



The Becks

One of South Manitou Island's Most Successful Immigrant Families

The Becks came to South Manitou Island in the mid-nineteenth century. They came as immigrants from Germany, settling on the island as homesteading farmers.

Telling their stories with a high level of detail and authenticity is not possible, at least thus far, since authoritative information about their lives and times is scant. Much of what has already been published about the Becks has been found to be sketchy and unreliable, and occasionally quite obviously erroneous. That is not unusual in the study of island personalities, but in the case of the Becks the questionable extent of what has previously been published seems unusually high. The presumption is that this reflects the limited availability of authentic historical records, the absence of such resources giving rise to fiction as researchers succumb to an urge to fill in the blanks.

In attempting to tell the Beck story, this article employs as much factual information as can be gleaned from authentic records. A timeline of significant events in their lives, based upon that information, has been helpful in attempting to understand their history. But in the interest of developing their story, narrative information found here and there in island-related articles and books has been included; material which is usually classed as oral history, which even if highly plausible, must always be accepted with a grain of salt.

Cattenstedt

The Beck immigrants were from Germany, all most often giving Brunswick as their birthplace. That probably refers to the historic Duchy of Brunswick rather than the town of Braunschweig, which was its capital city. Most genealogical researchers give Cattenstedt as their actual place of origin, which is about 45-miles south of the city of Brunswick, or 85-miles southeast of Hanover.¹ During the last half of the past century, information would not have flowed freely from Cattenstedt, which found itself behind the "Iron Curtain" from shortly after WW-II to about 1990.

From Mrs. Irwin Beck's little booklet about the history of her husband's family,² we learn that David Beck, the most distant of the Beck ancestors to emigrate to South Manitou Island, was born on November 4, 1812 near Cattenstedt, a tiny north-central German hamlet at the northern foot of the Harz mountains in Saxony. At that moment in time, according to history, his birthplace was known as the *Kingdom of Westphalia*, a French vassal state ruled by Napoleon's brother Jérôme Bonaparte. David was born the son of Johann Ernst Jacob Beck and Johanna Wilhelmine Caraline Auguste Schroeder, and was confirmed in the little church at the center of Cattenstedt fifteen years later, on November 22, 1827. According to Cattenstedt historical sketches, people born near the little hamlet most commonly married, raised families, and

died in Cattenstedt, supporting themselves mainly by agriculture and handicrafts.

Life in the Kingdom of Westphalia was subject to disruption and impoverishment by feudal turmoil and political feuds, with the men frequently at risk of conscription for one military adventure, or another. Before the French, it had been the Prussians. At the time of David's birth, Jérôme was required to supply troops for his brother's wars, and large numbers of Westphalian troops perished that very year in Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign.

Less than a year after David's birth, marauding Russian Cossacks invaded after repelling Napoleon, conquering the whole Kingdom, only to be repelled themselves a few days later when Jérôme returned with fresh French soldiers. But just a few weeks after that, having been worn thin by his unsuccessful Russian campaign, Napoleon's armies were finally defeated and routed at the horrific Battle of Leipzig, just 132-miles southeast of Cattenstedt, where 100,000 men were killed or wounded in the largest battle ever known up to that time.

With Napoleon's capitulation, the Russians dissolved the Kingdom, restoring the former status quo under the British Crown. Except for infighting and intrigue within the royalty that ruled what was left of the Holy Roman Empire at that time, things remained relatively peaceful in Cattenstedt for the next twenty-five years.

During those years of peace and prosperity, the population in the area radically increased as a result of industrial development. However, as increasing mechanization in industry produced greater productivity, there were fewer jobs for increasing numbers of unemployed men. Social unrest spawned the revolutions of 1848, which sought to establish democracy and reunification of the German states. Unfortunately, the ultimate failure of that movement resulted instead in increased repression, culminating in the short Austro-Prussian War of 1866, which finally returned the area to Prussian rule. Unrest in the area continued over the months that followed, with Prussian dominance soon tested again with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in July of 1870.

Roots

David Beck's personal history spans much of this turmoil. Born in 1812, he was the second of Jacob and Caraline Beck's four children. His older brother, Jacob, had been born two years before him; younger brother Gottfried, four years after him in 1816, and Christoph four years after that.³ Little sister Elizabeth came along five years later, in 1825. She never knew her mother. Caraline died soon after Lizzy was born, leaving her widowed husband Jacob with an infant daughter, and his four young boys; ages five, nine, thirteen and fifteen years old.

- 1810 Johann Heinrich Jacob Beck
- Nov 4, 1812 Johann Wilhelm David Beck
- 1816 Johann Heinrich Gottfried Beck
- 1820 Christoph Beck
- 1825 Henriette Frederike Elisabeth Beck



Eleven years later, in 1836, their father took his own life, leaving the four brothers and their little sister parentless. Under German inheritance laws designed to protect the integrity of the peasantry of the time, whatever property their father might have had would have automatically passed down to his eldest son, Jacob Jr. The law also forbade heirs from transferring any part of such inheritances to other family members. That left David, Gottfried, and Christoph essentially without resources, and probably destined to remain dependant on their older brother from then on.

From that point forward, the stories of Jacob Jr., Gottfried, and their sister Elisabeth disappear into obscurity, they apparently having lived out whatever was left of their lives in Germany. David, however, about four years after his father's suicide, met the love of his life, Dorothe Elizabeth Reindhert, the daughter of a customs officer from the nearby village of Hendersleben, which then lay where the River Selke emptied into the River Bode. He was twenty-seven, she just a year younger. They were married at the end of April in 1840. Elizabeth gave David seven children. First came a son, Theodor. Then came Lizzy, Albert, Dorothe Auguste (who died three months after her birth); then Dorothe ("Dora"), Willhelmine ("Minnie"), and lastly August:

07/15/1841 Johann Gottfried Elias Theodor (Theodor) Beck
11/05/1843 Johanna Friederike Margarete Elizabeth Beck
09/28/1845 Christian David Albert (Albert) Beck
07/13/1847 Johanna Elizabeth Dorothe Auguste Beck
08/21/1848 Alvine Freiderike Louise Dorothe (Dora) Beck
02/17/1851 Friederike Dorothe Wilhelmine (Minnie) Beck
12/01/1852 George Elias August (August) Beck

Destined to become early settlers on South Manitou Island were David, Dorothe and four of their children – Theodor, Albert, Dora and August – and David's youngest brother, Christoph.

Going To America

While the Becks continued to struggle with hardships and turmoil in Germany, incredible opportunity was developing on the other side of the world. After the American Civil War, pressure rapidly mounted for westward expansion in North America. By 1868 American Counsels in major European cities were acting as immigration agents, and similar agents sponsored by American states and American business interests could be found in every major European port.

Canadian agents worked ports on this side of the Atlantic, passing out leaflets and brochures encouraging newly arriving immigrants to settle in Canada. Canadians also lobbied their government in Ottawa to send agents to Europe, and to pass enticement legislation granting immigrants, and German immigrants in particular, free land. This, they hoped, would help Canada compete more effectively with the U.S. in the rush to settle western territories.

But the Americans had the edge since the U.S. offered prospective immigrants the Preemption Act of 1841, which permitted squatters on government land – who were heads of households, widows, or single men over 21; who were citizens of the United States, or intended to become naturalized; and

who had lived there for at least 14 months – to purchase up to 160 acres at about \$1.25 per acre, before the land was offered for sale to the public. Under that act, land was essentially available for free, and the U.S. had vast tracts of wilderness, most all of which was considered government land. Anyone who wished to have a place of their own could simply stake out 160-acres for themselves and move onto it.

Ownership under the Preemption Act, and payment for the land, only became an issue if someone else decided they wanted to buy the property from the government. That led to the obvious problem of someone buying land out from under families who had been living on it and improving it, often for several years. Recognizing this reality, the Congress passed a new law, requiring would-be homesteaders to merely file an application, improve the land, and ultimately apply for a deed of title. The Homestead Act was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in the spring of 1862.

These enticements, coupled with the depressed economic conditions and lack of opportunity in the homeland, produced two epochs of immigration from the German states. The first wave of immigration saw over a million Germans depart between 1845 and 1858, the majority of whom were from Germany's southern regions – Baden, Wurttemberg, and Bavaria. Most left through the port of Bremen and Hamburg, mostly headed for Australia, Canada and the United States. A second wave was prompted by the passage of the Homestead Act in America, a renewal of efforts by immigration agents, "America Letters" written by émigrés to friends and relatives remaining in the homeland, and newly discouraging local conditions. Between 1864 and 1873 another million left to seek a better life elsewhere. These were often people from Germany's northern districts – Hanover, Saxony, and Prussia. The Becks who settled on South Manitou Island were part of these two waves. Christoph was the first to come, followed by his nephew Theodor, who came alone, then by his brother David, who came with his wife Dorothe, daughter Dorothe, and their two other sons, Albert and August.

Christopher and Catharine

There has always been a wild card in story of the Becks on South Manitou Island; that being the first Beck to arrive on the island, who is variously referred to in the records as "Gustaff," "Christoph," and "Christopher."⁴ The available facts very strongly suggest that Christoph was closely related to the Becks who followed and was probably the reason that they immigrated directly from Cattenstedt to South Manitou Island. Interestingly, there is a ten-year gap in the Jacob and Caraline Beck family between the birth dates of their youngest two children. It seems likely that the mysterious Christoph was a fourth son, born in 1820, the youngest brother of David Beck.⁵

Christoph Beck and his wife Catharine arrived on the island sometime between the U.S. Population Census of July 30, 1860 and Christoph's homestead claim, filed February 25, 1863.⁶ A similar claim was filed by George Haas on that same day, so it has been assumed that they were well acquainted, and



probably made the trip to Traverse City Together.⁷

Christoph and Catharine were not youngsters at the time; he being in his early forties, and she being five years his senior according to island census data from 1870 and 1880. Christoph, giving his place of origin as Brunswick, presumably came from Cattenstedt. Catharine giving hers as Prussia, was probably from the same area. Their given names and variations thereof, were very common among German immigrants and appear frequently in the archives. Several married couples can be found with names that match within this general time frame. However none of those instances can be considered likely to represent this particular couple with a high level of probability.

Whatever their particular case, it was very common for European immigrants to arrive at Buffalo with empty pockets, having depleted the savings they had accumulated to pay for the trip to America. The experience of another somewhat earlier island settler, George Johann Hutzler, was not uncommon; settling in Buffalo for as long as it took to earn more money with which their family could complete their journey into the American interior and start a small farm. With the transportation business booming on the lower Great Lakes, employment aboard the boats was easy to come by at Buffalo, especially the new steamboats where previous sailing experience wasn't necessary for deck hands and those stoking the boilers. For those boats, South Manitou was always a scheduled refueling stop. Johann Hutzler found that the island ideally suited his purposes. He could easily get a job there chopping wood for the Burtons' wooding station. While simultaneously clearing land for his own farm in the island's interior, he could also wholesale that wood to the Burtons to earn even more money. Thus, the island provided the means by which he could get his family out of the disease infested immigrant ghettos of Buffalo.

It is likely that Christoph Beck, like Johann Hutzler, also came to South Manitou as a crewmember on a visiting ship. It isn't likely that he came as a farmer, since according to the U.S. Agricultural Census of 1860 there was no farming activity going on at South Manitou, at least nothing significant enough to warrant mention. A dozen years earlier Orange Risdon had done a complete survey of South Manitou, finding only one small "improved" plot, about 15 to 20-acres in what some sixteen years later became the Thomas and Richard Kitchen claims. The community on South Manitou Island was otherwise totally engaged in the business of supplying steamboats with cord wood.

During the next several years, maritime activity in the Manitou Passage continued to boom, with over a hundred vessels passing through most days in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Working in jobs supporting that activity would certainly have provided a better income and one easier to come by, than the arduous work and risky enterprise of farming in the wilderness. During these early years, farming was probably a part-time activity for the head of island families, with much of the work carried on by wives and children. Richard Kitchen, for example, was a grocer and postmaster,⁸ probably operating

a store near Burton's Wharf. After his older brother Thomas drowned while attempting to walk across the ice to the mainland just one year after filing his homestead claim,⁹ the farm, such as it might have been, became the responsibility of his wife and their three children.

Most writers of island lore pass over Christoph and Catharine Beck without mention, probably because they have no idea who they were. There is no record of their ever having had any children, so there was never any connection to other island families through marriage, as is otherwise often the case. They remained on the island for upwards of eighteen years; until at least the summer of 1880, since they appear in the U.S. Census taken there on June 5th of that year. Unfortunately, the records for the 1890 U.S. Census were destroyed by fire in their Washington D.C. repository. There is no other trace of Christopher and Catharine Beck until the recording of Christopher's death on June 4, 1900.¹⁰ According to that record, he died a widower, at 81-years of age. Since Christoph was among "the residents of North and South Manitou Islands" who signed a petition taken up by the Michigan Legislature in January of 1891, asking that the islands be detached from Manitou County and annexed to Leelanau County, it is probably safe to presume that he and Catharine remained on South Manitou for the rest of their lives.

Theodor Beck

Johann Gottfried Elias Theodor Beck emigrated from Germany in 1868, sailing from Bremen on the steamship Hansa, which arrived in New York on the 6th of July.¹¹

One narrative source suggested he exited his homeland in order to avoid military conscription. Various histories of the German immigration suggest that this was often the case. For example: "By far the largest number of German immigrants went to America in search of an improved standard of living. Political and religious freedom probably motivated fewer emigrants than did the threat of Prussian military service."¹² Under German law, individuals had to apply for permission to emigrate, although government officials appear to have placed no significant restrictions on immigration – except with respect to youths of military age who were obligated to complete their required military service. Indeed, there was turmoil arising in the region in the late 1860s that did result, yet again, in the conscription of its able-bodied young men. Saxony, the general area where the Becks are thought to have come from, had a long history of conflicts, with the territory often being divided up into new regions and changing hands as these conflicts were settled. These were always fights between princes and dukes, not between neighboring common people, so there was probably little or no feeling of regional pride or patriotism that would have encouraged young men to join armies willingly.

So the story about Theodor, who was just 26 and unmarried, seems plausible to some extent. However, since he apparently immigrated legally with the blessings of the German government, he was obviously not a draft dodger. More likely, he left to seek opportunities that were not available to him at



home because of German inheritance rules and the adverse economic conditions of the time.

He evidently came directly to South Manitou Island and began working on the Christoph Beck homestead. It is likely that Christoph began working a place of his own within that 160-acre claim, rather than working directly with his Uncle Christoph.

David, Dorothea, Albert and August Beck

The parents of Theodor Beck were Johann Wilhelm David Beck and his wife, the former Dorothe Elisabeth Rindert. Census data for August Beck consistently gives his date of immigration as 1869, and a rather obscure record from Germany entitled Lists of Emigrants From the Former Duchy of Braunschweig [or Brunswick]; Not Including the City of Braunschweig and the County of Holzminden, 1846-1871 indicates that David Beck requested an emigration permit for himself, his wife and three children in 1869. 13 The three children were their daughter Alvine Friederike Loiuise Dorothe Beck (20), their son Christian David Albert Beck and their youngest son Gustav George Elias August Beck (16). They arrived in New York on the 15th of May in 1869, having sailed from Bremen aboard the steamship Deutschland, a sister ship, as it were, to the Hansa. 14 Presumably, they came directly to the island to join their son Theodor on Christoph and Catharine's place, except for Dora, who evidently went to Milwaukee where she was employed as a domestic by the William and Mary Wolf family, he being a wealthy shipbuilder with four young children.15

Some in the Beck family pass along the tradition that Theodor became somewhat lonely and disenchanted with life on the island, and wished to return to Germany. A letter sent to their parents seeking their advice and consent resulted instead in the parents deciding to come to America.16 There is reason to believe that the father, David, favored his youngest son, August. August was approaching the age of compulsory Prussian military service, after which he would not have been permitted to leave the country. With war on the horizon again, the prospect of August's probable conscription might well have been what prompted David's decision to take his family to America.

The Farms

In her 1995 thesis, Integrating Cultural And Natural Landscape Management Decisions For Historic Agricultural Landscapes At South Manitou Island,17 Brenda Wheeler Williams included the comment:

"Tracing and understanding the history of property ownership among this family is confusing. August, Theodore, and Albert Beck created a partnership in 1877 which deemed that all of their property was jointly owned. Around 1870, Christoph and Catharine sold the lower half of their 160-acres to Theodore Beck. In the mid-1880s August Beck purchased the same parcel from Theodore and the upper half from Christoph. Before purchasing Christoph's homestead, August bought a parcel of land on the southern side of the island from

William N. Burton on 27 September 1875. According to the listing of families in the 1880 Federal Population Census ..."

Christoph Beck filed a homestead claim for 160-acres in 1863, and received a patent for that parcel six years later, in 1869. Theodor had arrived about a year before that, apparently establishing his own place on his Uncle's homestead. He, in turn, was joined by his parents and two younger brothers the following summer. According to the agricultural census for the following year, "Gustaff," as he was being called at that time, was working a well-established and moderately productive farm on his 160-acres. So if he did indeed sell the lower 80-acres of his homestead to Theodor, it would have been after the time of the census (August 18, 1870) and also after the arrival of Theodor's parents and brothers.

The agricultural census for 1870 indicates that there was only one Beck farm on South Manitou Island; that of "Gustaff" Beck. Therefore all the Becks were presumably living on the Christoph Beck homestead. The order in which the households were enumerated in the population census for that year suggests that the newly arrived family members moved in with Theodor in a home he had created in the southeast quarter of the property, adjacent to the Conrad Hutzlers, probably at what is presently being preserved as the "August Beck farmstead." Meanwhile, Christoph ("Gustaff") and Catharine probably lived on the north side, adjacent to George Haas. Indeed, a careful inspection of satellite imagery reveals the remnants of a farmstead on the property about a tenth-mile northwest of the August Beck farm.18

Ten years later, the agricultural census 19 and the population enumeration show three Beck farms and three separate Beck households. Noticing once again the order in which the farms and households are listed on these census records, it would appear that census-taker Michael F. O'Donnell 20 probably landed on the island at the Light Station. After interviewing a few families in the bay area, he moved westward from there towards Lake Florence, visiting the Joseph Haas and Miller farms, then south around the bottom of the lake past the old Burton place now occupied by Theodor Beck, then northward on the west side of the Lake Florence to the Conrad Hutzler, August Beck, Christoph Beck, and George Haas farms, in that order.21 The Beck farms were described as follows.

Theodor Beck was the head of the household consisting of himself (38), his brother Albert (35) and their disabled mother Dorothea (67 – rheumatism). He was also listed as the owner of this 160-acre farm, which consisted of 27 "improved" acres – 25 tilled and 3 in pastures, plus 132 "unimproved" acres, 60 of which were forested and 72 listed as "other," probably referring to useless hilly and sandy territory. The farm was thought to be worth about \$2,000. During the previous year he'd spent about \$25 on maintenance, and \$167 on labor, having employed someone for 52-weeks; probably his brother Albert. They had three horses, six milch cows and nineteen other cattle – having bought one, sold three, slaughtered one for their own use, and lost two – plus four hogs and thirty-four chickens. Together they had produced about \$1,500 worth of farm products during the previous year. That included 3-tons



of hay, 280-pounds of butter, and 100-dozen eggs. Twelve-acres planted in grains had produced 75-bushels of barley, 150 of oats, 60 of rye and 40 of wheat, plus three acres planted in potatoes had produced 400-bushels. A small orchard with six apple trees had produced three-bushels worth about \$19, and they had cut 350-cords of wood, which they'd sold for \$825.

August Beck was the head of the household consisting of himself (27), his wife Elizabeth (Haas) (24) and their four children (6-years to six months). He was also listed as the owner of this 80-acre farm, which consisted of 23 "improved" acres – 20 tilled and 3 in pastures, plus 57 "unimproved," all of which were forested. The farm was thought to be worth about \$520. During the previous year he'd spent about \$25 on maintenance, and had not employed any hired help. He had a single milch cow, two hogs and twenty-six chickens. All told, he had produced about \$500 worth of farm products during the previous year. That included 4-tons of hay, 100-pounds of butter, and 40-dozen eggs. Fourteen-acres planted in grains had produced 45-bushels of barley, 150 of corn, 100 of oats, 100 of rye and 60 of wheat, and four acres planted in potatoes had produced 400-bushels.

Christoph Beck was the head of the household consisting of himself (59) and his wife Dorothea (65). He was also listed as the owner of this 83-acre farm, which consisted of 19 "improved" acres – 16 tilled and 3 in pastures, plus 64 "unimproved" acres, all of which were forested.²² The farm was thought to be worth about \$600. During the previous year he'd had no maintenance costs, but had employed hired help for a total of nine weeks and paid \$100 for that. He had four milch cows, eleven other cattle – having sold three and lost two – plus three hogs and eighteen chickens. All told, he had produced about \$250 worth of farm products during the previous year. That included 3-tons of hay, 100-pounds of butter, and 50-dozen eggs. Twelve-acres planted in grains had produced 40-bushels of barley, 80 of corn, 70 of oats, 40 of rye and 30 of wheat, and two acres planted in potatoes had produced 120-bushels. A one-acre orchard with sixteen apple trees had produced six-bushels worth about \$3, and they had cut 16-cords of wood, which they'd sold for \$16.

From these descriptions, it seems clear that Christoph and August Beck were working the original 160-acre Christoph Beck homestead. As suggested by the comment in Brenda Wheeler Williams' thesis, Christoph was probably on the north 80-acres, with August on the south eighty. Both men indicated that they owned the 80-acres that they were farming.

It isn't clear where the Theodor Beck farm was at this point, but the census information strongly suggests that it was the Burton property on the island's south shore. Twenty-five years earlier, William Burton 23 had purchased four adjacent lots in Section 9 south of Lake Florence, the total of which amounted to 179.1-acres. They each contained an odd number of acres, owing to their bordering along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The absence of regular rectangular borders probably explains Theodor's claim that he was working 160-acres. Additionally, a plot map produced later shows that Oswald

Furst, who was married to Theodor's sister Dora, was the owner of a small irregular plot on the west end of this property, which would probably have amounted to about nineteen acres, reducing the total of Theodor's holdings to about 160-acres.²⁴

On the other hand, Burton also owned a regular 40-acre plot on the west end of his 179-acre holdings, while the eastern-most lot, containing 48.8-acres, was the site of a large dock, being, more or less, the south termination of Burdick Road. The son William N. Burton didn't leave the island for good until the late 1890's, and was cooperatively active, along with other farmers, in shipping cord wood up to that time, so might very well have held onto that property and the dock, the regular 40-acre plot on the west side being part of the farm Theodor Beck was operating. The total acres in that case would have been closer to 160; actually being 170.3-acres.

Theodor Beck claimed that his farm included about 72-acres which were essentially without value. That would also suggest the Burton property, much of it along the Lake Michigan shoreline and its western boundary consisting of rocky shoreline, with clay and sand banks, previously deemed worthless by surveyor Orange Risdon.

Although Theodor claimed to be the owner of this farm, it seems quite possible that it was actually still owned by the Burtons at the time. The house which the National Park generally calls "the Lodge" was originally built by William Burton, and was occupied by him and his family until his death in the late 1860s, around the same time that the David Becks came to the island.²⁵ According to George Johnson, who moved to the island with the Benth Johnson family in 1889, the Becks were operating a farm here, but living in log cabins until finally "getting the big house" from which (according to George) while sitting on its large front porch, they could watch all the ships sailing by.²⁶ That would suggest that the Becks finally took over the place around 1893 when the ailing and aged seventy-six year old son, William N Burton finally left the island for good, living out the last two years of his life with a daughter in Detroit.

Plausible Disambiguation

It seems puzzling indeed that the Becks are generally touted as being among the island's more prominent and influential families, yet it is very difficult to come up with much factual information about them. Moreover, very little mention of the Becks appears in the island-related literature produced by others, even those who were their contemporaries.

August Beck is usually the center of historic attention as one of the island's more productive farmers – "King of the Island," as some claim he was known. That also seems curious, for as can be seen above, his brothers' farm, at least in 1880, was by far the larger and more productive. August's farm at that time was little more than a subsistence operation, even after his having been on the island with his parents for more than ten years and presumably having taken over a preexisting farm. From what evidence is available, his older brother Theodor Beck was also a prominent civic influence during his



time, it being he who organized a petition initiative on taxation which was laid before the 1885 session of the Michigan State Senate.²⁷ That evidently led to an expanded initiative a few years later which eventually led to the demise of Michigan's Manitou County, by removing the islands from that jurisdiction and annexing North and South Manitou Islands to Leelanau County.²⁸

It seems likely that August Beck's historical position of prominence in island lore stems mainly from the fact that he outlived his more successful older brother Theodor by some 31-years. But it is also true that during the early years August was probably always subservient to his father David, who was probably making the decisions for their farm. August was, after all, still the youngest, being only twenty-seven years old in 1880. In view of David's personal history and advanced age – sixty-seven in 1880 – he might very well have been stuck in the “old country” farming paradigms. By those standards, what had already been achieved on their island farm would have been unheard of in Cattenstedt, and considered quite admirable by his peers in Germany.

July of 1886 saw the opening of a fine new and spacious barn on the David and August Beck farm, suggesting that the scope of their operations was dramatically increasing, probably as David's influence began to decline and August took over.²⁹ Several years later August evidently brought pedigreed breeding stock to the island for the purpose, no doubt, of improving the quality of the island's swine production.³⁰ As a result of his experiences at the Union Stock Yards in Chicago, August Beck was reputed to have been the islands *de facto* expert when it came to the buying and selling of livestock. He is also said to have been the instigator of certain cooperative efforts with other island farmers, such as the acquisition of a jointly-owned and shared threshing machine.³¹ These facts obviously lend support to the assertion that August, the youngest of the Beck brothers, ultimately became one of the island's most professional and progressive farmers.

Evidently the elder Becks were more interested in farming than in socializing. According to George Johnson, they were not often seen outside of their farms. Cultural and language differences could probably be credited for that, rather than religious issues. Religious issues were sometimes a problem for German immigrants who brought their old Roman Catholic vs. Evangelical Lutheran bigotry along with them from the old country to the new. But there is nothing in the record to suggest that the Becks were earnest about either persuasion. While at least one of August Beck's daughters was buried a Catholic, her father's funeral was conducted in a Lutheran church. Others were married by ministers of other denominations or, more usually, by a Justice of the Peace. George Johnson also asserted that August Beck's daughters all ran off to the mainland and married against their father's will, two of them to the Thompson brothers Theodore and Thomas, both marriages ending in tragedy. That might have given the Becks further cause for bad feelings towards certain other island families, leaving them somewhat inclined to keep to themselves.

Under the initiative that ultimately removed the islands from Manitou County, the island became South Manitou Township, attached to Leelanau County. A local assessment board then levied property taxes, and August Beck, as Township Treasurer, was charged with collecting them, and for imposing penalties on those who were not willing or able to pay. Islanders could then look to Theodor Beck as the instigator of the change that created the local Board of Review. What is more, it seems unlikely that any of them would have been pleased to see the local tax collector, his brother August, coming up to road to their farms.

There might also have been disputes and hard feelings between the Becks themselves. As suggested above, Christoph Beck and David Beck were probably brothers. When David's eldest son Theodor first came over from Cattenstedt, he knew where he was going – to his uncle's place on South Manitou Island. Brenda Wheeler Williams' research indicating that Theodor bought the south half of his Uncle Christoph's homestead seems plausible, although it seems more likely that his father David subsequently bought it for his family. The idea, also mentioned in her thesis,³² that the Becks formed some sort of cooperative partnership, sharing all three farms in common does not seem very credible, given the disparate scales of their operations, and the probably that Theodor was actually leasing or tenant farming at that time (1877).

George Johnson claimed that August Beck “got the place from his father.” That would agree with oral history (“talk”) asserting that when David Beck died, apparently sometime between 1870 and 1880, he, quite inappropriately by German traditions, left everything to his youngest son August, notwithstanding the fact that his eldest son had been working the place since the time of his arrival, perhaps for upwards of ten years. His reason for doing that might not actually have been favoritism, as most claim, but rather the fact that August had become a family man, married with children, while Theodor and Albert were both still bachelors. Nevertheless, at that point, Theodor, Albert and their mother left, moving south onto the Burton farm, perhaps originally leasing it, or working the place for its mostly absentee owner William N Burton under some sort of tenant farming arrangement.

The Wheeler report that August Beck bought part of that Burton property might also be incorrect; it actually having been Theodor. According to newspaper accounts, Mr. Burton apparently liquidated most of his family's assets on the island during the latter part of 1889.³³ But if August Beck did, in fact, buy a parcel of land in that area from William N. Burton in the 1880s, it was probably the single remaining lot at the end of Burdick Road where the south-side dock was located. George Johnson spoke of that large dock being used by island farmers to ship cordwood and farm products to markets in Milwaukee and Chicago, brokered by William N. Burton during the last years of his life, but also well into the early 1900s.



The Island Children

Christoph Beck³⁴ and his wife Catherine apparently never had any children. Three second generation families sprung from the David Beck family.

The first of David and Dorothe's children to marry was their daughter Dorothe, or "Dora." On Sunday, September 26th in 1876, she married Oswald Furst of Chicago.³⁵ He was thirty-six, she had just turned 28. Oswald had also grown up in Germany and had studied for the priesthood, but gave up on that idea to become a book binder by trade. They moved to the island and settled on a small farm, probably about 19-acres, immediately west of her brothers Theodor and Albert. Recognizing his religious training, Oswald was sometimes called upon to officiate at island funerals.³⁶ They had three children on the island:

Paulina on October 27, 1877
Martin Christopher on August 15, 1881, and
David A. in June 1884.

Paulina's life would be short. She died on the island on April 1st, 1904 at 26-years of age, and was probably the first to be buried in the island's new cemetery.³⁷ She had never married.

Martin joined the Coast Guard on the island, becoming second in command and serving as Keeper during the last half of 1911. He married Zella Mae Mabie of Bellaire (east of Traverse City) in 1905,³⁸ and by 1915 they had three children. Tragedy struck in the early days of December in the following year, when Martin died on the island suddenly and unexpectedly of appendicitis.³⁹

David also joined the Coast Guard, serving several years at Charlevoix, and finally as Chief at the Michigan City, Indiana station. He married New York born Sarah Idella Blow in 1905,⁴⁰ and they had four children. David died at Michigan City in 1958.

Oswald died on August 22, 1829; Dora on September 28, 1931. They rest together in the island's main cemetery.⁴¹

August Beck was the next to marry, wedding Elizabeth Haas in 1873. He was 21; she was just 17. They were married in Glen Arbor on June 28th, a Saturday, by Justice of the Peace George Ray, with Mrs. Ray and Andrew Burdick as their witnesses.⁴² They eventually produced ten children:

Mary Carolina on July 22, 1874,
Josephine ("Josie") on June 27, 1876,
David on June 1, 1877,
Alvina on April 1878,
George E. on December 22, 1880,
Matilda Agnes on October 1881,
Hattie Elsie on September 1883,
Irwin August on June 11, 1887,
Harley Robert on July 20, 1895, and
Robert, who died at birth.

Mary Carolina married the widower Samuel Walter Morris in 1901. He worked as a railroad mechanic in Lima, Ohio, Benzie County, and elsewhere, but they finally returned to the island in 1928 or 1929, taking over the August Beck farm and caring for her aging father, then about 76-years old.⁴³ August Beck died in May of 1941. Mary died in Benzonia County on September 6, 1951; Samuel four years later on October 8, 1955. Both were laid to rest in the Benzonia Township Cemetery.⁴⁴

Josephine married George Conrad Hutzler Jr in Leland on Thursday, June 15th of 1893. He was a twenty-year old farmer; she was 17 and working as a "domestic helper" on the island. Justice of the Peace W.W. Barton officiated, with witnesses listed as William W Fairchild and Mrs. R Ruff of Leland. She and George had one child; Lewis, who was born in March of 1895. She died on the island on October 8, 1911 of *Locomotor Ataxia* (or *tabes dorsalis*, a painful spastic disorder resulting from syphilis of the spinal cord and its appendages,) and was buried in the island's main cemetery.⁴⁵ George never remarried, and passed away on the island in 1944.

David died at birth.

Alvina married William West (actually "Wiest") in 1894. He was 27; she was 16. He had emigrated from Germany six years before, and was a butcher by trade. They moved to Grand Rapids, where they had three children, daughters Hattie (1894, who died at birth,) then Roma (Sep 11, 1900) and Viola (Jul 12, 1906,) neither of whom married. Alvina died in Grand Rapids in 1941.⁴⁶

George E. Beck grew up to be a nineteen-year old sailor. He died of consumption (tuberculosis) on May 29, 1900 and was buried on the island.^{47, 48}

Matilda married her former schoolmate, Theodore Thompson, an immigrant boy from Norway. They were both eighteen that summer, and were married in Leland on Monday, August 21st of 1899, by Justice of the Peace G. W Benjamin, with Henry Wyse of Glen Arbor and Elizabeth Ruff standing up with them. The young couple rented a small house near the island's big dock at Burton's Wharf north of the Life Saving Station. Theodore had become a commercial fisherman. Matilda maintained a small store, where she sold cigarettes, cigars, and candy to residents and to travelers who passed through on the boats, which were frequently coming and going, with stops at South Manitou for passengers and freight. Theo and Tillie would have four children during their ten-year marriage, the last two born in a new house the couple had built near the little village on the island's south point. Their marriage would last only until its thirteenth year. Tillie died early in June of 1912 of peritonitis, which was said to have been the result of her having attempted a self-induced abortion using a hat pin. Theodore then asked Bertha Peth, who had left the island and was living with her family in Chicago, to come back for a while to help with the store, and to help care for his young family. Bertha never again left



the island. While continuing as a fisherman, he joined the Life Saving Service on the island in 1916. He was transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Manistee, and what remained of the family moved there in 1922. Eventually leaving the Coast Guard, he worked for the railroad and carferry services out of Manistee, Frankfort and Ludington before passing away at Manistee on February 3, 1966, having lived eighty-five years.^{49, 50}

Hattie married Theodore's brother Thomas a year later, on Friday, September 14, 1900. He was twenty-one, Hattie just seventeen. They were married in Frankfort by Rev. W.W. Hulburt, with Deacon Peterson and his wife Bertha as their witnesses. After their marriage the young couple lived in Grand Rapids, where Thomas had found work with the Grand Rapids (electric) Railway Company. Three years later they returned to the island after Thomas won the mail-carrier contract. There Hattie gave Thomas two children, Beatrice and George. They were born on the August Beck farm, Hattie's home place, with her mother Lizzie (Haas) Beck as her midwife. Having acquired a power boat, which he named the "Beatrice" in honor of their first-born daughter, Thomas made regular runs to Glen Haven during the summers and as weather permitted during the winter months. When the lake was safely frozen over in winter, he'd make the crossing on foot, pulling a large sled. Tragedy struck the family on a Tuesday morning, June 14, 1910. While rowing out to his boat in the bay with his little son, and with Hattie looking on from the shore, three-year old George fell overboard. Thomas dove in to save him but, being unable to swim, the two sank below the surface. The skiff having drifted back to shore, Hattie hurriedly climbed aboard and rowed out to where the two had gone down and was able to pull her little son out of the water when he rose back to the surface. By that time the crew from the Life Saving Station had arrived and were able to resuscitate the boy, but Thomas had been lost. She later remarried, her second husband being Coast Guardsman William Barnhart. They were married the day after Christmas in 1912. Barnhart was subsequently transferred off the island to other stations, winding up in Grand Haven, where Hattie passed away on February 8, 1988. She was 104 years old.^{51, 52}

Irwin married Lulu Freeland of Empire on Monday, July 1st of 1918. He was thirty-one; she was twenty-nine and the daughter of Clark Freeland and the former Annie Stormer. Justice of the Peace W.C. Nelson performed the ceremony, with Mr. & Mrs. Jay R. Vanderlip as official witnesses. Irwin was employed by the Wisconsin Pea Cannery Company, working for them as a hired hand on a fruit farm in Benzon County's Blaine Township. By 1930 he and Lulu had their own farm next door to the Peter Stormer place at Empire, and three children; Anna, Lyle and Irwin Jr. Lulu died in Empire in 1949; Irwin died in Farwell, Michigan in 1988 at the age of 101-years. Both were laid to rest in Empire's Maple Grove Cemetery.

Harley married Grace Hendrick of Michigan City, Indiana on March 16, 1916 in Chicago. She was 19; he was 21. He then worked as an auto mechanic in Michigan City. Shortly after their marriage, they moved to the island, where Harley ran the farm for his aging parents. Oddly, in 1920 the census taker recorded that the farm was then owned by Harley, with his father and mother, August and Lizzy, living there in a rented house. They apparently stayed until after Lizzy's death in December of 1927, after which Harley's sister Mary and her husband Samuel Morris took over the farm. They then returned to Michigan City, where he apparently spent the rest of his working years employed by city's Fire Department. Harley and Grace had a single child; their son Harley H. Beck, born at Michigan City in November of 1917. Harley died at Michigan City in April of 1982 at the age of eighty-six.

Robert, the last of Lizzie Beck's children, did not survive infancy.

August Beck died at his son Irwin's home in Empire on Sunday, May 4, 1941. He was preceded in death by his wife Elizabeth, who passed away in the care of her daughter Mary Morris, at the Morris' home in Beulah, on Friday, December 5, 1927. Both were laid to rest in the island's main cemetery, not far from their farm, and next to their son George.^{53, 54}

Theodor Beck finally married at age 48. The bride was less than half her new husband's age; 21-year old Alvina (or "Helwine") Charlotte Virgin from Chicago. The ceremony was at Leland on Wednesday, November 4, 1891 with Lutheran Minister Rev. W. Boritzki officiating. Henry Warner and Anna Hoef⁵⁵ of Leland were the witnesses.⁵⁶ During their next sixteen years Alvina would give Theodor five children:

Minnie Bertha. on August 15, 1892,
William Frederick. on August 25, 1893,⁵⁷
Ida Emma on February 21, 1895,
Alma Alvina in 1906,⁵⁸ and
Arthur Theodore on August 19, 1907.

Minnie's life was short. She died of consumption (tuberculosis) on the island on September 12, 1907, and was buried in the new cemetery under a heart-shaped headstone. She was only fifteen years old.⁵⁹

William Frederick ("Willie") married Vernus Savage at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suttons Bay on Tuesday, April 21, 1925. He was thirty; she was twenty, the daughter of Aleck C. Savage, a carpenter by trade who came from Liverpool, England in 1866, and who was living on the island at the time. Standing up for the couple were Mrs. James E. Burgess from South Manitou, and Mr. J. Blacken from Suttons Bay. Being the eldest son, Willie became his father's right-hand man on the farm, and took it over for his mother upon Theodor's death. For many years the farm remained a source of commodities for island families and the Coast Guard Station. Willie was reputed as one who made the best (most powerful) cider on the island – the kind that "if you drank it sitting down, you



were lucky to get up and walk away!”⁶⁰ After the island’s fog bell was replaced by steam-operated horns, he and his brother Art provided each year’s supply of four-foot cordwood for the fog signal’s boilers.

In 1915, mother Alvina Beck wed for the second time, marrying the widower Benth Johnson. Theirs was a rather strange relationship. They did not live together much of the time. He worked his fishing nets during the season, living in his own home on the point near the Life Saving Station, while she remained on the farm with her two boys. Only during the winter months would Ben be found hanging around the farm. Ben and Alvina moved to Frankfort in the early 1930s. After his death there in March of 1939, Alvina returned to her farm on the island. In declining health, she sold the farm in the early 1940s and went to Milwaukee, where she ultimately passed away. Willie and his family moved to Kingsley, south of Traverse City, where he died in September of 1978, at the age of eighty-three.⁶¹

Ida Emma married Asst Lightkeeper Henry Joseph Rocheleau on June 6, 1922 at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Provemont (Lake Leelanau), the renowned Rev. Fr. Thomas. W. Albin officiating. Willie Beck, and Elizabeth Trudel of Provemont, were their witnesses. Henry was twenty-nine and Ida was twenty-seven. Henry was the son of David and Emelia Rocheleau, who were amongst the earliest of Cheboygan settlers, having arrived there from Quebec, Canada in 1831. He was apparently serving briefly as an Assistant Keeper at the South Manitou Island Light Station at the time, as a member of the U.S. Lighthouse Service (USLHS). He was also briefly assigned around 1930 to the Holland, Michigan station. The USLHS became part of the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939. Continuing in the USCG he attained the rank of First Class Boatswains Mate (BM1) before retiring with WW-II and Korean War citations. During most their marriage the Rocheleaus lived in Inverness Township, near Cheboygan, Michigan. They had four children: all boys: David, Harvey, Melvin and Kenneth. Henry died at Cheboygan on January 19, 1972. Ida passed away six years later, in December 4, 1978. She had lived almost eighty-four years. Both are buried in the Rocheleau plot in Cheboygan’s Calvary Cemetery Chapel of the Resurrection.⁶²

Alma Alvina married Gordon G. Retzlaff at Chicago on the 1st day of March in 1930, he being about 23-years old, and Alma possibly a year older. Their marriage may have produced a single child; a son, Gordon G. Retzlaff Jr, born in Chicago on the 28th of December in 1930. Gordon Sr. died August 27, 1959 at Oak Creek, Wisconsin at age fifty-two. Alma is thought to have died in 1978.⁶³

Arthur Theodore was married to Helen Rebecca Burgess on Tuesday, April 29, 1930. Arthur was 22. Born on January 21st in 1917, Helen was the thirteen-year old only child of Traverse City’s Perry and Anna Burgess. Her mother having died three years before, Helen had

presumably been sent out to the island to stay with her uncle James and aunt Viola Burgess. Helen died at Frankfort in March of 1960. During the first twenty years of her marriage, she gave birth to nine children, three of whom died at birth or a few days thereafter. Arthur married for a second time in September of 1963 at age fifty-six, his second wife being Vera Anderson of Frankfort. He lived to be seventy-three years old, passing away at Frankfort on the 17th of February in 1981.⁶⁴

Theodore Beck died on Monday, December 3, 1910, and was laid to rest near his daughter Minnie in the island’s main cemetery. The cause of death was listed as “Senile Decay.” He was sixty-nine years of age.⁶⁵

In 1915, his widow Alvina Beck wed for the second time, marrying the widower Benth Johnson. Theirs was a rather strange relationship. They did not live together much of the time. He worked his fishing nets during the season, living in his own home on the point near the Life Saving Station, while she remained on the farm with her two boys. Only during the winter months would Ben be found hanging around the farm. Ben and Alvina moved to Frankfort in the early 1930s. After his death there in March of 1939, Alvina returned to her farm on the island. In declining health, she sold the farm in the early 1940s and went to Milwaukee, where she ultimately passed away.

End of Story?

The Becks came to South Manitou Island in the 1860s. Four-score years later, they would all be gone, either buried in their final resting places on the island, or disbursed across their new homeland – mostly onto the Michigan mainland, but also westward into Wisconsin, Illinois and points further west, eventually as far as the Pacific coast.

Theodore Beck’s place was sold off in the 1940s to men with big ideas from Detroit. The fine farmhouse overlooking the Manitou Passage, originally built by William Burton as a retirement retreat, was turned into a lodge for visiting cronies of power-boating enthusiast and Detroit promoter J. Lee Barrett.⁶⁶ When his radical development plans for the island flopped, “the Lodge,” as it came to be known, was leased by Joseph Harrold, President of the Lee Island Company, who rented it out to summer visitors for a while before the company finally sold it to the government in the early 1970s.⁶⁷

Having not recognized the historic origins of what it thought was a farmstead established by Theodore Beck, the place was abandoned and permitted to molder to ruins, the park guaranteeing that it would all eventually disappear by designating area as *potential wilderness*. Through the occasional efforts of a Theodore Beck descendant the house been kept from deteriorating beyond repair and collapsing into rubble. Thus it still stands – forlorn to be sure, but still looking out over the Passage. Perhaps someday it will receive its due, as the last home of the island’s first pioneer and settler; the man who was responsible for making South Manitou what it became



Burton & Lord's wooding station which, for a while, turned the island into an essential stop-over for passing steamboats in what was otherwise an unsettled wilderness, South Manitou might well have never become a haven for immigrant settlers.

Another Barrett colleague, William Boales bought, amongst other things, the other Beck place in the island's interior – originally the Christoph Beck homestead – with the intention of raising prime beef cattle on the abandoned island farms. That idea also fell through, although it gave Edward and Esther Riker, who went to the island with their three young sons to manage his operations, the distinction of being the island's last full-time residents. Boales too sold his holdings to the government when the National Park came.

Fortunately, that Beck homestead fared better, although it is rarely thought of as being the Christoph Beck homestead after being identified by the National Park service as the August Beck farm. It is most likely a fact that Christoph's pioneering courage was probably the only reason that any of the Becks came to South Manitou Island in the first place, and all of the Becks who came originally lived and worked on that farm. August, the youngest of the Beck immigrants, was perhaps lucky enough to inherit the fruits of everyone else's labors. Be that as it may, the National Park Service did decide to preserve this important piece of history, has kept it up well ever since, and thus it appears on the National Register of Historic Places.



Editors Note: This essay is a compilation of information from a variety of historic texts and Internet resources. While information from these sources is not always in agreement, the information contained in this work represents an earnest attempt to remain faithful to the facts, or what was probable given the times and the circumstances of the events.

Acknowledgements: A special note of thanks is due to contributors Sharon Mary Beck Prehn-Forsstrom and David Morris. Sharon is descended from the Theodor Beck line, through his son Arthur Theodore Beck and Helen Rebecca Burgess. David is a great-grandson of Mary Carolina Beck, eldest child of August and Elizabeth (Haas) Beck. Both have generously provided a special collection of articles, documents and photographs which are now openly shared on the MIA website.

References

¹ The German origins of the Beck family was first published by Sharon Mary Beck, granddaughter of Theodor Beck, as a result of family research in the late 1970s, plus records searches privately commissioned and funded by her and conducted by professional genealogists in Germany in the early 1880s. Most other researchers have relied upon that information. Her family tree can be found online at Ancestry.Com - <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/27083809/family?cfpid=1987136592>.

² *The Beck Family Immigrates From Germany to South Manitou Island — 1860*, Mrs. Irwin Beck Jr., July 2000, self-published.

Note: The genealogical information provided in the first few paragraphs of this booklet appears to be mostly definitive and reliable, probably because it was derived from Sharon Mary Beck's definitive work. After that, the narrative appears to become imaginative and fictional, some of it lifted almost verbatim from Myron H. Vent's book about the Johann Hutzler family, who came from Bavaria.

³ Note: For reasons unknown, family genealogical information does not mention this fourth and youngest son. However, as indicated in this essay, Christoph Beck was almost without doubt David Beck's brother.

⁴ The name "Gustaff" appears only in 1870 Census records, the reports for which were very neatly and legibly done, suggesting that they were probably transcriptions of data taken in the field. "Gustaff" might have been an erroneous transcription of a less legibly written and misspelled "Cristoff."

⁵ An obituary and funeral record published on the occasion of August Beck's death asserts that upon their arrival on South Manitou Island "The family stayed with Mr Beck's uncle." – from the November 1993 issue of the *South Manitou Memorial Society Newsletter*.

Note: The error or implausibility of certain other facts mentioned in this article suggests that it was based on an interview with a member of the family, rather than reliable family records.

⁶ Homestead Certificate 218, dated November 1, 1869 for Christoph Beck, per application 153 filed February 25, 1863 at the Land Office in Traverse City, Michigan.

⁷ *Coming Through With Rye*, Brenda Wheeler Williams, National Park Service – Omaha, 1996, pg 34 and page 37

Note: When filing his proof of claim in August of 1868, Christoph Beck affirmed that he had lived on his property since February of 1863, and his witnesses attested that they had known him for five years. These statements arose merely for the purpose of compliance with the provisions of the Homestead Act, and are not useful in determining when Christoph and Catharine Beck might have arrived on the island.

⁸ *Ibid.* 7; pg 147. See also the 1870 U.S. Population Census for South Manitou Island, pg 2

⁹ *South Manitou Island – From Pioneer Community to National Park*, Myron H. Vent, 1973, pg 37

¹⁰ Death record of Christopher Beck, June 4, 1900, Traverse City, MI

Note: The reference to Traverse City probably denotes the central Post Office (postal area) rather than the deceased's actual place of residence.

¹¹ New York Passenger List, S.S. Hansa, Bremen to New York, arr July 6, 1868.

¹² *The German-Americans - An Ethnic Experience*, Willi Paul Adams (1993), Ch 2. The Immigration Office of the Senate of Berlin. (from <http://maxkade.iupui.edu/adams/cover.html>)

¹³ Immigration record – David Beck family, 1869.

¹⁴ New York Passenger List, S.S. Deutschland, Bremen to New York, arr May 15, 1868.

¹⁵ 1870 U.S. Census for the 5th Ward, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, pg 132.

Note: Although the census data is not extensive or accurate enough to identify this “Dora Beck” definitively, all the other possibilities discovered in the 1870 U.S. Census can be eliminated by their location, age, association with other family members and spouses, etc. This “Dora Beck” is listed as coming from Prussia, which would not have been strictly accurate, but then William H. Wolf is also listed as having been born in Ireland, whereas his biographical sketches, published by Milwaukee historians, indicate that his actual birthplace was Wendelsheim, Germany.

¹⁶ Beck family history page by Lori (David E.) Morris – webpage archived here as found at <http://www.geocities.ws/dmorriscat/BeckPage.html>.

Note: The source cited actually thought that Theodor and Albert had immigrated together, whereas the Deutschland manifest shows that Albert immigrated with other members of his family a year later.

¹⁷ Williams, Brenda Wheeler, *Integrating Cultural And Natural Landscape Management Decisions For Historic Agricultural Landscapes At South Manitou Island*, 1995, Thesis/Dissertation.

Note: Unfortunately, thus far it has not been possible to obtain a full copy of this document, so the source of this information cannot be determined.

¹⁸ Image – Possible Christoph Beck Farmstead

Note: The image suggests the presence of two large structures, probably a house and a barn, with roadways providing access to both. These structures were originally discovered by NPS Historic Architect Kimberly Mann, who remembers ...

“It is what I saw when I arrived here 20 years ago. There is a house that has been completely grown over with the forest. It was still standing when I saw it then; at least a wall. More than likely the forest was holding it up at that point. The vegetation was so deep, I didn't see the structure as I was climbing through the brush until I was right up on it.

I remember the direction from the August Beck house was to head towards the grave site up the knoll and veer to the left up across the field towards the forest. I would guess it was the circle towards the top of the image that I was blindly led to through the reforestation.”

¹⁹ Non-Population Schedule 2 – Production of Agriculture, 1880.

Unfortunately, the schedules for 1890 were destroyed by fire, and those for 1900 and 1910 were destroyed by Congressional order.

²⁰ Michael F. O'Donnell was a teacher, Justice of the Peace, and person of note on Beaver Island, County Seat of the former Manitou County, which included North and South Manitou Islands.

²¹ The order in which the Christoph Beck and August Beck households are listed is inverted on the population enumeration sheets, compared to the agricultural inventory, which was taken during the same visit. The neatness and legibility of the population data sheets suggests that these permanent records were probably transcriptions of the raw data taken in the field, Mr. O'Donnell then deferring to the senior Beck's by listing them first.

²² Note: This is probably an error, the numbers actually being 13-acres tilled, 3 in pastures and 54 “unimproved” for a total of 80-acres.

²³ viz.: the elder William Burton; not his son William N. Burton

²⁴ *Ibid* 9, pg 45.

²⁵ See the biographical essay *The Burtons* and the *Phyllis Begens Collection* on the www.manitouislandsarchives.org website.

²⁶ See *August 1972 Interview with George & Goldie Johnson* on the www.manitouislandsarchives.org website.

²⁷ *Journal of the Senate of the State of Michigan, 1885, Volume 1*, pg 295

²⁸ *Journal of the Senate of the State of Michigan, 1891, Volume I*, pgs 84 and 85

²⁹ *The Grand Travers Herald*, July 1886 issue. (The new barn highlighted in the article was presumably the one built on the stove wood foundation currently being preserved by the National Park Service.)

³⁰ *The American Duroc-Jersey Record* of December 1915 indicates that “Gus Beck” of South Manitou Island, Michigan was the buyer of the pedigree female swine #65683 “Volunteer Oak 3D” at Chicago's Union Stock Yards.

³¹ *Coming Through With Rye*, Brenda Wheeler Williams, National Park Service – Omaha, 1996, pg 111.

³² *Ibid*. 17

³³ *Grand Traverse Herald*, issues of July and September of 1889

³⁴ Possible Immigration Record – Christoph Bernhard Beck, 1854, Possible Marriage – Christoph Beck and Catharine Angele, March 15, 1861, Birth Record – Chatharina Barbara Angele, June 13, 1814

³⁵ Original Marriage Certificate: Oswald Fuerst & Dorothea Beck, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, September 15, 1876

³⁶ Notes on Oswald Fuerst, Exploring North Manitou, South Manitou, High and Garden island of the Lake Michigan Archipelago, Robert H. Ruchhoft, The Pucelle Press, Cincinnati – 1991, pg 118

³⁷ Death record and headstone – Paulina Furst

³⁸ Marriage Record – Martin Furst and Zella Mabie, September 24, 1905

³⁹ “*I Remember When ...*”, Ethel Paulina Furst Stormer, South Manitou Memorial Society Newsletter, March 1999

⁴⁰ Marriage Record – David Furst and Sarah Blow, December 3, 1906

⁴¹ Death records and headstone for Oswald and Dorothea Furst

⁴² Marriage Record – August Beck and Elizabeth Haas, June 28, 1873

⁴³ Letter from Iona (Morris) Fox in the *South Manitou Memorial Society Newsletter*, July 1990. Also 1930 U.S. Population Census, Glen Arbor Township, Sheet 5A.

⁴⁴ Miscellaneous records for Mary Carolina (Beck) Morris: Birth, Baptism, Death of Samuel Morris' first wife, residence in Lima, Ohio in 1910, residence on South Manitou Island in 1930.

⁴⁵ Miscellaneous records for Josephine (Beck) Hutzler: Marriage, Death, Headstone.

⁴⁶ Miscellaneous records for Alvina (Beck) Wiest: Census Records for 1910 – 1930, Roma's birth record, 1928 Grand Rapids City Directory, Death Record for Viola.

⁴⁷ *South Manitou Memorial Society Newsletter*, November 1993

⁴⁸ George Beck Death Certificate, May 29, 1900

⁴⁹ Miscellaneous records for Matilda (Beck) Thompson: Birth Record, Marriage Record, Death Certificate.

⁵⁰ The Johnson – Thompson Story, 2010, www.manitouislandsarchives.org

⁵¹ Miscellaneous Records for Hattie (Beck) Thompson: Birth Record, Marriage Records, Death Record.

⁵² *Ibid*. 38

⁵³ *Flashback to the Past*, South Manitou Memorial Society Newsletter, November 1993. Transcriptions of articles from the Grand Rapids Herald and Traverse City Record-Eagle, submitted by Sandra M. Black.

Note: There are several other unmarked graves on this same row in the cemetery; possibly other members of the August & Elizabeth Beck family whose wooden headboards deteriorated and disappeared over time.

⁵⁴ August and Elizabeth Beck headstone, South Manitou Island Cemetery

⁵⁵ Anna Hoeft was a granddaughter of George Johann Hutzler; daughter of John Hoeft and Elizabeth Hutzler.

⁵⁶ Marriage Record – Theodore Beck and Alvina Virgin, November 4, 1891

⁵⁷ Note: The birth date for Willie Beck is uncertain. August 25, 1893 is given on a Manitou County Birth Registry, which appears to be the most authentic record. Dates appearing elsewhere are August 15, 1893, November 27, 1893, August 1894, and November 27, 1894. The 1894 birth dates are very unlikely, since sister Ida Emma was born next, in February of 1895.

⁵⁸ Note: Based on data in the 1910 and 1920 U.S. Population Census', Alma Alvina Beck was probably born between December 28, 1905 and May 9, 1906.

⁵⁹ Miscellaneous Records for Minnie Beck – Birth Record, Death Record, Death Certificate, Headstone

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- ⁶⁰ Per Ronald Rosie in the November 1998 issue of the *South Manitou Memorial Society Newsletter*
- ⁶¹ Miscellaneous Records for William Frederick Beck – Birth Record, Ww-I & WW-II Draft Cards, Marriage Record, Death Record.
- ⁶² Miscellaneous Records for Ida Emma Beck – Birth Record, Marriage Record, 1930 Census Record (Park Township, MI), Death Records for Ida and Henry Rocheleau, Photo of Ida and Henry Rocheleau
- ⁶³ Miscellaneous Records for Alma Alvina Beck – Birth date based on census records, Marriage Record, origins of husband Gordon Retzlaff, probable son Gordon G. Retzlaff Jr.,
- ⁶⁴ Miscellaneous Records for Arthur Theodore Beck – Life summaries for Arthur Beck and Helen Burgess, origins of Helen Burgess, Death records for Arthur Beck and Helen Burgess
- ⁶⁵ Theodore Beck Death Certificate and Headstone
- ⁶⁶ J. Lee Barrett was Secretary of the *Southeast Michigan Tourist and Publicity Association*.
- ⁶⁷ *Coming Through With Rye*, Brenda Wheeler Williams, National Park Service – Omaha, 1996, pgs 74 – 77, and pgs 123 – 125.
- ⁶⁸ The original policy of the park was to allow the structure to molder but as more research was completed on the history of the structure and site, the park has begun to assist the current descendents in making repairs to the structure on the park's behalf.