

# Our Family News Letter

Issue 52

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## Heck Family Discovered On Board Ship in 1853

After 30 plus years of searching I finally discovered the Johann Heck family on board a ship arriving in the United States. This may not seem like anything important, but it really is to a genealogist.

### **Here is the rest of the story...**

After a great deal of research we had found in Henry Heck's Civil War pension records a document that was written by Henry trying to establish his age. The document was written on 23 February 1910, when Henry was 71 years of age. The document is transcribed as follows:

#### **State of Wisconsin County of Racine**

**Henry Heck being duly sworn, in relation to his application for increase of pension, under the act of February 6, 1907, declares as follows:**

**"I can not furnish a Baptismal record, nor is there a public record, that I know of. The only way I can explain my age is that I always was told by my mother, that I was born on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of February. We came to America in the spring of 1852 and I can well remember, that I was twelve years old at that time. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Day of February, 1862, I enlisted in the army and was then 22 years old."**

#### **Signed Henry Heck**

A similar document in the Civil War pension file of Joseph Heck, brother of Henry, stated that he

recalled the family arriving in New York in the spring of 1851.

Based on those two documents, I spent hundreds of hours searching every ship's manifest, name by name, for the first eight months of 1851 and 1852. I only looked at ships that departed Europe excluding Great Britain. When you consider that some of those ships had 300 or more passengers, you can better appreciate the task at hand.

I also searched every database on the Internet and at libraries and Historical Society Archives. I searched using name variations that I thought might be close to the Heck name. I searched for Heck, Hack, Huck, Heeck, Hech, Hecht, Haack, Haeck, Reck, Keck, Beck, Deck, and many more without positive results.

There were lots of people named Heck but none of them were our Heck family. The search should have been easy since the family was so large. The family should have included Johann Heck, his wife Anna Barbara, his children Peter, Lucy, Henry, Joseph and Clara. Soon I was ready to conclude that the family arrived by space ship.

In December, 2005, I decided to be good to myself for Christmas and I ordered a new book that was just being released in Germany. The book was titled: "Von der Eifel nach Amerika, Auswanderung im Gebiet der Oberahr 1840 - 1914".

Translated that means: "From the Eifel to America, emigration in the area of the Oberahr 1840 - 1914"

The book is entirely in German but it also contained a CD with tables of data. The book contained data from the Blankenheim and Schleiden

areas which included Dollendorf, Alendorf and Waldorf. Alendorf was the home of the Heck family. There are Heck relatives still living there to this day.

While working my way through the book I found our branch of the Heck family listed. Johann Heck and his wife and children were all listed by name as immigrating to America in 1853. Their date of birth was given and Anna Barbara even had her maiden name listed as Schaefer. On the same page there were two other Heck names, Balthasar and Thomas, immigrating from Alendorf on 23 April 1883. They were probably the two brothers who immigrated to America that Howard Heck heard about during his visit to Alendorf.

After more searching I found another reference for Johann Heck.

**“11.01.1853 Die Eheleute Johann Heck, Alendorf verkaufen Haus und Hof bei sofortigem Besitzeantritt, für 740 Taler an Gerhard Decker, Müggenhausen.”**

Translated this means:

**“January 11, 1853 The married couple (Mr & Mrs) Johann Heck, (from) Alendorf sold (their) house and yard with immediate possessions, for 740 Taler to Gerhard Decker, (from) Mueggenhausen.”**

Remember that the dates in Germany are always written as day.month.year hence 11.01.1853 means January 11, 1853.

The conclusion from all of this is that Johann Heck and his family were still in Alendorf in January, 1853.

## Time for a new search...

Armed with this new information it was time to try a new search through the Internet records for

the family. I tried a search on Ancestry.com, a well-established genealogy research site, for the family in the spring of 1853. Again the search resulted in nothing.

I then figured that I would try a real long shot by searching for every person named Peter, aged 18 years, who arrived at the Port of New York in 1853. I did not include a last name in the search. My reasoning on this search was that Peter is the most likely name to be spelled correctly. Johann can be spelled many ways as can Anna Barbara, Henry, Clara, Lucy or Joseph. Peter is usually always shown as Peter.

I found that there were only 2,825 young men named Peter who were age 18 and who arrived in 1853 in New York. I then started a name by name search through the 2,825 records. Usually I could quickly eliminate long surnames such as Klinkhamer or Schmidtheim and concentrate my efforts on short four or five letter surnames. When I found a name with promise I clicked on the manifest and read the original document.

When I got to the 327<sup>th</sup> Peter I saw that he was named Peter Hank and that he was 18 years old and that he arrived in the spring of 1853. It was worth a check of the manifest.

What I saw almost made me holler out with excitement. Gloria was asleep upstairs since it was after midnight so I just kept it to myself for the night. There was the “Johann Hank” family listed as Joh. Hank age 44, Farmer; Anna age 50, wife; Peter age 18, son; Lucia age 16, daughter; Heinr. Age 14, son; Joseph age 13, son and Clara age 10, daughter.

The surname was spelled Hauk but was indexed as Hank. This was the right family as every name and all of the ages are a match.

## How did the name Heck become Hauk and finally Hank?

When Gloria, Sharon, Don and I visited Alendorf in 1989 with our German friends from Wuppertal, Germany, our friends mentioned that the people from Alendorf had a very strong accent and were difficult for them to understand. When I asked what they meant they told me that the Alendorfers pronounce their words very harshly. They said that it almost hurt their ears to listen to them.

As I think about it now, that might explain why the 1860 US Census in Minnesota listed Johann Heck as John Haack. Haack is a harsh sounding name.

The person writing the names in the ship's manifest was probably from northern Germany and may have had the same problem spelling the name Heck the way it sounded to him. It came out as Hauk.

The letter u when written by hand looks very much like the letter n. As a result when the digital index was created for the Ancestry.com web site the name Hauk was read as Hank.

From all of this we now know that the Johann Heck family sold their land, home and possessions on January 11, 1853, at Alendorf, Germany, made their way to the port of Antwerp, Belgium, boarded the ship the "Peter Hattrick" and arrived in New York on April 16, 1853.

## **39 Days On Board Ship...**

After a little more research I found that the "Peter Hattrick" departed Antwerp on Wednesday, March 9, 1853 and arrived in New York 39 days later on Saturday, April 16, 1853. That must have been a difficult journey for the family.

## **Search For a Picture of the "Peter Hattrick"...**

The next thing for me to do was to search the Internet for information on the ship the "Peter Hattrick". From the manifest I read that the ship was 555 tons displacement and that there were 263 passengers on board. There were no births or deaths reported during the 39 day voyage.

I searched the Internet for "Peter Hattrick" and found quite a few listings. Most were passenger lists covering the period from 1842 to 1854. If that was the operating period of the ship it meant that it was unlikely that a photograph existed. There could be sketches, paintings, or structural drawings of the ship but probably not photographs.

One web site that I found was for a small museum in Essex, Connecticut. Essex is a small town with a population of 2,500 people. Essex is located on the Connecticut River not too far from Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. Essex is the home of the Connecticut River Museum. In their collection listings they had three paintings of ships, including one of the "Peter Hattrick" from New York in 1842. Talk about luck.

I sent an e-mail message to the Senior Curator of the museum requesting a photo or a copy of the ship. The Curator sent a reply and stated that the painting of the "Peter Hattrick" was a dark reverse painting on glass and the glass is cracked. She stated that they did have a good 8 X 10 black and white image of the painting and that they would be happy to send it along with an invoice.

## **Travel from New York to Wisconsin 1853...**

In 1853 the first all-rail railroad route was established from New York to Chicago. The train was called the "Pioneer" and it was the most likely method of travel for the Johann Heck family. Wagons and stagecoaches were also used to pro-



*The Chicago and Northwestern "Pioneer" was the first locomotive used in Chicago starting in 1848. It was this locomotive and car that was used for the trip from New York to Chicago in 1853.*

vide links to remote locations such as Brighton, Wisconsin. Since Brighton, Kenosha County, Wisconsin was only 70 miles north west of Chicago, it is possible that Anna Barbara's brother, Johann Peter Schaefer may have been at the train station in Chicago to meet the Heck family. He would have likely used a large covered wagon to pick up his relatives.

The Schaefer family and several other Alendorf families were already living in Brighton. It must have been a great reunion.

On the following pages you will find a picture of the ship "Peter Hattrick" and a page from the original manifest showing the Johann Heck family.

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## Who were those people?

Johann Heck and his wife Anna Barbara Schaefer were my great great grandparents. They were the first Heck family to immigrate to the United States from Alendorf, Germany. Johann and Anna Barbara had five children: Peter, Anna Lucia, Henry, Joseph, and Clara. Henry was my great grandfather. The Heck family from Racine,

Wisconsin are all descendants of Henry. Peter, Anna Lucia, Joseph and Clara lived in Minnesota around the New Ulm area. Anna Lucia was married to Leonard Bore, and Clara was married to Vincent Brunner. The Canadian Hecks are descendants of Peter Heck through Peter's son, Joseph Herman Heck.

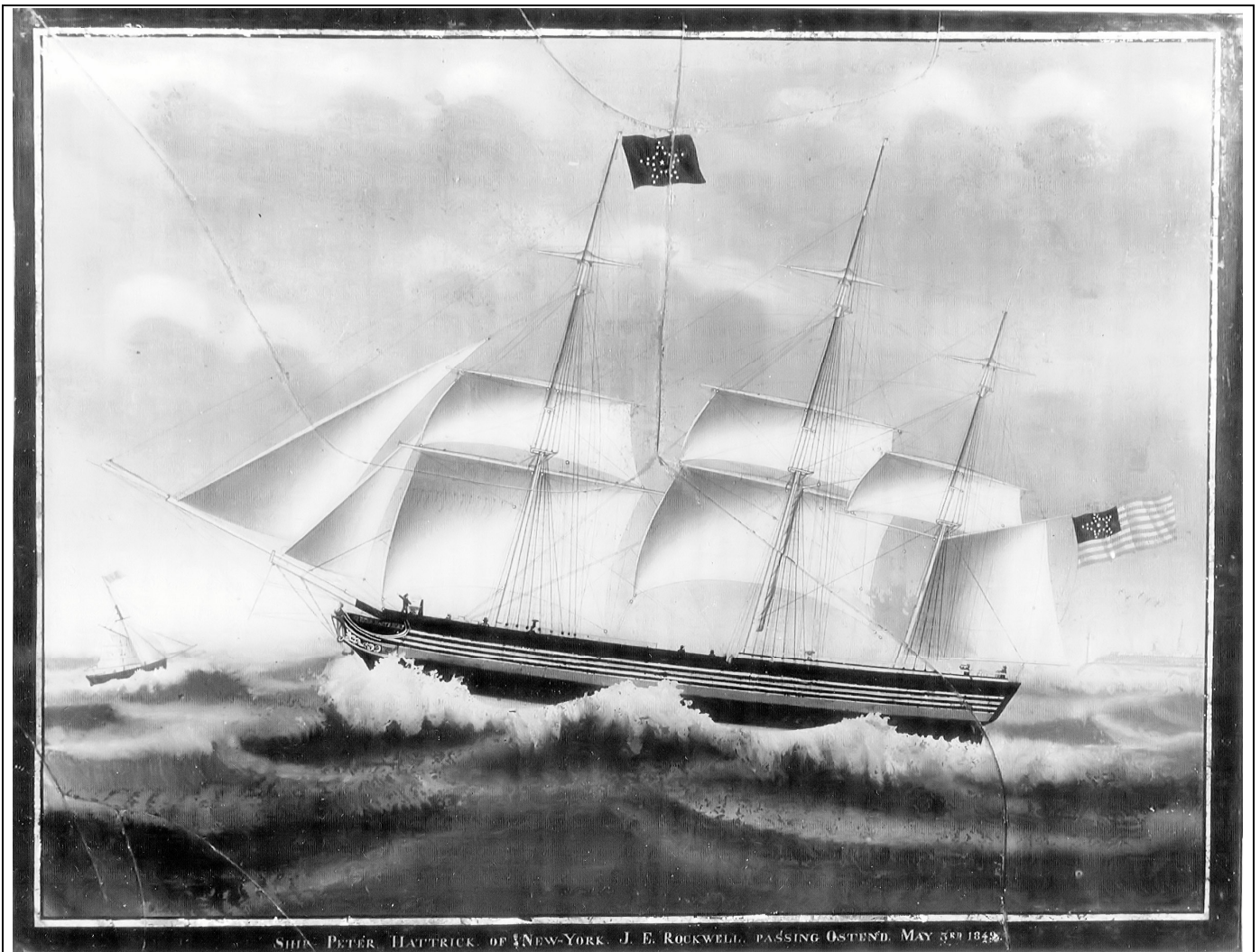
Shortly after Johann's arrival in Wisconsin in 1853, the family purchased farm land at Brighton, in western Kenosha County, Wisconsin. In November, 1855, Anna Barbara Schaefer Heck passed away. She is buried in an unmarked grave at the Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church cemetery at Brighton, Kenosha County.

Johann married Susannah Zeren, widow of Nicholas Zeren, in June, 1856. Susannah and Johann had four more children: Lucy, Joseph (known as Josiah), Andrew and Annie. Lucy Heck married William Dorn, and Annie married Jacob Meyer.

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## Did you know...

...that three of Johann Heck's sons served in the Infantry during the Civil War? Peter, Henry and Joseph Heck all served with distinction.



SHIP PETER HATTRICK, OF NEW-YORK. J. E. ROCKWELL, PASSING OSTEND, MAY 3<sup>RD</sup> 1849.

Information provided by the Connecticut River Museum: The ship "Peter Hattrick" of New York was built at Essex, Connecticut in 1841 by master builder Richard P. Williams for Essex and New York owners. She was built in the New City Shipyard and was registered at 556 tons. The vessel was 133 feet long by 30 feet wide and had a depth of hold of 21 feet. The ship was first commanded by Captain David R. Post, followed by John E. Rockwell, his nephew. She was sold to a foreign buyer at New York in 1855.

The reverse painting on glass is by P. Weytz of Antwerp, Belgium.

The inscription under the painting is difficult to read but it states: "Ship Peter Hattrick of New York, J. E. Rockwell, passing Ostend May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1849."

The flag shown on the mast was the flag of the "Black Star Line" later known as the "New Line" or "Samuel Thompson's Line" in Liverpool. In 1851 the ship became part of the "Hurlbut Line" of passenger ships servicing Europe and the United States.

You will notice that the glass has several cracks in it. The painting is 157 years old and in very fragile condition. We are very lucky to have a photo of it.

DISTRICT OF NEW YORK—PORT OF NEW YORK.

I, John E. Rockwell do solemnly, sincerely and truly swear that the following List or Manifest of Passengers, subscribed with my name, and now delivered by me to the Collector of the Customs for the District of New York, contains, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a just and true account of all the Passengers received on board the Ship Peter Hattrick whereof I am Master, from Antwerp

Sworn to this 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1853 Before me John E. Rockwell  
 List or Manifest OF ALL THE PASSENGERS taken on board the Peter Hattrick whereof John E. Rockwell is Master, from Antwerp burthen 555 1/2 tons.

NAMES.	Age		SEX.	OCCUPATION.	The country to which they severally belong.	The country in which they intend to become inhabitants.	Died on the Voyage.
	Years.	Months.					
1. John Schegg	55		Male	Farmer	Switzerland	United States	1 Chest
2. Anton	21				"	"	2 Guns, 1 Bed
3. Joh. Jac. Kollenbig	33			Weaver	"	"	1 Chest, 1 Gun
4. Thea Mar	21			Wife	"	"	1 Bed.
5. Joh. Ant. Hader	24			Farmer	"	"	1 Chest, 1 Bed, 1 Gun
6. Mar. Hader	17			Wife	"	"	1 Chest
7. Johann Lehner	32			Baker	"	"	1 Chest, 1 Gun
8. Joh. B. Wicker	19			Student	"	"	1 Chest, 1 Gun
9. Joh. Christoffel	34			Farmer	"	"	1 Chest, 1 Gun
10. Joh. F. Frenkel	24			Silk Weaver	"	"	1 Bag
11. Charles Wilman	30			Artist	Prussia	"	2 Trunks, 1 Bed
12. Phil. Spitzer	25			Miner	Germany	"	2 Chests, 1 Bed
13. T. Mar. Anbarke	25			Wife	"	"	
14. Nicholas Berens	28			Farmer	"	"	2 Chests
15. Magdalena	26			Wife	"	"	4 Guns
16. Maria		4		Child	"	"	
17. Maria				Wife	"	"	
18. Joh. Hauk	44				Prussia	"	2 Chests
19. Anna	50			Wife	"	"	
20. Peter	18			Son	"	"	
21. Lucia	16			Daughter	"	"	
22. Heinrich	14			Son	"	"	
23. Joseph	13			"	"	"	
24. Clara	10			"	"	"	
25. Peter	24			Farmer	"	"	1 Bag
26. Georg Kimmel	41			Butcher	Germany	"	1 Bag
27. Conrad Meyer	30			Waiter	Prussia	"	1 Chest
28. Jacob Bessler	28			Artist	Germany	"	1 Chest
29. Franz	19			"	"	"	1 Chest
30. Michel Wagner	29			Laybinder	"	"	1 Chest
31. Michel Herman	55			Baker	"	"	1 Chest
32. Math. Seufert	26			Farmer	"	"	1 Chest
33. J. G. Graefers	22			Farmer	"	"	1 Chest
34. Rosina	23			"	"	"	1 Bag
35. Christina Hofman	30			Tailor	"	"	1 Chest
36. Joh. Woban	18			Physian	"	"	1 Trunk
37. Caspar Ruff	22			Journal	"	"	1 Bag
38. Joh. G. Bennis	18			Tailor	"	"	1 Bag
39. Joh. Herman	32			Farmer	Prussia	"	1 Chest
40. Peter Langenscht	45			Miner	Prussia	"	1 Chest

The "Peter Hattrick" Passenger Manifest from April 16, 1853. The Johann Heck family is shown as number 18 through 24. The surname appears as Hauk.

# Virginia M. Henrich

## 1916 – 2006

(Nee Plucker) Age 89, of Waterford,. Passed away February 15, 2006 at her residence in Waterford. Born to Alfred J. and Elizabeth R. (nee Heck) Plucker in Burlington, Wisconsin, July 19, 1916. Virginia was a 1934 graduate of Waterford Union High School. Virginia married Lester G. Frenz in 1937, who preceded her in death in 1982. She then married Emil Christiansen, who has preceded her in death, and Virginia married Al Henrich who preceded her in death in 1995.

She worked at Foster Forbes in Burlington and was a member of the Glass Blowers Union there. Virginia spent her entire life in the Waterford area. She was a lifelong member of St. Thomas Church, also a member of Tichigan and Waterford Seniors club and loved to travel on Ruthie's bus and play sheepshead.

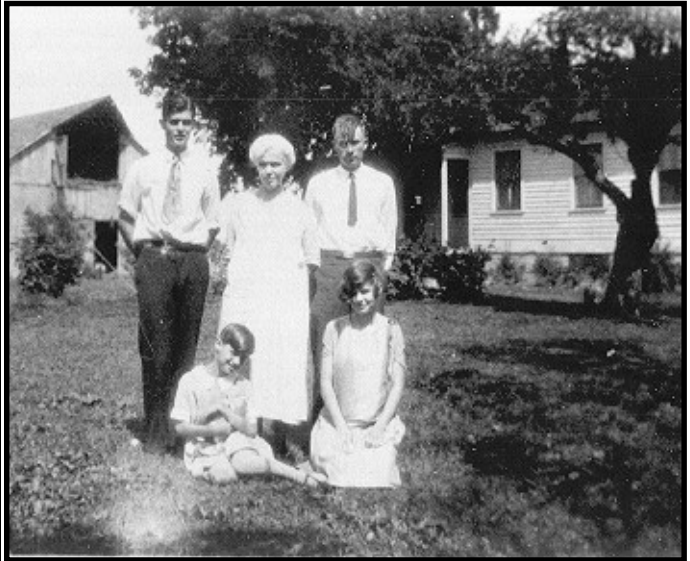
She is survived by children: Lorraine (Gil) Bakke, Lester (Katherine) Frenz and Philip (Kathryn) Frenz, special stepson Don (Judy) Henrich. Further survived by special friends: Sally Gahagan and Geraldine Halbach, nieces, nephews other relatives and many friends.

Preceded in death by her parents, 3 husbands: Lester G. Frenz, Emil Christiansen, and Al Henrich, 1 daughter: Jeanne, 1 son: Fritz, 1 sister: Gwen Degrave and 1 brother: Larry Plucker. Mass Saturday, February 18, 10:30 AM at St. Thomas Catholic Church, 305 South First Street (Hwy 20), Waterford. Visitation in church, 9-10:30 AM. Burial following Mass at St. Thomas Cemetery. Memorials are suggested to St. Thomas Building Fund.

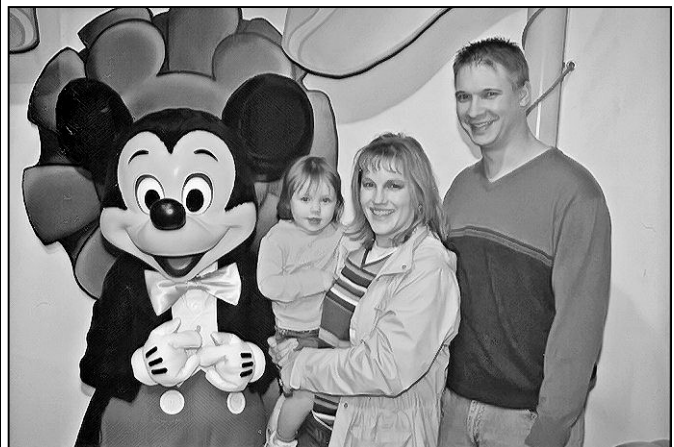
Mealy Funeral Home, 225 W. Main St., Waterford, Wisconsin 53185. (262) 534-2233.

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NOTE: Virginia was the granddaughter of Henry Heck and Mary Ann McNulty. She was the last surviving grandchild of Henry Heck.



The Alfred Plucker Family: L-R: Lawrence, Virginia, Lizzie, Alfred, and Gwen taken at Waterford, Wisconsin about 1925.



Lauren, Judi and Dave Heck visit with Mickey Mouse at Disney World in 2006. This was Lauren's second trip to Florida. Ask her about it the next time that you see her.

Send me your photos and maybe I will include them in this newsletter. Send them via e-mail to **bheck@execpc.com** or send them by snail mail to Bob Heck, 4910 Steeple Drive, Greendale, WI 53129.

## Pictures from the photo album...



Meet Sarah and Matthew Miller, children of Jeff and Sue (Bark) Miller from North Oaks, Minnesota. This photo was taken in December, 2005. Matthew is 3 and Sarah is 5.



## Meet the Pfeiffer cousins...

Marvin and Joanne (Heck) Pfeiffer now have 28 grandchildren and one great grandchild. In the picture at lower left are:

Row 1: Lauren Behrendt, Rebecca Pfeiffer, Dana Mrazek, (holding sister) Mackenna Hatfield, and Meghan Pfeiffer.

Row 2: Catherine Pfeiffer, James Pfeiffer, Luke Behrendt, Grandma Joanne, Jack Behrendt, Granpa Marvin, Jenny Pfeiffer, and Jamie Pfeiffer.

Row 3: Joy Pfeiffer, Samantha Behrendt, Kaitlyn Pfeiffer, Erika Kelley, Andrew Suchla, and Amanda Pfeiffer.

Row 4: Craig Robertson, Michelle Pfeiffer, Jacob Suchla, Karin Robertson, Julia Pfeiffer, Rachel Kelley, Tony Arndt, and Jonathan Pfeiffer.

Missing are: Laura DeHart, Erick Robertson, Tom Pfeiffer, and Mary Hatfield.

Congratulations to Joanne and Marvin Pfeiffer and to all of the descendants of your wonderful (and large) family. Shopping for Christmas must be a blast.

This newsletter is written and published by **Robert J. Heck, 4910 Steeple Drive, Greendale, WI 53129.**

Our Family News Letter is published quarterly and is distributed without charge. Contributions to help cover the costs are greatly appreciated. My home web page address is <http://www.execpc.com/~bheck/heck.html>

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