

# Our Family News Letter

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## Sometimes Genealogy Is Just Too Easy.

By Bob Heck, MPAFUG

I get a lot of e-mail messages from people asking for help with their family history. Last week I got an e-mail message from a guy named Mike. His message stated that his mother was a Heck. He had no one left on the Heck side of his family to ask. He said that her dad was Dean Heck and that Dean had brothers named Wilber, and Max.

Max went hunting one day but never came back. They found his gun by a tree but no Max. Mike thought all of this was in or around Sullivan or Farmersburg or Shelburn, Indiana. He thought that Dean's dad was named Comadoor?? And that he was a blacksmith. There were no dates given for any of these people.

I told Mike that my Heck family lived mostly in Wisconsin, Minnesota, with a few in the Dakotas and Alberta, Canada, and that my entire database of 9,000 people did not contain any of his Indiana family.

This one had challenge written all over it. The only reason that I took up this challenge is because of the first name "Comadoor". Right off the bat I suspected that the spelling of the name was not correct and that it probably should be spelled "Commodore".

I started a census search in the 1930 US Census for Indiana by looking for a Commodore Heck. I found him right away in Bloomfield Township, Green County, Indiana.

In the 1920 Census I found the family in Hamilton, Sullivan County, Indiana. Max, Wilber and

Dean were in the family along with a few other siblings.

I kept tracing the family back in the 1910, 1900, 1880, 1870 and 1860 US Census and found that Commodore Heck's father was Jacob H. Heck from Indiana. I also found that Jacob H. Heck served in the Civil War in Company F of the 115<sup>th</sup> Infantry, an Indiana unit. I found that Jacob H. Heck's father was Valentine Heck from Ohio.

Using Ancestry.com I found that Valentine Heck was the son of Jacob Heck who was born in Maryland in 1790. Jacob Heck's father was Peter Heck from Maryland. I even found a photograph of Valentine Heck.

This was just too easy. In a period of two hours I was able to trace Mike's Heck family back to the 1700's and I gave him 27 Heck relatives and a picture of his great-great-great grandfather Valentine Heck. I even found death and marriage records in the Indiana Archives and Works Progress Administration records.

Mike was astonished at how much information I was able to uncover in two hours. He decided to subscribe to Ancestry.com immediately.

I went to bed that evening feeling good that I was able to help someone over a brick wall.

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## Sorry, there was no obituary...

By Bob Heck, MPAFUG

I had been researching LaSalle County, Illinois records for an obituary for Gloria's great grandfather. I knew when and where he died in 1921

from his death certificate. It clearly stated that he died at Streater, LaSalle County, Illinois on 29 April 1921.

LaSalle County has an organization called the Genealogy Guild and it has an excellent web site at <http://www.LSCGG.org/>

I wish that every county had an organization like the Genealogy Guild. Using the web site, I was able to search for an obituary in their index, which covers nearly every town in the county. If you find one listed you can then place an order for it for a small fee.

All of my searches showed that there was no obituary for Thomas Sullivan. There was one for his wife who passed away in 1917, but not for Thomas. I thought that this was a bit strange because he had lived in the county for 76 years. He owned 640 acres of prime farmland and had built a huge house and farm buildings. He also owned 300 acres of farmland in Minnesota, which was run by his son. He also was a member of the school board, and served as County Assessor for a number of years. He had 13 children and attended church regularly. It was just not logical that he should not have had an obituary.

In August, 2011 Gloria and I made a two day genealogy junket to LaSalle County. Our first stop was at the Genealogy Guild located in Ottawa. The Guild has a very large research facility with books and files lining the walls. They had computers, which contained indexes of their holdings. They even had original court probate records. The probate folder for Thomas Sullivan contained about 100 documents: a real gold mine. But, there was no record of an obituary. The members of the Guild also found that very strange.

Our next stop was to Allen Township cemetery in Ransom Township where we found the graves of the Sullivan family. After taking many pictures we were off to the town of Streater. We stopped at the Public library and I asked to see the microfilm from the local newspaper. The clerk looked up Thomas Sullivan in their index

and stated that, "**There was no obituary for your ancestor.**" I asked to see the microfilm anyway.

I cranked the reader to the date that he died, 29 April 1921 and on the third page I found a five-line notice of his death that morning. It even had a bold headline. It stated that funeral arrangements were pending. I cranked to the following day and there on 30 April 1921 I found a large one-column obituary with a bold headline. The obituary was filled with errors however. Two of the errors stated that Thomas was born at Ransom, Illinois and that he had 8 children. He was actually born in Norway. I was happy to find the obituary but was surprised that the family let so many errors stand. On a hunch I decided to check the newspaper for several more days.

In the 3 May 1921 issue on page three I found a huge three-column obituary with a very large bold headline. All of the errors had been corrected and the obituary went on to state that Thomas' father died of yellow fever in New Orleans right after they arrived from Norway. It also stated that the mother took her three children and continued her trip to LaSalle County where she died two years later in 1846. How on earth did someone miss indexing the obituaries that appeared on three separate days?

My Tip of the Day is, If someone tells you that the record does not exist, don't believe him or her. Follow your instincts and your logic.

Happy Hunting,  
Bob Heck  
MPAFUG

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## **The Heck Family Flees Indian Uprising in 1862.**

In 1862, the Dakota Sioux Indians started an uprising near Swan Lake, Nicolett County, Minnesota. The Heck family was forced to flee.



New Ulm. This is shown in the picture above.

## The Events of 1862

August 1862 - Annuity payments to the Dakota Sioux are late; The Dakota Sioux demand future annuity payments be made directly to them, rather than through traders. Traders refuse to sell provisions on credit. Andrew Myrick, spokesman for the traders, says: "So far as I am concerned, if they are hungry, let them eat grass."

August 17 - Four Dakota kill five white settlers.

August 18 - Bands of Dakota kill 44 Americans in attacks on the Redwood Agency and on federal troops heading for the Agency.

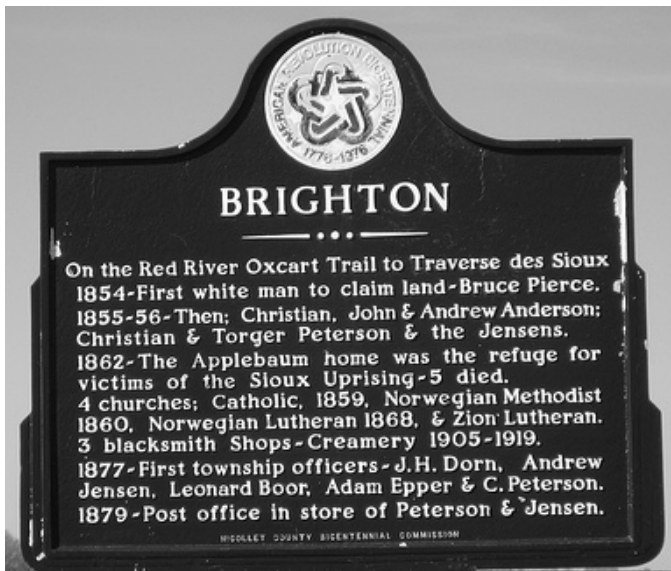
August 19 - Minnesota Governor Ramsey names Col. Henry Sibley to command American volunteer forces. Sixteen settlers are killed around New Ulm. Settlers crowd into a small barricaded area of

August 23 - About 650 Dakota attack New Ulm. Town is burned; 34 die and 60 are wounded, but the barricaded area holds out.

August 25 - 2,000 New Ulm refugees head for Mankato, thirty miles away.



The leaders of the Dakota Sioux in 1862.



Historical marker at Brighton, Minnesota.

Johann Heck age 43 came to America in May, 1853 from Alendorf, Germany. He arrived with his wife, Anna Barbara age 52, and his children Peter age 19, Anna Lucia age 17, Henry age 14, Joseph age 12, and Clara age 10. After living in Brighton, Kenosha County, Wisconsin for just two years, his wife Anna Barbara Schaefer died on 23 November 1855.

Johann married a second time to the widow Susannah Zeren, former wife of Nicholas Zeren. The family moved to Minnesota in 1857 but returned to Wisconsin during the 1862 Indian uprising. The family returned to Minnesota in 1867.

Johann died in West Newton, Minnesota while attending a wedding party at the home of his daughter, Lucy Heck Brunner. His obituary stated that he died of a suspected heart attack. An obituary appeared also in the St. Peter Herald on Friday, June 26, 1885 as follows: "John Heck of Granby fell dead on "Monday" at the home of V. Brunner in the town of West Newton. Mr. Heck went to West Newton on Saturday to visit and attend a wedding and on Monday while playing with some small children fell dead. He was 75 years old. The funeral occurred Wednesday."

## A Distant Relative Finally Found.

Listed in an old photo album that belonged to my mother, Mary Ann Mikel Heck, was a picture of my parents on their honeymoon in 1935. The picture is shown below.



L-R Front row: Robert G. Heck, Mary Ann Mikel Heck, Aunt Annie, Anna Pastyrikova Mikel, and John Mikel. Anna and John Mikel were the parents of Mary Ann Mikel Heck.

The picture was taken in Mount Olive, Illinois, which is near Saint Louis, Missouri. Mary's parents traveled with the honeymoon couple because they owned the car.

The question was; Who was Aunt Annie? By comparing this picture with several others in the photo album I was able to identify the family name as Mitas.

In 1991 I asked Mary Ann Mikel Heck about the picture. She said that the picture was taken in Mt. Olive, Illinois and that the old lady in the center was an aunt of her mother. She confirmed that the aunt was a Mitas.

In the 1920 US Census, Annie Mitas was found living at White City Village, Mt. Olive Township, Macoupin County, Illinois. She was 66 years of age, a widow, and was living with her daughter and son-in-law, Amalie and Joseph Slapak.

Information on the back of the picture indicated that she was an Aunt of Anna Mikel, and that she came from the Village of Rudimov, the same place where Anna Pastyrik Mikel was born.

The death certificate for her son, Leopold Mitas (Mitasch), State file number 23044, Registrar's number 5615, states that he was born 14 Nov 1882 in Czechoslovakia. His parents were shown as John Mitas and Anna "Pasderzek". This is a very close pronunciation of the name "Pastyrik" from the Village of Rudimov. Note that a female normally would have the suffix "ova" added to the surname, so Aunt Annie would have been shown as Pastyrikova.

Annie Mitas, a 56 year old widow, was on a ship arriving at New York's Ellis Island on 25 Nov 1912. She was traveling with her daughters Amalie, age 21, Aloisie, also age 21, and a son Ferdinand, age 13. They were going to St. Louis, MO, to stay with Annie's son, John Mitas at 1711 South 11th Street. It is believed that the three children are the three adults shown in the back row of the 1935 picture.

Death information from Death Certificate number 12234, page 117, White City, Mount Olive Township, Macoupin County, Illinois. The death certificate shows the date of birth as 5 May 1855, at Rudimova, Czechoslovakia. Her father is shown as Akres Bojkovice, and her mother is shown as not known. It is suspected that her father's name was not correct on the death certificate. It is more likely that her name was Pastyrik and that she was a sister of Josef Pastyrik. That would fit in with the photo showing her as an Aunt of Anna Pastryk Mikel.

My grandparents, John and Anna Mikel often had Czech relatives visiting from St. Louis, and Illinois. They had a tradition of going out to their backyard for a group picture with any out-of-town visitors. They usually marked some names on the back of the photo.

This photo at right was marked, "Frank, Charles and Mary Mitas". The photo was taken at my



grandparent's home at 1212 Hagerer Street in Racine, Wisconsin. It looks like they were holding a nice catch of lake perch from Lake Michigan.

Mary Mitas was the husband of Leopold Mitas and Frank and Charles were their children. The picture was probably taken in 1935.

### **What ever happened to Frank and Charles Mitas?**

Frank L. Mitas was born in 1917 and died in St. Louis in 1985. He was married to Marie Matula. Frank L. Mitas served in the US Navy during WWII and was a retired member of Anheuser-Busch Bottlers Local Number 1187. I knew that Frank lived in St. Louis because I stayed with his

family for one day in 1962 while driving to Pasadena City College in California.

Charles A. Mitas was a little harder to find since I had no idea of where he lived. I found his obituary while searching the internet and discovered that he had been living in Beech Grove, Indiana when he died in 2009.



### **Mitas, Charles A.**

Charles A. Mitas 87, passed away on November 29, 2009. He was born in St. Louis, MO to the late **Leopold and Mary Mitas**. Charles later moved to Beech Grove, IN. and worked for Eli Lilly until his retirement. He

was preceded in death by his loving wife **JoAnn** in 1993. Charles is a veteran of the US Navy having served in WWII. He was a long time member of Holy Name Catholic Church and the American Legion in Beech Grove. Charles is survived by his son Daniel Charles Mitas, two daughters; Elaine (Jon) Shively and Carol (Jon) Canida. He is also survived by two grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Charles was preceded in death by one brother **Frank Mitas**. Friends may call on Wed. Dec. 2, 2009 from 5-8 p.m. at Little and Sons Funeral Home, Beech Grove Chapel. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held in Holy Name Catholic Church at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 3, 2009. Burial at Forest Lawn Memory Gardens.



### **Charles A. Mitas 1922 - 2009**

Information from the Indianapolis Star Online Obituary, December 1, 2009.

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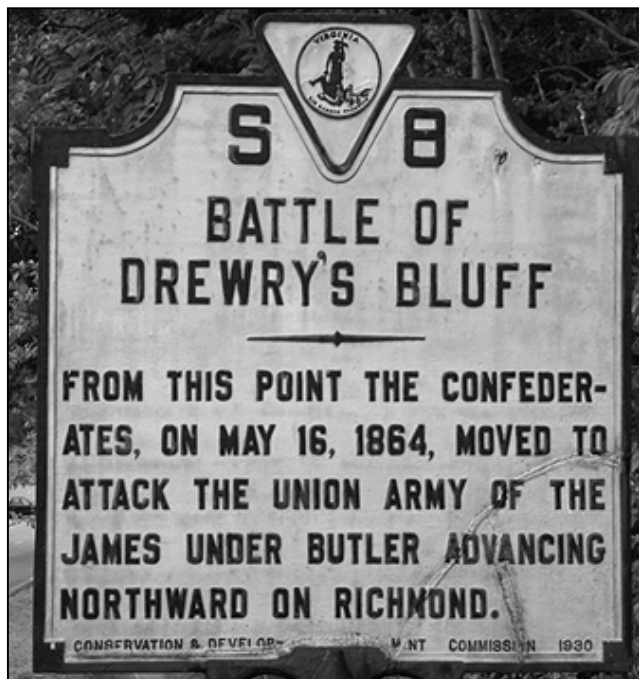
## From the newspapers...

The following article in the Richmond, Virginia Dispatch describes the heavy fighting on May 16, 1864, at Drewry's Bluff just south of Richmond. This was the battle in which my great grandfather, Henry Heck, was wounded in the left leg by a musket shot. It gives a different perspective since it was reported from a Confederate point of view.

### Richmond Dispatch

Tuesday Morning, May 17, 1864.

**The War News** – Heavy Fighting on the Southside. Affairs Progressing Favorably – Capture of a large number of prisoners – A victory in the Valley – News from General Lee's Army.



Sunday night left the opposing forces on the Southside of the James River in the same relative positions they had occupied for two days, but there was a decided impression upon the public mind that a general engagement would occur yesterday, and in this was no disappointment. Desultory Brag continued through the night, and about five o'clock on yesterday morning he commenced in earnest. The attack was by our forces, and among the brigades engaged were

Gracey's, Kemper's, Johnson's, Barton's, Corse's, and Ransom's. It is stated that after the battle commenced, our men allowed the enemy to get possession of a fortification, when a fight took place, almost hand-to-hand, the opposing forces being at times within ten yards of each other, and almost blinded by the dense fog and smoke of the musketry. The result was that the enemy were driven some distance, who sustained heavy losses in killed, wounded, and prisoners.

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

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## From the Newspapers...

Burlington Free Press: October 19, 1919

### OBITUARY

**Mrs. James Heck** (nee Wilhelmina Hoernemann) died last week Thursday morning after a very short illness at her home in this city, aged 46 years. The funeral was held on Monday morning at 9 o'clock from St. Mary's Catholic church. Rev. J. A. VanTreeck officiating.

The deceased was born in this city on August 19, 1873. She was married to Mr. **Heck** sixteen years ago and they have always lived here. There are surviving a husband and five children, the latter being Raymond, Loraine, Herbert, Alice and Josie. ( Note: Josie was actually Joseph Henry **Heck**.) Also two brothers, Henry B. of Burlington and Frank Hoernemann of Muskego.

Those from a distance in attendance at the funeral were as follows: Mr. And Mrs. Charles Kelly, Mr. And Mrs. Rudolph Wright, Mr. And Mrs. Jas. **Aspland**, Rockton, Ill.; Mrs. Jos. **Brady**, Beloit; Mr. And Mrs. Sylvester **Dibble**, Mrs. Adam **Dibble**, Antioch; Mr. And Mrs.

Robert **Heck**, Mr. And Mrs. L. Schenkenberg, Mrs. Theo. Heinen, Mike May and John Hege- man, Racine; Mr. And Mrs. Matt **Heck**, Thomp- sonville; Mr. And Mrs. Lawrence **Heck**, Mrs. Mary **Grosstueck** and Miss Eva **Heck**, Milwau- kee; Mr. And Mrs. Frank Hoernemann, Mus- kego; Henry **Heck**, Mr. And Mrs. John **Heck**, Mr. And Mrs. Alfred **Plucker** and Leona **Heck**, Waterford; Mr. And Mrs. Ed. Wieners, Lyons; Mr. And Mrs. Joseph Christman, Kansasville.

Note from the Editor: The value of an obituary to a genealogist is that many of the names that ap- pear in the article are relatives , shown in bold, and often their location is given as in the above article. For example, it was through this obituary that I was able to locate the Dibble family in An- tioch, Illinois, and the Aspland family in Rock- ton, Illinois.

Elizabeth McNulty married Sherman Aspland, and her sister, Loretta McNulty married Adam Dibble.

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Wausau Daily Record: August 17, 1970

#### **OBITUARY**

##### **Mrs. Frank Heinrichs**

Mrs. Frank Heinrichs 84, 701 W. Wausau Ave., Wausau, died Saturday afternoon at a Wausau hospital.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. at the Helke West Chapel, Wausau, and at 10 a.m. at St. Anne's Catholic Church, Wausau. The Rev. A. W. Fischer will officiate, and burial will be in Restlawn Memorial Park, Wausau. Friends may call now at the funeral home, where a parish Bible vigil will be held today at 7:30 p.m.

The former Mollie Henningfeld was born July 21, 1886, in Burlington, daughter of Mr. And Mrs. Henry Henningfeld. On October 21, 1907, in Milwaukee, she was married to Frank Heinrichs, who died in December 1947. She was a member of St. Mildred's Circle and the Fatima Council, both of St. Anne's Catholic Church, Wausau.

Survivors include four sons, Carl, 406 Grand Ave., and Gordon, 1009 Quaw St., both of Wau- sau, Francis, New Berlin, and Eugene, Milwau- kee; five daughters, Mrs. Damon Reynolds, 701 W. Wausau Ave., Mrs. Roy Zarnke, 506 Martin Ave., and Mrs. Gilbert Teuke, 500 17<sup>th</sup> Place, all of Wausau, Mrs. Jack Johnson, Milwaukee, and Mrs. Joseph Woolley, Green Bay; 28 grandchil- dren and one great grandchild.

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Burlington Standard Democrat March 21, 1900

#### **OBITUARY**

Mrs. Elizabeth Henningfeld died at the home of her son, Henry Henningfeld on McHenry Street, on Sunday, March 18, at 6 p.m. The deceased was born in Olfen (sic Olfen), Westpfahlen, Germany, February 27, 1816, and was conse- quently 84 years and 19 days old at the time of her demise. On October 2, 1839, she was united in marriage to Francis Henningfeld in her native country, coming to this country in 1847. She re- sided in Waterford till about 23 years ago, since then she made her home with her son in this city. She leaves to mourn her death 1 sister, 6 chil- dren, 36 grandchildren and 11 great- grandchildren. The children are Mrs. John Mi- lartz, of New London; Mrs. John Leber of Chip- pewa Falls; Mrs. John Wurms, of Waukesha; Mrs. Henry Plate and Henry Henningfeld, of this city. The funeral took place at 9 o'clock Wednesday morning from St. Mary's Catholic church, Rev. T. Jacobs officiating.

Editors Note: Mrs. Elizabeth Henningfeld was born Elizabeth Richter. A photo of her tomb- stone is shown below.

