



Flashback To The Past

By Sandra M. Black



December 9, 1927 Without benefit of clergy and while neighbors stood in the deep snow and sang into the blizzard her favorite hymn, "Nearer My God To Thee," the body of MRS AUGUST BECK was lowered to rest on South Manitou Island her home for most of her 72 years, on Dec. 9. The island was stormbound and a minister and undertaker were waiting on the mainland at Glen Haven, nine miles away for the lake to calm enough for them to cross.

MRS BECK (ELIZABETH HAAS) died at the home of her daughter in Benzie county on December 5, 1927. A party of relatives left Dec. 6 to take the body to the island for a funeral the next day, but as they were about to put out in the storm in Capt. August Warner's mail boat all but the widower turned back. The mail boat fought one of the heaviest seas on the Manitou channel in years to reach the island coast guard station late that night. For two days Capt. Warner waited for a break in the storm to go back to the mainland for the minister and the undertaker, but the intensity of the storm grew almost hourly. On the third day the people of the island held the service by themselves. Capt. William Fisher of the life saving station led the Lord's Prayer and gave a short sermon. Game Warden Mark Crow, on temporary duty at the island, read a chapter from the gospel of John, and a choir organized by Miss Minnie Carpenter, the island school teacher, sang.

Then a procession of sleighs moved on through the blizzard to the island cemetery two miles away. At the grave Capt. Fisher offered a prayer and the neighbors bared their heads to the storm while they sang "Nearer My God To Thee." Every one of the 55 residents of the island was among the mourners.

Surviving Mrs Beck, besides the widower, are three daughters, MARY of near Beulah; ALVINA of Grand Rapids, HATTIE of Charlevoix, two sons, IRWIN of Empire, and HARLEY of Michigan City, Ind.; two brothers, HENRY and WILLIAM of South Manitou Island, and several grand-children and great grandchildren.

The funeral of AUGUST BECK was held Tuesday, May 6, 1941, at the Lutheran Church at Glen Arbor at 10:00'clock with Rev. R.R. Lather officiating. The service was held on the mainland and then the body was taken to the South Manitou Island. The body was accompanied by Mr. IRWIN BECK, HARLEY BECK, and MR BARNHART, the sons and son-in-law; C. Bennett and Rev. Lather. A short service was held at the coast guard station and then the body was taken to the cemetery where the commitment service was read.

AUGUST BECK was born December 1, 1853, in Berlin, Germany. He came to the United States in 1868. He, with his parents, two brothers and one sister, left Germany in the month of May. They were six months on the ocean, arriving in New York the latter part of September. They arrived at the South Manitou Island in the month of October. The family stayed with Mr Beck's uncle. In the spring of the year they settled in the wilderness on a 160 acre homestead. He stayed with his father, mother, and two brothers for a number of years. Then he dissolved partnership and bought a 160 acre homestead and this is where he carved his home out of the wilderness. He married Lizzie Haas in 1873. On his homestead he built a log house which stands today, and as the years went by he started building new farm houses and outer buildings which still stand today, and here is where he reared his family of nine children. He was a very successful farmer and gained many friends in Leelanau County. He died May 4, 1941 at his son's home in Empire, Michigan.

He leaves in his passing, three daughters, MRS MARY MORSE of Homestead, Mich., MRS ALVINA WEST of Grand Rapids, and MRS HATTIE BARNHART of Grand Haven, two sons, HARLEY BECK of Michigan City, Ind., and IRWIN BECK of Empire. Also 25 grandchildren 17 great grandchildren and a host of friends