spent in this area and like an old shoe I hope that I have come to wear well with all age groups. In the spring of 1991 I met a father and his son as I was shopping. After some

conversation the father turned to his son and said, "Do you know this man?" The son with a surprised look said, "Dad, everybody knows Mr. Heck."

Frank Heck's ancestry is shown here to set the stage for other items from his book..

Johann Heck - Anna Barbara Schaefer
Joseph Heck - Josephine Stuetz
Aloysius Heck - Mary Lang
Frank V. Heck - Rose Wagner

Frank's father, Aloysius Heck, was known as Alois Heck. I had the pleasure of meeting Alois in 1982 when he was 95 years old. It was Alois who told me some of the stories of the early Heck family from Swan Lake, Minnesota. He told stories about the Sioux Indian uprising in 1862, and of how the Heck family survived.

Alois was in a nursing home in 1982, but his mind was as sharp as a tack. His hearing was very poor but his voice was strong. I introduced myself to Alois and he opened up to me like I was a first cousin.

I recall one story that he told me about the locust plague that hit the area. He said that there were so many locusts that they ate the clothes off of the clothes line. The chickens had a field day eating the locusts but their eggs turned green. It seems to me that someone wrote a book about green eggs.

Alois gave me directions to Swan Lake, Minnesota and told me where exactly to find the graves of my great great grandfather Johann Heck. I was very new at genealogy back then and I just wish that I had a tape recorder with me that day. Alois had so many interesting things to talk about.

He told me that the Heck boys used to wrestle and play with the Indians around Swan Lake. The Heck family was good to the Indians and often shared food with them. That was one of the reasons that the Indians warned the Heck family in 1862 that there was going to be trouble in the area. Johann Heck took the warning serious and fled with his family to Fort Ridgely.

The Indian uprising took place and many farmers in the area were killed and their farms were destroyed. The Heck farm was left unscathed.

Alois Heck married Mary Lang in 1907. Alois and Mary had six children: Frank Vincent (born in 1908), Clara Louise, Roman Joseph, Victor Ferdinand, Edwin Alfred, and Robert John Heck. Robert John was known as "Red" Heck.



L-R Mary, Victor, Edwin, Robert, Frank, and Alois Heck in about 1917.

Frank V. Heck was trained as a teacher and spent most of his life dedicated to that profession in one capacity or another. Frank had a great love for music. After he got his first violin in 1925, he and his Uncle Alfred Lang played for the entertainment of neighbors in the evenings after the work of the day was done. Since the two played outside against the back of the house, and the sound of music traveled for quite a distance, neighbors often would use their newly acquired telephones to request their favorite selections. This was considered to be quite an innovative advance in the art of communication.

In his book, Frank V. Heck wrote about the things that he remembered as a child. Some of his thoughts are repeated here.

"Since there were no refrigerators, much meat was exposed to a salt brine for a number of days and then cured by a process called smoking. Salted

chunks of meat were hung from the rafters in the smokehouse. A smoldering fire composed of shavings and sawdust from the wood of apple trees or hickory trees was built on the floor of the smokehouse. This provided heat and smoke for drying the meat and for giving it an aromatic flavor. Often these smoked chunks of meat were buried under two or three feet of wheat in the granary. This provided the insulation needed to preserve the smoked meat well into the summer months that followed.

In the Heck household, fish were preserved for short periods of time in two ways. Alois prepared carp by smoking them. Mary prepared red suckers in a spicy and salty brine which softened the numerous bones (spines) so that they could be eaten without danger. This was named "fish sultz" and had the texture of head cheese. Both of these preparations were eaten with great relish. Another way of preserving food for short periods of time was



Frank V. Heck and Rose M. Wagner with Victor Heck and Florence Lang on August 5, 1930.

that of putting perishables into pails and lowering them with ropes close to the level of the water in a shallow well. This provided the cooling effect needed to preserve the food. Also, there were fruit cellars as separate rooms in the basements or as underground rooms away from houses. Potatoes, various kinds of fruits, vegetables, and other produce were kept in these root cellars for surprisingly long periods of time. In addition to that, most homes preserved food by canning large quantities of jams, sauce, fruit, and other food in half-gallon, quart, or pint jars.

Certain types of food were dried on screens placed on the roofs of porches in the same way that grapes are dried to make raisins. This dried food could be stored for a long time and then reconstituted by adding water as needed. Much of this dried food could be eaten without adding water.

Frank V. Heck married Rose Margaret Wagner on August 5, 1930. Frank and Rose had a daughter, Germaine Martha Heck, born in 1936.

More on Clara Stratman

Clara Stratman, wife of Henry Henningfeld, was thought to have come from the city of Coesfeld, Germany. Searches of church and civil records over the years have failed to substantiate her place of origin. Some family members thought that she came from Coesfeld, but there is no hard evidence that I'm aware of to prove that.

I reviewed the church records at St. Mary's Catholic church at Burlington, Wisconsin and found that in the christening record of her children, Clara Stratman stated that she came from Hamm. One record shows it as Ham but at least four others show it as Hamm.

I pulled out a map and located several places called Hamm. I guessed at which one was the right one and ordered a microfilm of the church records. Sorry to say, there were no Stratmans listed in the records. My next step will be to try one of the other places called Hamm. If anyone out there knows

any more information about Clara Stratman, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Thanks to our contributors....

Since Christmas, the following subscribers made significant contributions to keep Our Family News Letter going:

Lolita Manske, Susan and Jeff Miller, Howard and Anne Heck, Sharon and Don Heck, Carl Henningfeld family, Louise Havens family, Dale Wise family, Edith and Fred Mehre, Rosemary Reynolds, Marjorie Ayo family, Shirley Heck, and Joanne and Marv Pfeiffer.

We greatly appreciate their fine contribution.

MyFamily now has 45 family members

We set up a special web site on the Internet just for members of our family. There is no charge for using the site, but you must be a registered and invited guest to use it. The site contains the latest family photos, our family history, notices of birthdays, news, and a chat room just for family members. You can even leave messages for your relatives. **If you would like to get an invitation to the Heck - Mikel family site, just send me your name and e-mail address.** I'll add you to the growing list.

Just to give you an idea of how we use the site, within a few hours of the close of the Heck family picnic, photos of the event were on line for all 45 members to view. My cousin, Mary Kay, was unable to attend the picnic this year but she was able to see Cel Heck running around town in a red Miata as well as other photos from the comfort of her California home.

Any member is free to add their own pictures to the web site. All we ask is that you use the JPG format in order to keep the size of the picture file down to a reasonable level.

Visit my Internet home pages....

If you are new to the Internet, you might want to drop in on my home pages for a visit. Here are the addresses:

Heck Family Home Page

<http://www.execpc.com/~bheck/heck.html>

Descendants of John Henrich Henningfeld

<http://www.execpc.com/~bheck/hfeld97.html>

Henningfeld / Henningfield home page

<http://www.execpc.com/~bheck/hfeld/hfeld97.htm>

Heck family genealogy and forum

<http://www.genforum.com/heck>

Henningfeld family genealogy and forum

<http://www.genforum.com/henningfeld>

Burgess family genealogy and forum

<http://www.genforum.com/burgess>

Descendants of John Burgess 1711 - 1796

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Garden/5842/index.html>

An Obituary from 1896

Racine, Wisconsin: Mrs. Amanda Burgess died June 10th at the residence of her son, Mr. William Burgess, in Somers, Kenosha County. The deceased was eighty-seven years of age, having been born in Catskill County, New York, in 1799. She came with her husband (Benjamin Burgess) to this state in 1836 and settled in Salem, Kenosha County, and has for over fifty years made her home either in Racine or Kenosha Counties. She was the mother of six children, three of whom are living vis: Mrs. Thomas Dow and Mrs. W. D. Thomas, of Racine, and Wm. Burgess of Somers.

Mrs. Burgess was one of the pioneer settlers of this county and during her long residence has seen many changes. The country was but a wilderness when she first made her home here, coming from

the east by team and walking part of the long tedious journey. She was a woman of untiring industry and up to a short time before her death she retained her mental and physical faculties. Some time ago she had the misfortune to meet with a severe accident and since then she has rapidly declined.

She leaves behind a host of relatives and friends who had all learned to love and respect her for many womanly qualities. The funeral will take place tomorrow at the residence of her son, Mr. Wm. Burgess of Somers, Kenosha County.

Editors note: Amanda Foster Burgess was the second wife of Benjamin Burgess. Benjamin Burgess died in 1838, just two years after arriving in Wisconsin from New York state. Benjamin started a saw mill on the Pike River near Parkside University in Kenosha County, Wisconsin. After his death, Amands Burgess ran the saw mill with the help of her young children and step-children and her father, Alfred Foster.

Confirmation of Rebecca Chase's parentage

A lady from Walcott, Iowa found my web page on the Internet and sent information showing that Rebecca Chase, first wife of Benjamin Burgess, was the daughter of Mordica Chase and Patience Johnson, formerly of Washington County, New York, and then Berlin, NY. The research that she sent me was from a genealogy written by her great uncle Everett McClelland. Everett lived from 1858 to 1956 and was 97 years old at the time of his death. His information was taken from a page of a family bible. That page is believed to be at the Iowa Historical Society and we are attempting to obtain a copy of it at this time. The significance of this is that Everett's findings are apparently based on solid documentation while our connection to Mordica Chase and Patience Johnson was based on strong circumstantial evidence.

More will be reported on this important finding as information becomes available.

From the Photo Album....



***Top: 1999 Heck Family Picnic
Left: Bob & Gary Heck 1942
Right: Games at 1992 Picnic
Bottom: Burlington, WI on
July 4, 1890. Look carefully
for Margaret Henningfeld,
Henry Heck, Mary Ann
McNulty and other family
members from Burlington.***

***If you have old photos that
you would like to share
with your family, scan and
print in grayscale and send
a copy to Bob Heck.***