

themselves on the island, they encouraged the Hasses to emigrate to the island with their sons. About 1860, the Hass family arrived and settled on this farm. They soon built a large house on the location of a now derelict cabin. It was not far from the Hutzlers, for the eastern part of their land abutted the Hutzler farm, and the friends remained congenial neighbors for many years. Later a Hutzler girl would marry a Hass boy, uniting the two families in blood. Since the main island cemetery was not established until the first decade of this century, George and Maria Hass were buried in the family orchard as was George Johann Hutzler. The site of George Johann Hutzler's grave is easily found today but those of the senior Hasses are more



*Bill Hass' cabin in 1987*

difficult to find.

Their youngest son Henry established another farm near the west side of Lake Florence, which is described later on this walk. Their oldest son, John married, and with the help of his younger brother Bill took over the original family farm. John lost his wife and only child to illness, and he never remarried. He and his brother William remained on the farm as bachelors the rest of their lives. Bill did most of the field work, while John looked after the animals and did the cooking. Bill was also the island blacksmith, and maintained a forge complete with large bellows in a side building near the house. There he shaped the shoes for the island horses and repaired farm machinery. Since parts had to come from the mainland at a great time delay, Bill was often able to make temporary repairs to worn parts, so the farmer could continue work until replacements arrived. One day, as he looked out of the farmhouse window during lunch, he saw his blacksmith shop aflame. Despite the help of many neighbors, the shop which was some distance from the nearest well, was a total loss. It was the end of blacksmithing on the island.

From their orchard, the brothers could press enough juice from their apples each year to nearly fill two 55-gallon barrels. Sugar and raisins were added to top off each barrel. The barrels were then stored in a pit, where natural fermentation took place. After six months of aging, the brothers had 110 gallons of first-class cider to brighten the long and lonely winters.

John died in 1924, and shortly thereafter the large family house was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. This left his 65 year old brother homeless and alone. Several island neighbors helped Bill build a one room log cabin, where the bent old man lived out the remaining years of his life. This ruin is all that is found at the former site of the original Hass homestead. The building is now surrounded by small trees growing both inside and outside of the remaining log walls. Although I did not know the story of the Hass family when I first visited it, the now-desolate location and deterioration of the ruined building left me with a strong feeling of loneliness and isolation.

If you wish to see this ruin, it should take you about ten minutes to walk back to it. Follow the side road to the right, which is still in the forest but parallels a large open field on the left. You will come to a small open area that is easily crossed before returning to the woods. As late as 1987, you could follow this side road almost to the old cabin but today the latter part of this road is so clogged with deadfalls and underbrush that it is better to continue on the field to the left. If you look north up the hill, you will see a treeline crossing the field at the top of the hill. Walk towards a break in that treeline, which once served as a border between the Hass and Beck farms. Once beyond the break, start walking diagonally to the right in this field. Keep your eye peeled for the walls of the old cabin, mostly hidden in small trees near the eastern border of the field. If you are not used to doing off-trail walks you won't miss anything of spectacular interest if you skip this side trip.

When you continue on the main trail, you almost immediately enter a large field, where a substantial well-maintained house is easily seen. This is the homestead of August Beck, who was born in Germany and came to the island with his two older brothers, Theo and Albert. The three teen age boys arrived about 1860, shortly after the Hasses. The oldest, Theo, established his own farm on the southern end of the island. The Hass and George Johann Hutzler farms to the northeast and the farm of the other branch of the Hutzler family adjoining the Becks to the southwest formed the nucleus of the German community, which would dominate farming and the social life of the island for better than 70 years.

These families were often linked together by marriage. Eligible young women were usually in short supply. The 1880 census showed that only three young ladies were available for the 12 youthful bachelors living on the island. This meant that men sometimes married girls considerably younger than themselves, or spinsters who were a great deal older than their prospective husbands. The early death of some married men saw their widows remarrying other available island bachelors, making genealogy of the island a confusing hodgepodge of inter-related families.

The Beck house was to become the longtime home of one of these young couples. Their marriage linked two of the island families together. 19-year old August Beck married Elizabeth, the daughter of the nearby Hass family, when she was only 16. The marriage thrived and was fruitful, for when Mrs. Beck was 24 years old she was already the mother of four children.

During the early part of this century, August Beck was the most influential farmer on the island. Energetic and resourceful, he was instrumental in introducing new and better