

PECK

A SKETCH

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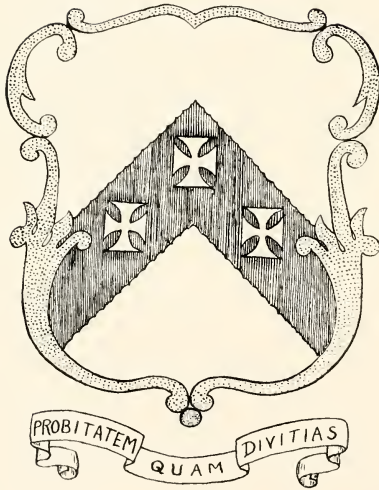
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Russell, William H.
Peck, a sketch

New England Historic Gen. Society

from

W. H. Russell.



PECK

COAT OF ARMS

PECK

A SKETCH

DONE BY
WILLIAM H. RUSSELL
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.
1922

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PECK

It is here taken for granted that everybody is more or less interested in his own history and descent, hence these scanty notes for those who may be concerned.

Amos Peck, Jr., of Berlin, Conn., was a soldier in the American Revolution. He enlisted twice in the Militia. First, on July 11, 1775, at the age of twenty-one, discharged Dec. 19, 1775. Again, on April 3, 1777, discharged May 15, 1777.

Our young man, it seems, was a fifer and served as such in his two enlistments for which he received extra pay from the General Assembly.

It was said by Elizabeth Langdon Peck, his daughter-in-law, who heard him play the fife during his later years, to please the children, that there was in his playing a strain of sadness and that he spoke of great suffering during the war and of bloody foot-prints in the snow—he probably meant during the march of his regiment to Boston the latter part of 1775.

He was descended from Deacon Paul Peck who came to Boston in the ship "Defense" in 1635, and to Hartford in 1639, where he settled, lived and died.

Deacon Peck was one of the original settlers of Hartford in 1639, having accompanied the Rev. Thos. Hooker, the eminent Divine, statesman and author of the Connecticut Constitution, upon which the Constitution of the United States was patterned, as presented by Judge Olive Ellsworth of Connecticut at the constitutional convention.

Deacon Paul Peck was Deacon in Mr. Hooker's Church and in the original allotments of land in Hartford he was given that plot of land on which is now located the State Supreme Court and Library, one of the finest buildings in New England. The Peck family are also lineal descendants of this same Thomas Hooker, founder of Hartford, Theologian and Statesman.

At the end of warring and home guarding, our pioneer built him a house, and thither brought his bride, Anna Scovell. The site of the house was ideal under the circumstances, a brook fed by living springs flowing through the farm.

An unquenchable well of water was covered in at the back of the main building, while the hills and moderate sized mountains stretched away in the distance, "lending enchantment to the view," and suggesting to the Pecks, the name of "Blue Hills" for their loved and lovely home.

The first picture of the homestead here given does not show one-third of the buildings on the premises, at present, but only the earliest one before additions were made. These were necessitated by an increasing family, there being nine children in ten years, none of whom died in childhood. The mother, however, was taken from them by a tragic accident, having been fatally kicked by a horse. Although comparatively a young man (forty-one), her devoted husband never married again.

An unmarried sister of the father, Desire Peck, brought up the children. We may imagine she had her hands full at times, although each child was trained to helpful tasks almost as soon as out of the cradle.

In order to shelter the busy ones from extreme weather, all exposed spots were roofed in, from the unquenchable well with its key-position, to the remotest pig-pen.

There is a reduced facsimile given here of the commission as Captain, extended to Amos Peck, Jr., by Governor Oliver Wolcott, the Captain General and Commander-in-Chief in America and over the State of Connecticut. Subsequent to the Revolution, there are other commissions of Ensign and Lieutenant which do not appear here.

He had a brother, Norman Peck, who was a sea Captain in the Merchant Marine, who left issue, and another brother, Matthew Peck, who traded in the Northwest. Norman Peck was a man of considerable substance and settled and died in Berlin, Conn.

Two sons of Amos Peck, Jr., namely, Amos III, and William Peck were sea Captains in the Merchant Marine, but left no issue. Another son, Matthew Peck II, fought through the Civil War in the Tenth Cavalry.

He answered to the first call of arms at the breaking out of the Rebellion. Having served three months, he followed that by enlisting in the Tenth Connecticut Cavalry, to serve three years (or the war) in the Division with Robert L. Schenck.

In the small action at Cross Keys, while scouting, he was ambushed, and his horse having broken its bit, ran wild, brought up in a swamp and became mired. A fire arm was put to Mr. Peck's head while helpless there, and he was taken prisoner.

We next hear of him at Belle Isle, where the prisoners of war were kept. This Belle Isle was an island of sand in the York River.

The Executive Mansion was not far away and the prisoners could hear the sound of revelry there. As a part of the entertainment, Davis and his guests would come to the water's edge and toss pieces of food to the starving, half-naked Yanks. Our trooper had very long arms and was exceedingly quick and always got his share of the food, so he survived.

Inside of the main door to the house stood a tall clock, a specimen of that New England ingenuity which was so wonderfully developed in subsequent years, for its works were made of wood, and it was said that Seth Thomas made the first examples of such clocks by whittling the works out with a jackknife.

At a certain time every night the head of the family would wind the clock, which was a signal for everybody to take their tallow candle in its tin candle-stick, and troop off to bed.

In the same room with the clock stood the Captain's writing desk, which, like the clock, was unvarnished, and therein he kept his papers, for he had a building business.

His barns stood back from the main road and were a sufficient distance apart to protect them from fire from the other buildings.

It was the same with the carriage-shelter, a building on the other side of the highway, which was a haven for vehicles caught in a storm.

The days of the most abundant hospitality were when the Captain's son, Norris, presided on his porch that faced the turnpike running past the house.

This same Norris carried on a business between North and South until the breaking out of the Civil War, when the South repudiated their debts to the North and left Mr. Peck in reduced circumstances.

Even then he maintained the habits of entertaining that he had acquired in the South and would let none go hungry from his door.

Among his papers is an appointment as Corporal, dated September 1, 1817, but beyond this we have no military record of his.

The road that ran before the home place lay parallel to the Stage Coach Route between New Haven and Hartford, about four miles west of that important thoroughfare.

Driving on the highway north, about a quarter of a mile, brings us to a crossroad and the little New England schoolhouse, the scene of much of the social, religious and political activity of the sparsely-settled neighborhood.

It is about four miles east of the crossroads to the Old Berlin Coaching Tavern which was a lively place before the coming of the railroad. So many retired ministers came to reside beneath the arching elms of Berlin Street that the facetious ones of the neighborhood called the place, "Saints' Rest."

Then there were the Goodrich families with their publishing houses in Boston, where they put forth their serious writings, as well as Mother Goose's Melodies, that one-time joy of childhood.

There was also born in Berlin, the eminent female educator, Mrs. Emma Hart Willard, founder of Troy Seminary. She was related to the Pecks, and during visits to her old home, she gave private instructions to Elizabeth Hibbard Peck, eldest daughter of Norris Peck, who also attended Berlin Academy.

Mrs. Willard, while crossing the Atlantic, wrote the words of the song, "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep."

Here I may tell a little story about Amos Peck III, when a child. It was at a time when the Stork was expected, and it was deemed expedient that young Amos should visit his aunt, who lived in Berlin Village. So he was driven over in a buggy about four miles, the road crossing a number of big wooden bridges, spooky places.

Upon arrival, he was turned loose, after a hearty welcome. Finally, however, during the morning, after some time had elapsed, he returned to his aunt and told her he thought he would go home. "You can't," she re-

plied, "The buggy has gone, besides there are devils under those dark bridges, and they will surely catch you."

Late that afternoon the child appeared home, having walked the whole distance, "And," he concluded, "There were no devils under those bridges, because I looked under every single one, and there were none there," showing the spirit of the third Amos Peck.

A VISION

By the field of war I stood,
That battle meadow we all have visited,
Whether with fearful fancy or haunting hope,
Stark silence after the din
Hung over the haunted vale.
Suddenly out of the gloom
Peace came toward me, clothed as a woman
With mantle of white, and on her feet
Gray sandals.
"Wondrous deity," said I, "you come late
And your hands are bleeding."
"Aye," she answered, in a voice wondrously gentle,
"But where each drop of blood mellows the earth,
A citadel shall rise,
And for the tears that I have wept
Laughter shall be born, clear-eyed."
And I noted that for all the bleeding of her hands
And the tears that stood in her soft eyes,
Her mantle was spotless white.

SYDNEY KING RUSSELL.

PEACE—1918

I.

Cease firing!—out of chaos
Came the call,
More imperious than the cannon's threat,
Shaming to a whisper the shrapnel's blatant boast,
The mandate of Order
The years had waited for,
Like some uneasy giant
Nursing a score of festering wounds,
The battlefield slowly sank into sleep.

II.

Such a hush came
As seemed in its Infinity
To drown all,
A silence that was revelation itself,
An answer to each prayer,
Benedicite for every curse,
Balm for every wound.

III.

And now the silence woke to song,
Throbbing, quivering song,
How marvelous the first sweet time
The lark waited not for the embrace of evening
But lifted his orison joyously,
Full throated,
To the tremulous morning.

IV.

Dawn came on tiptoe,
Timidly,
The memory of searing days still fresh,
Fearful of punishment,
Supplicating mercy,
Wondering at the jubilation of the birds,
The untainted freshness of the air;
While in the hills and valleys
Unseen buds of peace
Were opening slowly,
Silently,
To the new sun.

SYDNEY KING RUSSELL.



THE ONE-DAY WOODEN CLOCK THAT STOOD IN
THE OLD PECK HOMESTEAD



DESK USED BY CAPTAIN AMOS PECK, JR., THE ANCESTOR



EARLIEST STRUCTURE AT BLUE HILLS



INTERIOR—HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS AND THE DUTCH OVEN WHICH HELD HOT DISHES FOR THE
NEW ENGLAND THANKSGIVING DINNER

OLIVER WOLCOTT, Esquire.

Captain General and Commander in Chief in and over the State of CONN.
in MARCH.

To Amos Peck, Jr.

Genl. G. BASSING.

Y^{ou} being by the General Assembly of this State appointed
reposing special Trust and Confidence in your Ability, Care and good Conduct, I DO
by Virtue of the Laws of this State, so then, enabling, appoint and empower you to
take the said _____ into your Command and Charge as their
and diligently to discharge that Office and Trust, governing your inferior Officers and
Soldiers in the Use of the Arms, according to the Rules and Discipline of War establish-
ed and established by the Laws of this State, and to be put in Execution and Governed
and commanding them to obey you as _____ and you are to observe all
such Orders and Directions as from _____ and you shall receive, either from me or
from other your superior Officers, in Pursuant to the Commission hereby issued to you.

Given under my Hand, and the Seal of the said State, at _____
the _____ Day of _____ 1777.
By His Excellency's Command, _____ Secretary.

Oliver Wolcott.

COMMISSION AS CAPTAIN ISSUED TO AMOS PECK, JR.



JABEZ LANGDON, (1777-1858) FATHER OF ELIZABETH
LANGDON PECK



AMY BRONSON, (1785-1858) WIFE OF JABEZ LANGDON
AND MOTHER OF ELIZABETH LANGDON PECK



GENERAL VIEW OF HOMESTEAD



NORRIS PECK, (1795-1869) SON OF AMOS PECK, AND
FATHER OF ELIZABETH PECK RUSSELL.



ELIZABETH EDWARDS LANGDON, (1804-1900) WIFE OF
NORRIS PECK AND MOTHER OF ELIZABETH PECK RUSSELL



ELIZABETH PECK RUSSELL, (1824-1904) DAUGHTER OF
NORRIS PECK AND ELIZABETH EDWARDS LANGDON



MATTHEW PECK, (1839-) SON OF NORRIS PECK,
DECORATED WITH INSIGNIA OF G. A. R.



HOME OF THE HON. FRANK L. WILCOX, BERLIN, CONN.



HON. FRANK L. WILCOX, SON OF ANNA PECK
WILCOX, IN UNIFORM OF MAJOR COMMANDER,
GOVERNOR'S FOOT GUARD OF CONNECTICUT



FREDERICK PECK WILCOX, SON OF MARY PECK
WILCOX, WHO WHEN BARELY OUT OF COLLEGE
RESTORED HIS FATHER'S SHATTERED FORTUNE



RESIDENCE OF W.M. HENRY RUSSELL, LOS ANGELES, CAL.



WILLIAM HENRY RUSSELL, SON OF ELIZABETH PECK
RUSSELL, WEARING ACADEMICALS OF OXFORD UNDER-
GRADUATE



HENRY EMANUEL RUSSELL, SON OF WM. H. AND
GRANDSON OF ELIZABETH PECK RUSSELL, IN UNI-
FORM OF CAPTAIN AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY
FORCES



SYDNEY KING RUSSELL, SON OF WM. H. AND
GRANDSON OF ELIZABETH PECK RUSSELL, IN
UNIFORM OF PREPARATORY FORCE



EVERET PECK UPSON, SON OF ALICE PECK UPSON, IN
UNIFORM OF CAPTAIN OF THE U. S. ARMY



DONALD RUSSELL HOOKER, M.A., M.D., GRANDSON OF ELIZABETH PECK RUSSELL



AMY LANGDON PECK, GRAND-DAUGHTER OF JABEZ LANG-
DON PECK, IN GRADUATION UNIFORM OF CONNECTICUT
COLLEGE



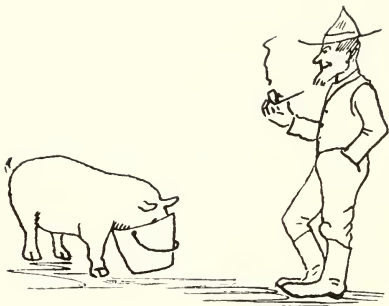
BLAKESLEE BARNES, SON OF BLAKESLEE AND MARGARETA
PECK BARNES, IN UNIFORM OF LEIPZIG (GERMANY)
FENCING CLUB



PHOEBE INESON, GREAT, GREAT, GRAND-DAUGHTER OF AMOS PECK, JR., "A LATE ARRIVAL"



"WAR:" SKETCH BY CAPTAIN HENRY E. RUSSELL,
WHO WAS AT THE FRONT OVERSEAS



"PEACE:" SKETCH BY CAPTAIN HENRY E. RUSSELL

JUN 26 '23

