

Our Family News Letter

Issue 107

Greendale, Wisconsin

December 2019

Photos from our readers



Photo from my Cousin, Alvin Heck Jr., from Woodland Park, Colorado, in 2019. Alvin is a Volunteer Firefighter and when not fighting fires, he takes great pride in keeping the fire trucks and other equipment in good condition, clean and shiny. Alvin and his wife, Carolyn, were with us at the Heck family picnic last July. It was really great to talk to them and to share some old stories from the past.



Alvin wrote, "I was amazed that so many of our Hecks followed in George Henningfeld's path as related to 1st responders and/or firefighters."

Alvin is shown in this close-up photo.

George Henningfeld was our grand uncle who served in the Racine Fire Department until he was thrown off of a fire truck while responding

to a fire in Racine. He suffered severe injuries and was given a medical retirement. Uncle George was the youngest brother of our grandmother, Margaret Frederica Henningfeld Heck.

Many thanks to Alvin for sharing these photos with us. The original photo was in color and I converted them to grayscale in order to include them in this newsletter.

If you have photos that you would like to share with our family of readers please send them to me by e-mail to heck.bob@gmail.com

Photos from the past



The photo on the previous page is of Gloria Heck and our son, Bill Heck, taken in April 1991. The photo was sent to Gloria from her childhood friend, Joan Nicolai, from Pioneer, California. Joan was clearing out some old treasures and returned a photo that Gloria had sent her many years ago. When confronted with the photo, Bill claimed amnesia but later admitted that it was him who received the parking ticket.

Since Gloria and Bill are both smiling, we figured that she was holding a parking ticket rather than a speeding ticket. To solve this question I used the computer to enhance and enlarge the ticket. That showed that it was indeed a parking ticket that Bill got with his Buick while attending a conference at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.



What The Heck Is This?

Cheryl Ann Heck “volunteered” to give a presentation on Interviewing Techniques at the annual Family History Center Genealogy Workshop held on 19 October 2019. Cheryl agreed to give the presentation if I would help her with the technical part of her talk and if I agreed to be interviewed on stage during the presentation. Naturally I agreed.

The skit that we presented prior to her talk was intended to show how NOT to conduct an inter-

view. She is shown in the photo with a floppy hat, a pretend cigarette in her mouth, dirty slacks, lots of holes in her sweatshirt, no shoes, mixed socks, loud music coming from her boom box, papers falling all over, and her phone ringing loudly. During the skit she even arranged to have someone back stage bouncing basketballs across the stage. She put a lot of thought and hard work into her skit and presentation.

Cheryl had her audience in stitches. Following the skit she used the opportunity to make it part of a learning experience by asking the audience what they observed that was wrong for an interview.

Cheryl then did a serious Power Point presentation that included sound clips of her Dad and her Uncle Gene. She covered the subject of how to correctly conduct an interview. Cheryl has interviewed and digitally recorded her grandmother, Frances Pier Heck, her Dad, and all of her Dad’s siblings and spouses. Each interview is between half an hour and one hour in length and can be heard on the What The Heck Facebook page.

The audience, numbered about 45 people, greatly appreciated her presentation. There were a lot of questions and suggestions on interviewing techniques that followed her talk.

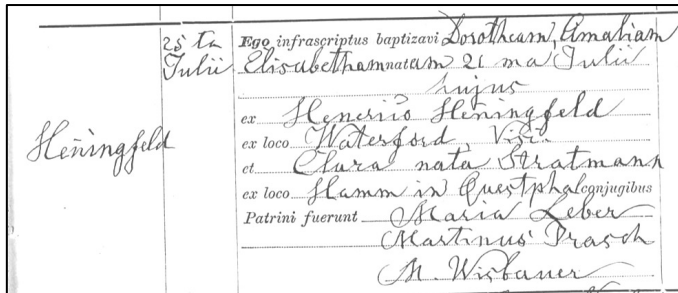
Great job Cheryl. I can hardly wait to see what she will do for next year’s workshop.

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 e-mail address is **heck.bob@gmail.com**

Remember that when a family member passes away, they take a library of memories with them. It’s a genealogist’s duty to record them before that happens.

I only research genealogy on days that end in “y.”

Found in Church Records...



The image above is the christening record for “Dorotheam Amaliam Elisabetham Heningfeld” on 25 July at Saint Mary’s Catholic Church, Burlington, Racine County, Wisconsin. The record shows that she was born on 21 July. Her father is shown as “Henerico Heningfeld” born at Waterford, Wisconsin and her mother is “Clara nata Stratmann” born at Hamm in Westphalia. The godparents were Maria Leber and Martin Prasch.

The record is written in Latin and the names in English are Dorothy Amalia Elisabeth Henningfeld, Henry Henningfeld, and Clara born Stratmann.

Dorothy Amalia Elisabeth Henningfeld was the youngest of nine children of Henry and Clara. She later married Frank Heinrichs on 21 October 1907 in Milwaukee, and was known as Molly. She lived most of her life in Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin and raised a family of nine children. She died in Wausau on 3 December 1947.

Near the Toll Road...

The photo at upper right shows a billboard near the toll road in Chicago. It is advertising a concert at Rosemont, Illinois as part of the “Rockin’ in the Park” summer concert series. Shown are the three members of the Rush Tribute Project, from left to right: Sean Jones - Bass, Keyboards, Pedals, Lead Vocals; Thomas Slawnik - Frankenstein collection of Drums and Cymbals; and Bill Heck - Guitars, Pedals, and Vocals.



This year the group played at the Hard Rock Café in San José, Costa Rica. They have been invited back in 2020.

Things we did as Kids...

When I was a kid growing up on Jones Avenue in Racine, Wisconsin, we used to have a lot of fun playing in the neighborhood. When we moved into our house at 1306 Jones Avenue in 1944, I was just four years old.

Right across the street from us were three empty lots. In the center lot a man dug a hole for the basement of a house that he was planning on building. We knew him as “Old Man Wally.” We were always told that Old Man Wally dug that hole by hand but apparently ran out of money and never built a house on that property.

Erosion and a bunch of neighborhood kids soon rounded the edges of the hole until it was nothing more than a deep depression that looked like it was made by a small meteor. We always called the place, “The Hole.”

In the winter we would slide down the sides of the hole with our sleds. Right after Christmas we would scrounge through the alleys in the neighborhood collecting used Christmas trees. We would trim the branches and build a fort every year. Our parents must have loved us a lot because we would come home every night covered

with mud from the hole and well coated with sticky sap from the pine trees. I still remember how much it hurt to have a scrub brush put to the skin to get rid of that sap. Some of the sap would get into our hair and that was always the worst to get out. Sometimes my mother even had to use mineral spirits to get it out.

In the spring we would chase all over the three empty lots catching a lot of bugs, bees and butterflies. Every now and then we would catch a grass snake which instantly became one of our pets. Somehow or other they always seemed to get out of their cage when we were sleeping. Hmmm.

There were several large apple trees and one cherry tree on the three lots. We would spend a lot of time in the trees trying to make a tree house or just sitting there eating worm filled green apples. The cherries were always bitter and not very tasty. Now that I look back on those days it was probably because we were always testing the cherries and none of them ever got to ripen on the tree.

The Rapp family bought the eastern most lot first and promptly built a house on it. I remember how disappointed we were to lose one third of our play area. Earl Rapp was my best friend for many years and all we ever talked about was opening some sort of repair business when we grew up. After four years in the Air Force, Earl and I both went to the Milwaukee School of Engineering. We both graduated with Electrical Engineering degrees.

Down the street was a grocery store called Morgenson's Grocery run by Elmer Morgenson. We just called it "Morgies" and we called the owner Mr. Morgenson. It wasn't a very big store but before the days of the supermarket it was all that we knew. The only supermarket around at that time was the local Atlantic and Pacific store known as the A&P store.

At the front of the store situated on the corner of the building was a large metal Coke sign and

thermometer. The thermometer never worked but the sign became our home base for any games that we played at night. Whenever we would run to the home base we would slap the tin sign and it would respond with a rather loud sound. I'm sure that everyone in the neighborhood could hear that loud thump.

Some of the games that I remembered were "Kick the Can," "Hide and Seek," and "Captain May I?" The only time we played Captain May I was when the LaBlanc girls played with us. Most of the time we played Kick the Can.

Kick the Can was started by placing a tin can on the curb in front of the store. The game was played by designating someone as being IT. All of the kids would run and hide while the IT person would cover their eyes by leaning up against the tin Coke sign and count to 50. He or she would then holler out, "Here I come, ready or not." The IT person would start looking for the other kids and when he or she saw one would race back to the tin Coke sign and slap it hard while calling out the person's name that he or she had just spotted. Then the two of them would both be IT and would seek out the others. While they were searching, any of the other kids could sneak back to the home base and kick the can. That would free anyone caught and the IT person would have to start all over again.

"Ally Ally X and Free, If you don't come now your it." That call could be heard every night during the summer. It was a signal to all of the other kids that they had to come to the home base. It usually meant that we were going to start a new game or play something else.

Some of the favorite hiding places included a chicken coop in the alley or under the porch of the corner house. There was a secret panel that we could remove in order to hide under the porch. Another place that I remember was in the second floor of one of the garages. There was a ladder going up to the loft of what used to be a small barn.

Some of the players that I remember from the early days include Jerry Bidlo, Matt Sisak, Johnny Sieger, Chuck Cermak, Gary and Bob Heck, Earl Rapp, Joan and Kathy LaBlanc, Linda and Ronnie Krezon. In later years Don Heck, Jean Rapp, Fred Groth, Ken and Kathy Locke, Jesse Acklam, Arlene Richter and others joined us.

Back to the Hole. Soon the western most lot was excavated and the Schoolcraft family built a house on the second third of our play area. Eventually the Goede family bought the hole and built a ranch home on the last third of our playground. Now we had to travel about two hundred yards to a huge park called Douglas Park in order to play.

When we called for kids in the neighborhood we would never think of ringing a doorbell or knocking on the door. Instead we would stand on the sidewalk and holler out as loud as we could, "Oh for Earl" or "Oh for Chuck" in a sing song voice. Somehow or other we turned those single syllable names into multiple syllable names in the process.

The night would end when our parents would stand on their porches and call out our names as loud as they could. We were taught to instantly respond to those calls to come home for the evening.

If we were going fishing in the morning we would have sprinkled the lawn with the water sprinkler for about an hour. Then we would get our flashlights and go worm hunting. We always caught plenty of worms, which we kept in a coffee can. We learned that if you put a piece of red cellophane over the lens of the flashlight the worms couldn't see the light but we could see them. That vastly improved our worm hunting technique.

The following morning several of us would hop on our bikes and make the five-mile trip to the Horlick's dam on the Root River. To this day I can't believe that our parents let us make that trip alone. Rapids Drive in Racine was a very busy

street and we had to ride our bikes on the street. There were no sidewalks back then.

When we reached the dam we would walk our bikes along the river bank to a spot where the river widened. There we set up camp and started fishing. There was a natural artesian spring next to where we fished and that provided us with fresh cool water. In our knapsacks we usually had peanut butter sandwiches and an apple or two.

The fishing was usually good. We would catch some small bluegills, perch, bullheads, and every now and then even a huge carp. We would keep the fish on a stringer and haul them home with us at the end of the day.

There was a small creek that crossed Rapids Drive where we would stop on the way home. There we would release the bullheads into the creek. Our thinking back then was that if the bullheads survived then we would start releasing the other fish there also. That way we wouldn't have to ride our bikes so far when we wanted to go fishing.

Every week we would check the creek to see if the fish had survived but we never did see any. Eventually someone built an office building on the land and the creek was no more. Apparently it was just a drainage ditch of some sort. I wonder what ever happened to the bullheads?

Some days Earl Rapp and I would go to the local bakery and just sit under their oven vent at the back of the store. We would just sit there and smell that fresh baked bakery. Boy, was it good. We never had enough money to buy any so since smelling was free we did it often.

Sunday afternoon was movie time for most of us kids. After lunch, which we called dinner, we were given twenty cents for the movie. The movie cost fourteen cents so we had six cents to spend on candy. Candy at the theater was always very high priced so we never bought any there. Our first stop was at Morgies or at Minner's drug store. There we could buy six cents worth of

candy which would last us through a double feature, news, previews, and a cartoon or two. In order to make it last we usually bought root beer barrels which were two for a penny. Those things would last for a long time. The other favorite candy was the jaw breaker. They came in red or black and lasted a long time.

On Saturday evening our cousin Shirley Heck would come over to watch us while our parents went out for the evening. Shirley was great because she let us do almost anything. There were always kolaches in the kitchen from my grandmother. We were allowed to have one each but Shirley always let us have two.

We had an Admiral black and white TV at the time and Shirley let us watch a movie on the Schlitz Saturday Night Theater. We were supposed to be in bed at that time but Shirley always let us stay up till the end of the movie. Jack Brant was the host of the show and we always thought that he was getting a little drunk by the end of the movie. Thank you Shirley for being so good to us kids.

Well, that's about enough for now. I would like to invite you to write about your memories as a kid. Send them to me and I'll include it here.

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Join "What The HECK"

If you would like to learn more about our family, join our Heck Family Facebook Group. Log into Facebook and search GROUPS for "What The HECK". You can then request to join the Group. All we ask is that you state how you are related to the Heck family.

Here is the web address for our group page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Whattheheckfamilygroup/>

Here is the address in larger letters:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Whattheheckfamilygroup/>

You can also send an e-mail message to Cheryl Ann Heck and ask her to send you an invitation to join the "What the Heck" group. Cheryl's address is **whatdahek@sbcglobal.net**
Cheryl is the one who created the group page for our family.

Right now there are 76 members of our family who belong to the "What The Heck" group on Facebook.

Our Family News Letter On-Line.

Thanks to my son, Bill Heck, 107 issues of Our Family News Letter are now available to you on-line and for free. They are available to you at the following web address:

<http://ourfamilynewsletter.com/>

Just go to the web address shown and select a year and then an issue. There are four issues per year starting in 1993. Each issue is usually eight pages in length and in PDF format. That's over 800 pages of our family history!

You should feel free to share the web address and the newsletters with other members of your family. If we don't share our family history, someday there won't be anyone around to tell our story.

I Have A New E-Mail Address...

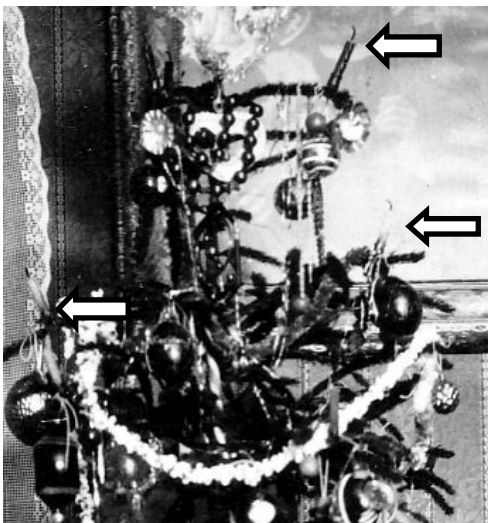
If you need to contact me or send me photos or articles that you wrote please send them to me at my new address: **heck.bob@gmail.com**

My old address at **bheck@execpc.com** has been shut down and deliveries are no longer made to it.

From the Photo Album



My mother, Mary Ann Mikel, and her brother Bohumil Mikel in 1920. She was eight and he was 10 years old.

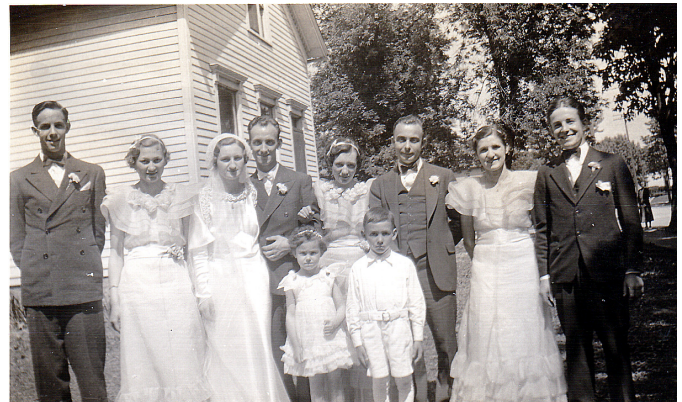


If you look closely you can see the candles on the Christmas tree. I couldn't believe the size of them.

A fire waiting to happen.



First Date - Left to Right: Eloise Jensen, Bohumil Mikel, Emma Kristof, Robert Gerald Heck, and Mary Ann Mikel. The date on the photo was 5 September 1932, which was Mary's 20th birthday. Eloise and Bohumil married on 11 January 1934, and Mary and Robert married on 29 June 1935. Bohumil was known to us as Uncle Mike.



The wedding party Left to Right: Don Henningfeld, Ann Polansky, Mary Ann Mikel Heck, Robert Gerald Heck, Mary Hrubos, Clarence Heck, Emma Kristof, Herb Heck. Children are Marjorie Heck and Jerry Kriva. 29 June 1935.

Both of the photos above were taken at 1212 Hagerer Street in Racine, Wisconsin. After a honeymoon in Saint Louis, with her parents, Mary and Robert lived at 1212 ½ Hagerer Street, in a flat above her parents. On 11 November 1961, their first son, Gary Heck married Joan Auterman and their first residence was in the same flat at 1212 ½ Hagerer Street.



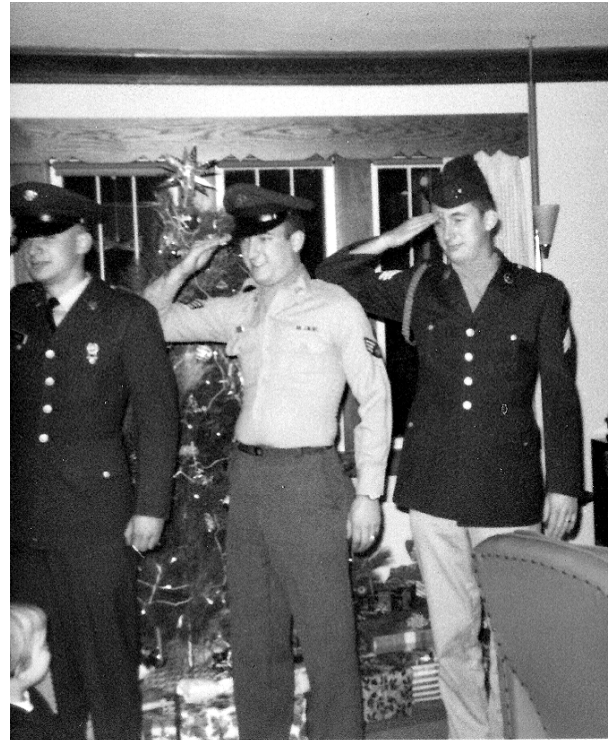
Christmas 1975 Left to Right: Gary, Robert, Don, Mary, and Bob Heck. The photo was taken at 1306 Jones Avenue in Racine.



The Heck Girls Left to Right: Cindy, Joan, Lee, Mary, Sharon, Amy, and Gloria Heck at Christmas 1975.

The photo at upper right was taken when Don Heck came home on leave in December 1965. Left to Right: Don, Bob and Gary Heck. Bob and Gary were veterans of the military service. Bob served four years in the U.S. Air Force and Gary

served three years in the U.S. Army. Don was still on active duty of a three year tour and served one year in Viet Nam.



Bob and Gary were pleasantly surprised to find that their uniforms were still a good fit. Gary was a Deputy Sheriff in Racine and Bob was a Junior at the Milwaukee School of Engineering studying Electrical Engineering.

We hope that you enjoyed this journey into the past Christmas years and will consider sending in your photo memories.

Thanks to those who have contributed to keeping this family newsletter going. Since Christmas of 2018 to November 2019:

- Lorraine & Cheryl Heck**
- Lee Ann Heck**
- Sue & Jeff Miller**
- Ellen & Bill Stiner**
- Frank & Andrea Lamping**
- Shirley Heck**
- Alvin & Carolyn Heck**
- Don & Sharon Heck**
- Joanne Pfeiffer**
- Steve Pfeiffer**