

# Our Family News Letter

Issue 76

Greendale, Wisconsin

March, 2012

## Meet Our Cousin Ellen R. Heinrichs Stiner

In early December 2011, I received a note from Ellen Stiner from Golden, Colorado. Ellen was asking if I knew the name of Mrs. Henry Henningfeld. Mrs. Henry Henningfeld was her great-grandmother.

Ellen is married to Bill Stiner. Ellen and Bill Stiner have one son named Robert Meredith Stiner who is married to Karen Osmundsen. Robert and Karen have two sons, Samuel and David Stiner.

Ellen, is the daughter of Anthony Gordon Heinrichs and Margaret Debalske. Anthony Gordon Heinrichs was the son of Frank Heinrichs and Dorothy Amelia (Molly) Henningfeld. Dorothy Amelia (Molly) Henningfeld was the daughter of Henry Henningfeld and Clara Stratmann.

**Clara Stratmann** was the Mrs. Henry Henningfeld that Ellen was looking for.

Ellen and Bill are on my mailing list for Our Family News Letter. She said that she was delighted to learn from the December 2011 issue of the newsletter that her great-great grandmother was Elizabeth (Richter) Henningfeld. I had included an obituary in the newsletter for Ellen's grandmother Molly and her great-great grandmother Elizabeth.

I was more than happy to send Ellen a printout of her ancestry going back to the early 1700's. In return, Ellen sent me two Christmas letters from 2010 and 2011. I really enjoyed reading them and so I asked Ellen if it would be okay for me to

include them in Our Family News Letter. I hope that all of you enjoy them as much as I did.

## All Aboard For A Merry Christmas!

By Ellen Stiner December 2010.



**One** of my earliest childhood memories remains vivid to this day. I am a toddler in my parents' apartment and all the lights are out except the Christmas tree. Frightened, I hide in the kitchen. Then I hear a whistle blow. Curious, I peek around the corner and see the tiny light of a toy train engine as it chugs around the track encircling the tree. I immediately was hooked and remain so today. Dad was a railroad buff and became an avid train collector. I grew up with Lionel electric trains. My brother Tom got his first train when he was 2 and from then on, train tracks frequently ran around the living room, and always at Christmas. It was as much a part of the holidays as tinsel and candy canes.

**Alas**, like Puff the Magic Dragon, electric trains disappeared in my life as I grew up, went to college, got a job, moved away and was married. When our son Rob was 3, his train-loving Grandpa Gordon sent him his own electric train, actually two, one a freight train and one a lighted passenger train. It was fun having an electric train in the house again. The ensuing years flew by. Rob

grew up, went to college, got married and moved away. The train, now packed away in boxes, went with him. When our grandsons Sam and David came along, Bill and I bought an animated electric Christmas train at a hobby shop. Santa rode atop the train shouting "Merry Christmas" and "Ho, ho, ho" for many Christmases delighting the boys.

**Dad** passed away in 2001, just two weeks before Christmas. Our holidays were dampened that year by our loss, but the Christmas tree and train went up as usual. My dad was on my mind and I implored him one night to send me a sign that he was okay. The next morning I awoke and found a shiny nickel sitting on the railroad tracks. I smiled through my tears. Eventually Rob and his family returned to the Denver area and we gave the Christmas train to the boys. But every year I bugged Rob about putting up the Lionel train Dad had given him so many years before. There were always reasons why it never happened, mainly the kids were too young or there wasn't enough room.

**This** year, feeling nostalgic, I asked Rob if I could borrow his train to put up around our Christmas tree. He brought it over and Sam and David, now 11 and 9, saw those trains for the first time in their lives. They were fascinated and I was positively thrilled as a tsunami of memories washed over me. The most recent date on the newspapers wrapped around the train cars was 1986, likely the last time Rob had put the train up. That night on a whim, I asked Dad again to send me a sign that he was okay. In the morning, I arose first and checked the train tracks for a coin. Nothing. But as my eyes lifted, I saw an electric candle glowing, one I distinctly remembered turning off before I went to bed. Believe what you will, but I know Dad was checking in and enjoying "his" train and his favorite holiday once again.

***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!***

***Bill and Ellen***

## The Christmas Box

By Ellen Stiner December 2011



Every year, about two weeks before Christmas, a wonderful package would arrive at our house. Mom and Dad were all smiles as we excitedly opened the annual Christmas box from Dad's employer, Procter & Gamble. Dad was so proud. We didn't have much in those days so it was welcomed. Contents varied year to year, but always included a ham, a fresh one in the early years, and later, canned. It was always delicious, even the year it arrived with a bit of "green" around the edges. A call to the County Extension Service assured that if we cut off the "green," it would be safe to eat.

Mom and Dad were most thrilled with the ham and Dad loved the "stinky" cheese, but we were more excited about the bounty of other goodies: a tin of butter mints, chocolate covered cream drops, hard ribbon candy, Cracker Jack; nuts, oranges, peanut brittle, Russell Stover chocolates and tin-foil-wrapped popcorn balls. It seemed like an endless stream of magical treats! We oohed and aahed as each precious item was lifted from the box. Some years, they were packaged in a Scotch cooler; other years in a picnic basket.

Dad retired after more than 30 years with P&G but the Christmas box kept coming. Then, in De-

ember 2001, we rushed home when Dad became critically ill. With Christmas only a couple weeks away, we cheered up his bedroom with a small, lighted Christmas tree. Dad so loved Christmas music and sang for many years with a Barbershop Chorus and a church choir. The groups often sang Christmas carols at nursing homes and other venues around town during the holidays and so we played Christmas music for him during those last days.

Under home hospice care, he slowly slipped into unconsciousness but at one point, he opened his eyes and asked, "Is it Christmas?" "Yes, it is Dad," my sister Carol assured. It was December 10 and soon after midnight, Dad passed away. In the midst of making funeral arrangements, we struggled with conflicting feelings when the Christmas box arrived. We reminisced about Christmas packages past as the box was opened. We knew this would be the last Christmas box and we quietly marveled one last time over its contents, believing in our hearts that Dad was proudly watching from another realm. Sad, proud, excited, tearful and joyful. We felt so many emotions that day as we witnessed the end of an important chapter in our family's life.

Food and family stories are intertwined in our memories and this year my siblings and I completed a family cookbook of both recipes and recollections so our own families could experience a little of what we shared and will cherish forever.

*Wishing you fond memories and loving families this holiday season!*

*Bill and Ellen*

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## **Tracking down the Guthoff line of our family**

My Cousin, Cheryl Heck, and I are busy researching the Guthoff line of our family.

Cheryl, her dad Bob Heck (New Berlin Fire Chief), and I have been researching microfilms and computer records for the ancestors of Clara Stratmann for quite some time. We had uncov-

ered the Stratmann line all the way back to the early 1700's in the area near Hamm, Germany. All of that research was on the paternal side of Clara Stratmann's family. Now it is time to work on her maternal side of the family.

We knew that Clara's mother was Anna Maria Elizabeth Guthoff. We knew that Anna Maria Elizabeth Guthoff was born on 8 May 1819 in Germany but we did not know where she was born.

We knew that Anna Maria Elizabeth Guthoff was married three times. First she married Johann Peter Theodor Brueggemann but we had no idea of when or where that marriage took place. He died on 11 December 1844 at Ostefeldmark, Germany.

Her second marriage was to Anton Stratmann on 19 February 1846 at Geithe, Germany. Anton was the father of Clara and Charles Stratmann. Anton died 11 October 1858 at Ostefeldmark.

Her third marriage was to Friedrich D. Heitkemper on 6 March 1859 at Geithe, Germany. Friedrich died on 7 April 1911 at Burlington, Wisconsin.

We just recently discovered the marriage record of Anna Maria Elizabeth Guthoff to Johann Peter Theodor Brueggemann. They were married at Rhynern, Westfalen, Germany on 20 May 1843. The marriage record listed her parents as Theodor Guthoff and Anna Elisabeth Peiler.

It is interesting to note that Johann Peter Theodor Brueggemann was only married one year, six months, and 21 days before he died at the age of 31 years.

Armed with the information from the marriage record we were able to discover that Theodor Guthoff's full name was Johan Heinrich Diedrich Theodor Guthoff. We discovered that he and Anna Elisabeth had four children: Elizabeth Anna Maria born 8 May 1819, Gerhard Heinrich born 26 Aug 1823, Anna Clara Catharina Elisa-

beth born 18 July 1825, and Wilhelmina born 15 September 1833.

All together we discovered 23 more people in the Guthoff line. We ordered three microfilms of church records from two different communities, which we hope will lead us to the ancestors of Johann Heinrich Diedrich Theodor Guthoff and Anna Elisabeth Peiler.

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## New On-Line Documents at FamilySearch

If you are interested in conducting some of your own genealogy research you should be sure to visit the web site at:

<http://familysearch.org>

The web site is free and contains millions of records. Some of the new on-line documents include every State in the Union, all of central and western Europe, and much more.

For example, the items listed for Wisconsin include Wisconsin births and christenings 1826-1926, Wisconsin Deaths and burials 1835-1968, Wisconsin marriages 1836-1930, Wisconsin State Census 1855, 1875, 1885, 1895, and 1905, Wisconsin Birth Index 1820-1907, Wisconsin Calumet County New Holstein Public Library Records 1900-2001, Wisconsin Dane County Naturalization Records 1887-1945, Wisconsin Death Records 1959-1997, Wisconsin Fond du Lac Public Library Records 1848-1980, Wisconsin Outagamie County Records 1825-1980, Wisconsin Probate Estate Files 1848-1935, Wisconsin Shawano and Oconto Counties indexes and records 1850-2007.

The European collection for German births include over 37,000,000 names in the period 1558-1898. This site is well worth looking at and it is free.

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## From the Photo Album....



Standing L-R: Michelle (Mayo) & Jerald Johnson, Shirley Heck, Eugene & Carol (Witkofski) Heck, Cheryl Heck, Donna (Heck) Benedict, Bernie & Delores (Heck) Kunka, Don Johnson, and Lois (Heck) Hawkins. Front L-R: Mikaela, and Janice (Johnson) Schlesinger. The picture was taken at Christmas 2011 in Racine, Wisconsin.



Lauren Heck, oldest daughter of Dave & Judi Heck, showing the campaign sign that launched her successful political career as Student Council Representative for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at Robinwood School in Franklin, Wisconsin, 2011-2012.



A 2012 photo of Grandma Gloria pulling Grace Heck on the same sled that was used to pull Grace's dad, Dave Heck, 40 years ago.

## A Special Thank You

Each year about this time I like to thank all of you who contributed financially and with articles, photos and stories to keep this newsletter going. As you are probably aware, I have issued Our Family News Letter every three months (76 issues) since June, 1993. I never charge for the newsletter but rely on the generous contributions from our readers. I send out 60 copies of the newsletter every March, June, September and December.

The following readers were the donors during 2011 and 2012.

**Jim, Rick, Sherry, Dick & Cel Heck, and Barb & Dave Schneider**  
**Cheryl Heck**  
**Carlos Henningfeld**  
**Shirley Heck**

**Don & Sharon Heck**  
**Steve & Cara Pfeiffer**  
**Ellen & Bill Stiner**  
**Howard & Anne Heck**  
**Ralph & Ruth Heck**  
**Don Johnson**  
**Sue & Jeff Miller**  
**Frank & Andrea Lamping.**

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# 1940 US Census

Did you know that the 1940 United States Census is due to be released to the public on April 2, 2012? Did you know that the census is taken every 10 years starting in 1790?

The census records are released 72 years after they were created. Since the official date of the 1940 census was April 1, 1940, it was to be released on April 1, 2012; however, since that is a Sunday, it is actually being released on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The 1940 census will be the largest, most comprehensive, and most recent record set available that records the names of those who were living in the United States on April 1, 1940.

The 1940 census was taken shortly before the start of World War II for the United States. War had been ongoing in Europe since September 1939 and Japan had been at war with China since 1937. Most Americans knew when the 1940 census was taken that it was just a matter of time before they were drawn into a world war.



Accordingly, the 1940 census asked many questions about income and occupations. Supplemental questions were asked about the place of birth of the parents of each person, the native language spoken in the home, and the mother tongue of each person. Women were asked if they were married more than once, and what was their age at the first marriage. They were also asked how many children did she ever give birth to. Veterans were asked questions about their military

service. All were asked if they were the wife, widow, or under 18 year old child of a veteran. If the person was a child they were asked if their father was a veteran, and was he/she living or dead.

Questions were asked about Social Security. Did they have a Social Security number? Were deductions for Federal Old Age insurance or Railroad Retirement made from wages in 1939?

One of the interesting questions was Where did you live on April 1, 1935? This question will really help many people track their ancestor's migrations.

Another question asked was about a person's highest educational grade. For those of foreign birth, they were asked to give their country of birth as it was situated on January 1, 1937. They were asked to distinguish Canada-French from Canada-English and Irish Free State (Eire) from Northern Ireland.

For many of our readers you will be able to find your name on the census if you were born before April 1, 1940.

My Cousin Richard Heck is the only one of my first cousins who can actually find himself in the 1930 and 1940 Census. Richard was born in 1928.

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Pictured at left in about 1950, L-R: Gary Heck, Bob Heck, and Don Heck. The picture was taken in our back yard at 1306 Jones Avenue, in Racine, Wisconsin.



The photo of the Heck family above was taken at the Heinrichs-Henningfeld reunion in 1981, which was held at Wausau, Wisconsin. Shown from L-R: Gary & Joan, Robert G. & Mary, Don, Gloria & Bob Heck.

The reunion was held at a local park and was highlighted by a lot of singing and card playing. The Heinrichs family was really good at singing, and our branch of the Heck family was better known for our card playing. Our singing left a lot to be desired.

One event that comes to mind was that there had been a large amount of sunspots that week and in the evening you could see the Aurora Borealis, an event that was rarely seen in Milwaukee and Racine. We drove to the north side of Wausau and up a mountain drive to get a better view. That was the first time that I ever saw the Northern Lights.

## Tip Of The Day

Bob Heck, MPAFUG  
January 2012

Most family history researchers accumulate a great deal of documents over the years. When a person obtains a document or set of documents, they are usually looking for a specific piece of information. After they glean the information they usually file the document away in a folder or a three ring binder.

The Tip of the Day this month is to revisit those old documents and re-read it with an open mind. There may be some "hidden" information buried within the document.

The best way that I can illustrate this is by telling you about a real-life situation that happened to me this week.

Many years ago I sent for and obtained the Civil War pension records for Frederick Burmeister, my wife's great grandfather. The National Archives and Records Administration sent me a twenty-page packet of documents that were rich in information about Frederick, including his Rheumatism and hernia obtained while freeing a mule from the deep mud at East Post, Tennessee; his partial paralysis from being kicked in the leg by a mule; and his right arm injury by being struck in the arm by a six pound ball.

The pension records also contained documents from his wife, Wilhelmina Koehn, and included statements that she and he came to America in 1853. They married in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1859, and a copy of their marriage certificate was included in the file.

Wilhelmina's father, Gottlieb Heinrich Koehn, had four children according to the census records. However, there was a ten-year gap between the second child and the third child. This suggests that there may have been more than one marriage for Gottlieb.

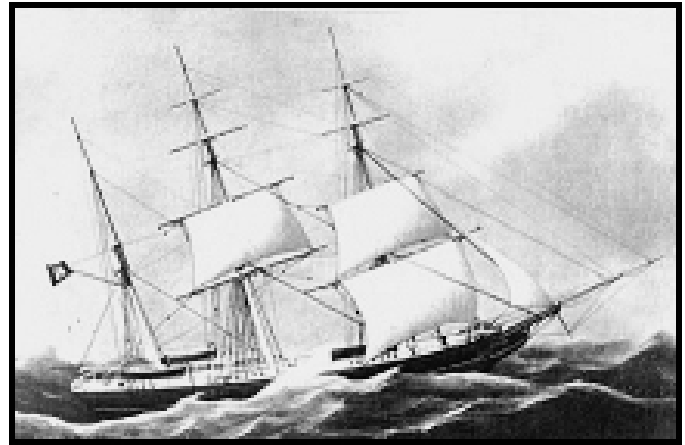
Fast forward to January 2012.

Yesterday I pulled out the pension records that had been put away for almost 20 years. I re-read every document and much to my surprise I found some new information. There was a general affidavit from Henry Koehn and Georgine (Witt) Koehn his wife, dated 12 Dec 1902. In it was stated, "Affiants are personally acquainted and well know the above named claimant (Wilhelmina Koehn Burmeister) being the **half sister** of the first named of these affiants (Henry Koehn). The affidavit went on to say, "They all came from Germany in the same ship in the year 1853."

I did a quick check on Ancestry.com and found the entire family including Georgine Witt on board the Bark Rhein arriving in New York on

21 November 1853. Georgine later married Henry Koehn. I now also know that Gottlieb Koehn was married twice.

It pays to re-read those old documents.



## The Bark Rhein

The RHEIN capsized and sank during launch, and was not delivered to her owners until 9 March 1849. Her maiden voyage took place on 24 March 1849, from Hamburg, Germany to New York. The ship Masters were:

1849-1851 H. Ehlers; 1851-1854 P. Popp; 1854 G. Maass; 1854-1856 P. H. Haack; 1856-1858 J. M. T. Spier.

Voyages: 1849-1857 - New York

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### **Burlington Standard Press October 19, 1897.**

John Heck and Miss Annie Ketterhagen were united in marriage in St. Mary's Catholic church in this city at 9 o'clock Tuesday morning. Rev. T. Jacobs performing the ceremony. A largely attended wedding reception followed the ceremony at the residence of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ketterhagen, at Brown's Lake. The groom is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Heck, of this town, formerly of Brighton. The young couple has many friends who wish them well on their journey through life.