

Our Family News Letter

Issue 29

Greendale, Wisconsin

June, 2000

Meet some of your cousins...

The Canadian Branch Of The Heck Family

Joseph Herman Heck and Mary Curry Larson



Joseph was the son of Peter Heck and Margaret Zeren. Peter was the son of Johann Heck and Anna Barbara Schaefer. Joseph was born on September 2, 1874, on his parents' farm in West Newton Township, Nicollet County, Minnesota. He married Mary Curry Larson in 1901 in St. Michael's Catholic Church in Morgan, Minnesota. Mary was born on June 5, 1885 to Jens and Carrie Larson. She and Joseph lived in Morgan for a short time and then moved to South Dakota where they farmed in Butte County.

Land was available for homesteading in North Dakota so Joseph and Mary filed a claim near Minot. They farmed there until they learned of opportunities for farmers in the province of Alberta, Canada. In 1909, Joseph filed for a homestead in the Sunnynook district in Alberta and built a sod house on the property that same year. The sod home is where the family lived until 1914. The property was described as at N.E. 1/4 of 26-27-12, and is located about 100 miles east of Calgary, Alberta.

In 1911, Joseph, Mary and their six children, ranging in age from an infant to eleven years, moved to the sod home in Canada by covered wagon. They came by way of Bassano, Alberta, and then traveled 44 miles north east to Sunnynook.

Five of the six children became sick on the way to Sunnynook. A doctor examined them at a stop along the way and said that they only had sore throats. The children all had diphtheria and three of them died soon after their arrival in Canada. The three, Isabell age 11, Violet age 9, and James age 2 were buried on the homestead.

The youngest of the children was just an infant and had not been baptized prior to arriving in Alberta. She was christened Isabell Violet in honor of her two older sisters claimed by diphtheria.

This News Letter is written and published by
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Greendale, WI 53129**

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<http://www.execpc.com/~bheck/heck.html>
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Joseph and Mary had seven more children after arriving in Alberta. The names of all 13 children is given here.

Isabelle Heck, born 1900, died 1911; Violet Heck, born 1902, died 1911; Marvin Joseph Heck, born 1904, died 1988; Dallas Andrew Heck, born 1907, died 1988; James Heck, born 1909, died 1911; Isabell Violet Heck, born 1911, died 1974; Mary Luella Heck, born 1913; Clara Margaret Heck, born 1914; Peter Benjamin Heck, born 1917; Lucy J. Heck, born 1919; William Francis Heck, born 1922, died 1986; James A. Heck, born 1922, died 1979; and John Patrick Heck, born 1924.

Several biographical sketches of the Heck family in Canada were sent to me by Sharon and Victor Oliver. Vic's mother was Isabell Violet Heck, the sixth child of Joseph Herman Heck and Mary Curry Larson. Their mailing address is Box 158 Alder Flats, Alberta, Canada and the postal code is TOC OAO.

Here are a few excerpts from those biographical sketches:

"We, the family of Joseph and Mary Heck would like to pay tribute to our pioneer parents. Like other pioneers they were wonderful people and they tried to leave behind not only a large family, but also tried to instill in us the love of God and our fellow man."

"On arriving in this country they lost three of their precious children with diphtheria and had many hardships. They were always grateful for every day they lived; along with the sorrows were many joys too. It takes years for children to realize what wonderful parents they had."

"Our store and post office was Flowerdale, owned and operated by A. R. Stewart. All his supplies were freighted from Bassano. Mr. Stewart's house was built of stone and some of the stone walls are still standing two miles north of the Heck place, now occupied by a son, William (Bill) Heck."

"In the spring of 1911 the creek rose the highest ever seen. It came up and surrounded the sod house and we had to leave in the middle of the night. We stayed at Joe Knutson's for several days until the water went down. That year the grass was ever so green, and the creek banks were a bed of roses and all kinds of wild flowers. Our mother and father were sure then they had come to a wonderful country."

"There were a few years of good crops then the dry years came along, but they knew with water the land could be so productive and beautiful. In 1918 the folks finally decided that thinking about irrigation wasn't enough and they couldn't do it on their own. They decided to make a trip to Medicine Hat to talk about putting in a dam for irrigation. They went by democrat, which was a long hard trip. They slept many a night on the ground under the democrat for shelter. The older children were left in charge of the farm while they were away. They didn't live to see the dam that was finally built in 1948. It is not in operation yet, like Father visioned."

"We were a large family and we had lots of happy times together and got along very well while we were under Papa's shingles. Father passed away in



Standing L-R: Jim, Jack, Isabell, Bill, Marie, Johnnie, Clara, Marvin, Dallas. Seated L-R: Mary, Lucy

1946 and Mother in 1949. They are both buried in the Hanna cemetery."

In early 1979 the following children were living at Hanna, Alberta: Marvin, Marie, Lucy, and Jim. The other children were Dallas at Caroline, Alberta; Clara at Calgary, Alberta; William and John at Sunnynook, Alberta; and Jack at Salmon Arm, British Columbia.

Sharon and Vic Oliver raise buffalo on their ranch at Alder Flats and sent us a picture of one of these magnificent animals.

(Gloria was excited to see the picture of the buffalo and was quite proud to display it during Easter dinner.)

LYDIA GAUNT'S WILL

Lydia Gaunt was my 8th great grandmother and was married to Peter Gaunt in about 1629.

Lydia, wife of Peter Gaunt (1609-1692)
Lydia Gaunt (1642-1697)
Thomas Burgess (1668-1743)
John Burgess (1711-1796)
Benajah Burgess (1761-1830)
Benjamin Burgess (1794-1838)
Patience Burgess (1823-1894)
Mary Ann McNulty (1844-1912)
Robert S. Heck (1877-1923)
Robert G. Heck (1909-1995)
Robert J. Heck (Me)

Mayflower Descendant, Vol 15 April 1913 #2 pg 76-77 Abstracts of Barnstable County Mass Probate Records.

"Lydia Gaunt of ye Towne of Sandwich" made her will 28 December, 1691, the inventory was taken 17 February, 1691/2, by Stephen Skeffe and John Jennings, and the will was probated 21 April, 1692.

"first my mind and will is that my body be decently buried by the Advice and Assistance of my dear friends the people of God Called quakers att their burring place in Sandwich"

"unto my son Israel Gaunt whome I make my Executor my great Brass kettle and my great Iron pott And two -pewter platters and my warming pan and a brass Skimer and a Brass Candle stick a spitt and dripping pan"

"unto my Son Zachariah four pounds and his Son and Daughter I have given Alredy their portions"

"unto my Son Hannaniah four pounds and to his Children each of them ten shillings apeece"

"unto my Daughter Lydia my little Brass kettle and all my wearing Cloathes and all my Linning which I have not otherwise disposed of and all my pewter which I have not disposed of and I give her my hitchell and my great chest with a Lock and key to it"

"I give my Grand Daughter Mercy Hixe one ffether Bed and one Blankit"

"to my Grand Daughter Mary Thirston twenty shillings"

"to my Grand Son James Easton ten Shillings"

"unto my Grand Son John Easton ten Shillings"

"unto my Grand Daughter Deborah ten Shillings"

"for ye use of ffriends Called quakers my best fether Bed and bolster two pillows and two pillow Coats A paire of Sheets and a paire of blankits and my Best Rugg"

"unto my ffriends in Sandwich which are of ye womens meeting Called quackers in Silver forty Shillings for them to dispose of for ye Service of the truth"

"I do desire my dear friends Edward perry william Allen Daniel Butler to be ye over Seers of this my will and in Case any of them shall be disabled Then they or any two of them Shall Chuse another or others in their stead"

The will was witnessed by John Northy, John Jennings and. Alice Worthelake, the latter signing by a mark.

On 21 April, 1692, "Allis worthelake Took her oath that shee did see Lydia Gaunt Seal and declare this to be her Last will"

"Mr Stephen Skeffe ordered by ye Court to take ye other evidences upon oath"

"Israel Gaunt made Oath before ye Court after ye manner of ye quackers to ye truth of this Inventory April ye 21th 1692 Attest Joseph Lothrop: Clerk"

The will and inventory were recorded 26 April, 1692, by Joseph Lothrop, Recorder.

Matt Heck Tavern...

This photograph was in very poor condition. It was faded and very dark. Using computer enhancement I was able to fix it up somewhat. At left in white is Matt Heck, brother of Robert S. Heck and son of Henry Heck. At far right is Robert S. Heck.

The picture was taken about 1900 at Thompsonville, Wisconsin. Both Matt Heck and Robert S.



Heck were tavern keepers. Robert S. Heck worked at the Log Cabin Saloon located at 5th Street and Monument Square in Racine, Wisconsin. Both Matt and Robert died in 1923.



The picture above was taken in November, 1941 and shows me, Robert J. Heck, with my grandfather, John Mikel. I was 11 months old at the time. The picture was taken at Racine, Wisconsin at John Mikel's home.

Thomas Burgess buys land in Newport

Robert Bartlett, "cooper" of Plymouth, sold to Thomas Burge, Jr., of Newport, R. I., on 17/27 Feby 1670, for £50 current silver money, "one Moyety or halfe in Deale" of his share of land at Acushena in Dartmouth, also "one Moyety or halfe in Deale" of a share at Pascomansucke in Dartmouth, reserving to himself one third of the last named share, "which said severall shares of land are a prte of the Purchasers land (Comonly soe called) my selfe being one of the said Purchasers," [Col. Deeds, V:118].

More on Clara Stratman Henningfeld...

Rosemary Heinrichs Reynolds from Wausau, Wisconsin, called and passed on a few stories about her grandmother, Clara Stratman Henningfeld, wife of Henry Henningfeld and mother of Molly Henningfeld Heinrichs, Margaret Henningfeld Heck, Mary Henningfeld Brott, Sylvester, Carlos, George and Fred Henningfeld.

Rosemary has an outstanding memory and recalled the stories that she was told by Clara so many years ago.

According to the stories, Clara Stratman was 16 years old when she became engaged to a man named Henning. Both were living in Germany at the time. Clara was on board a ship bound for America when her fiancé' died in Wisconsin of a sunstroke. When Clara arrived in Wisconsin she found out that Mr. Henning had died. Clara was alone and scared but was determined to stay in this country.

The wife of a Racine County Judge felt sorry for her and took her in as a house worker. She did the cooking and house cleaning and cared for the children.

Clara's first meal in Wisconsin was a hot dog. She refused to eat it because she said that Germans don't eat dogs.

One of the first things that Clara did when she arrived was to wash her hair with sugar to counteract the effects of salt water from the voyage.

Clara swore that she would always speak English in this country. It was a promise that she kept and the only time that she ever spoke German was when she was with a group of German adults and they wanted to keep secrets from the children.

Clara Stratman met and married Henry Henningfeld from Burlington and Waterford, Wisconsin. They were married at St. Thomas Catholic Church in Waterford on 6 May 1873.



L-R: Sylvester, Molly, Clara, Fred, Carlos, and Margaret. This picture was taken on February 11, 1923 at Racine, Wisconsin. The picture was taken at 1717 Carlisle Ave, which was where Clara Stratman Henningfeld lived in 1923.



Alwina Duman and Matt Heck on their wedding day, May 15, 1903, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Did You Know....

....that 20% of the entire Internet is devoted to genealogy?

....that you can call anywhere in the United States for free by using the internet system? Try it at:

<http://www.dialpad.com>

A letter from Angela & Nikolaus Heck

The following letter was found in a book "News From The Land Of Freedom" by Walter D. Kamphoefner and others. The letter is from a Heck family who lived in Irrel, a village in the southwest Eifel Mountain area just 38 miles south of Alendorf, Germany. Alendorf is the village where our branch of the Heck family came from in 1852.

"New York, July 1, 1854"

"Dearest Relations,"

"We are writing to tell you that our ship left Antwerp on March 21st. Then we sailed with bad winds into Easter week, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Then the ship started to roll. Then it was like everyone was drunk. One went running this way, another that way, in order to be sick. Most of the people couldn't face even the mere thought of food. Hauer, Nussbaum, and my husband sat tight on our trunks. The other 8 of us couldn't stand the sight of them eating we were so ill. Then things calmed down a bit until the night of Easter Sunday. Around 12 o'clock there was a noise up on deck that was so loud that everyone awoke. The sailors and helmsman and captain were all on deck for we were now having such a terrible storm that we thought the ship would be torn apart. We all started to tremble and shake. It kept getting worse. We all started praying out loud, all of us in the ship, almost 300 people and all Catholic and almost all from villages near ours, from Luxembourg and from our country."

"At daybreak things got even worse, that is on Easter Monday. The ship was listing to one side and all the top planks started to break. We had to hold on as tight as we could to keep from falling out. Then we all started again and prayed 17 rosaries before we stopped. All those who didn't know how to pray had to learn. We all called on all the Saints in Heaven and God, the Holy Mother of God., Saint Nikolas, but things kept getting worse and worse. We thought the ship would be ripped apart at any moment. The ship was listing so much that you couldn't lay down, stand up or sit. There weren't

any windows in the ship except where the stairs went up. There was an opening there and also across from our beds. The stairs were then closed off since water was coming into the ship from the deck above and the small trunks started floating around. Our cooking pot and spoon floated all around. Our boys let them float away because they didn't think we would need them. It was so loud, the ship was sailing just like it was in a valley and on both sides it was so high you couldn't see over, just water everywhere. The ship started to crack, two masts broke and their sails and ropes were ripped and torn to pieces. Then the ship sank down very deep and water came into the opening like it was being poured in with a bucket. They couldn't shut this or else we would have suffocated. We were all so frightened we couldn't even pray. We repented our sins and we all prepared to die."

"Johann and K. Limburg were still in bed naked and held on to us as well as we could. We quickly put on our undershirts so we wouldn't be lying there naked when we died. For two days we hadn't put on any shoes and stockings. Our boys lay between the trunks and had tied the trunks down with ropes. For three days we couldn't cook since no one could go up on deck since the water was pouring in over the side. The first day no one ate anything, up to the evening of the second day, then we ate the first bit of our ham raw. On Maundy Thursday we ate the last of the bread we had brought from home. Those who had never believed in God now got a chance to see that He exists. We never forgot Him in our prayers, since we prayed three rosaries every morning and evening."

"Our ship was thrown so far off course by the storm that they hardly knew where we were. We kept hoping from one day to the next but all we saw was sky and water every time we looked. Finally we saw a lot of ships, one after another. Then we were told we would soon see land. Then finally on May 17th we saw land and cities. But then we had to wait on the ship until the doctor came. But he was finished quickly. Everyone left the ship, for there were no more people who were sick on board. Then our trunks were taken to shore on a steamboat and we also came on a steamboat."

"There was a young man there from Hefnig near Echternach who was there to meet his countrymen, a real rascal. He then led all of us who were in the ship to a German boardinghouse in New York. There we ate three meals and slept one night. Then everyone had to pay 7 francs (\$1.40). My husband had to pay 14 francs for the two of us, since they had put all the trunks in the cellar and no one could get them back before he paid. The next day most of them moved on to the train. It was all very sad. Most of them didn't have enough money and couldn't go where they wanted. The extra weight of the trunks cost more than they had imagined. We were able to hold on to the money we still had, for one man told us that if you were a tailor you should stay in New York. We had hardly been here for fifteen minutes when they came running to us with cards looking for tailors."

"Everyone was very sad when they left but not us because we already knew where we were going. And we also would have had enough money left even if we hadn't found work so quickly, but we were quickly taken care of."

"When the others from Irrel left on the train, we drove happily with our trunk to our tenement. The first few days we didn't work very much, since we had to buy all sorts of things that we needed. But all that money gives you courage. He started immediately to work for a shop. He earns a dollar a day. He makes nothing but men's jackets."

"You at home may well think I don't have a job. You mustn't think that; I always help him with the sewing. But there aren't any women at home who have such a good life and it gets better every day. All of the things we need to eat we can buy across the street just like at the market. But this year everything is quite expensive. The worst bread that they eat here is better than the finest cake at home. We can eat every day for one shilling. We don't need to buy wood; there's enough wood just lying around. Rooms are expensive where we are on the corner. We have to pay 4 dollars a month. But we are among nothing but good people who are all Catholic and German. On Sundays we all go

together to church, since there are so many German Catholic churches here. I only wish that everyone who has to stay at home and lead a life of poverty could live like we do. Young people who have learned a trade have more here than someone at home who has a fortune of 2000 talers."

"Give my best to Anna Bisdorf and Elisabeth Mutsch too and tell them they should burn up their grape baskets and get themselves some tailors, even if they are windbags."

"One other thing I want to tell you: there were 300 of us when we went on board the ship. But when we left, our numbers had increased to the millions. And those countrymen were called lice. The ship was full of them. We didn't have any though."

"Angela Heck"

The relationship of this Heck family to our branch of the Heck family is not known. Our branch of the family lived in the Eifel Mountain area in many of the villages surrounding Alendorf, Waldorf, Berrendorf, Dollendorf, and Irrel so it is most likely that the families are related.

It is interesting to note that the Nikolaus Heck family probably had no intention of living in New York and were probably originally thinking about living in Wisconsin along with the many friends from Irrel. A quick job offer and advice from a stranger led this family to establish themselves in New York City.

Just seven years later in 1861, Nikolaus found himself serving his new country in Company "B" of the 52nd Regiment of New York during the Civil War. He was discharged in 1863 after he became very ill and was disabled. He went back to New York to recover.

In 1865 he was drafted again and returned to the service. He finally was discharged at the end of the war. The family finally moved to Williamsburg, New York where they remained for the rest of their lives.

34th consecutive
Heck Family Picnic
July 16, 2000

On Sunday, July 16, 2000, we will again gather as a family to celebrate our heritage and to enjoy each other's company for the 34th consecutive year. The picnic will be held at the Light House at Wind Point, near Racine, Wisconsin.

Again the events start out with breakfast at the Hammez restaurant located at the corner of High Street and Douglas Avenue in Racine. Golfers and non-golfers alike are invited to attend the breakfast which has become a tradition associated with the family picnic.

Following breakfast, we will meet at Shoop's Park, overlooking beautiful Lake Michigan, to begin our annual golf tournament. Remember that you don't have to be a good golfer to participate. Many of our golfers only golf once a year. The idea is to just have a bunch of fun with a bunch of fun loving family members.

Don Heck was the winner of last year's tournament so he gets the honor of coordinating the competition. Don is sure to come up with some goofy gimmicks to even out the playing field. Don will have help from his brother Bob in running this year's activities.

The cost for golfing is \$5.00 plus green fees for 9 holes. The \$5.00 fee is used to pay for the reservations and for some really great gifts and prizes. We even have a coveted Red Blazer with the Heck Family crest which is awarded to the tournament champion. If you win the jacket you are entitled to wear it anywhere you wish for a whole year. You just have to remember to bring it back the following year so that it can be awarded to the next winner.

If you are interested in golfing, please call Don Heck at (262) 639-2124 or Bob Heck at (414) 421-7143. You can also contact Don by e-mail at

donheck@execpc.com or Bob at
bheck@execpc.com.

The golfing is usually finished by 11:30 AM, and then we all wander on over to the Light House for a great picnic that starts at noon. Each family brings their own meat, soda, beer, lawn chairs, and a dish for the house. All the extras are provided. Grills are set up but if you have a portable gas grill you might want to bring it along since there could be hundreds of brats and steaks being grilled at the same time.

There are lots of games for the kids and adults and everyone has a great time. Photo albums and family history books are displayed so that you can look back in time at our ancestors. We always take a large group picture so we can look back years from now and remember our large and ever growing family.

The best part of the picnic is just in seeing and visiting all of the cousins.

When I tell our genealogy group that we are having the 34th consecutive family picnic, many of them are awe struck. You would be amazed at how many families never get together for a picnic or reunion or even just a visit. We should consider ourselves lucky that so many members of our family are willing to spend the time and effort in planning the games, activities, breakfast, golfing, and facility rentals.

The cost of the picnic is \$5.00 per household which goes toward the rental fee for the Light House.

If you have any questions about the picnic or about what to bring as a dish, please call Cel Heck at (262) 639-5370 or (262) 639-6064.

NOTE: Photos needed

If you have some old family photos that you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please bring them to the picnic or send them to Bob Heck at 4910 Steeple Drive, Greendale, WI 53129. I can return the originals if you wish.