



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Descendent of Knobbe Family Presents \$1,000 Donation to Hazelwood's Historic Preservation Commission

Hazelwood, Mo., (April 19, 2010) – Stan Busken of Liberty, Mo., visited the City of Hazelwood recently to present the Historic Preservation Commission with a \$1,000 donation to be used toward the acquisition of display materials to show photos of the Knobbe family and his ancestors. He presented the check in front of The Knobbe House, a historic home in Hazelwood's Brookes Park, which was built by his great-great grandfather John Bernard Henke who was a local German farmer.

About a year ago, Busken was in Florissant for a family funeral and toured The Knobbe House which was newly renovated by the City of Hazelwood. He was pleased with how everything looked, but he noticed there weren't very many photographs of the Knobbe family and his ancestors. "Pictures always tell a story," Busken said.

So he set out on a mission to find more photographs, which occupied much of his time last year. With a long-time interest in genealogy, Busken, an American Airlines retiree, began to seek other descendants.

Since his grandmother was born in The Knobbe House back in 1891, Busken began researching her side of the family. He tracked down Joseph and Barbara Knobbe, discovering in the process that they lived just 40 minutes away from Liberty. Joseph is the grandson of Joseph S. Knobbe, Sr. He and his wife were instrumental in having the home preserved in 1995 and moved to Brookes Park from Dunn Road.

After several meetings with Joseph and their cousin, Mel Roettger, Busken was able to make several family connections that led him to finding photos of the 12 children that had lived in the home. During his search, he came across a family newsletter published by another cousin, Jean Henke, proving to be a strong source of information.

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Descendent of Knobbe Family Makes Donation, Add One

“Her research and family photos were a great help to me in putting the pieces of the puzzle together,” added Busken. Of the 12 Knobbe/Henke children, 10 were married at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Florissant. He was able to obtain all their wedding photos, dating back to 1901.

“One interesting story I was able to uncover during my research is that two step-sisters, who were also first cousins, married on the same day at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Florissant. And, it wasn’t a double wedding as you would normally think,” said Busken. “One of them was married at 8 a.m. and the other at 10 a.m. on April 30, 1901. Both of them wore the same wedding dress, but the photos show a slight variation. Angelia Margaret Henke wore a bow on the belt and Katherine Angela Knobbe didn’t.”

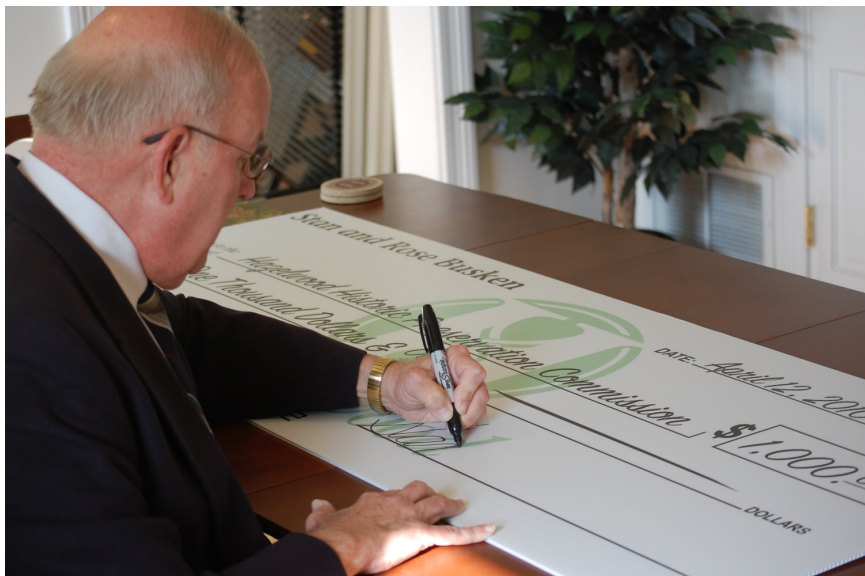
The reason for the different last names involves a story of a blended family at The Knobbe House. In 1877, Joseph Steven Knobbe, Sr., age 19, left Germany to seek new opportunities in America. He eventually found work as a laborer on the farm of John Bernard and Anna Margaret Henke, owners of The Knobbe House. While he lived there, Knobbe fell in love with Henke’s daughter Anna Maria. They were married on April 29, 1879, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Florissant and had six living children. Anna Maria later died at the age 41. Her brother, Henry Bernard Henke, preceded her in death at age 34 due to a fallen tree accident. His widow, Maria Anna Henke, became Knobbe’s second wife and her five children joined them. This increased the number of children to 11. Knobbe and Maria Anna Henke had one son together, making it a total of 12 children.

Due to hard work and smart decision making, Knobbe became the owner of 300+ acres of rich fertile farm land in St. Louis County in less than 20 years after coming to America. All of the Knobbe/Henke children attended Sacred Heart School, walking three miles to and from school daily. Knobbe hauled wood and coal to the local schools to heat them during the winter months. In addition to being an active member of Sacred Heart Church, he was a member of the Catholic Central Union (Verein) of America, the first nationwide association of Catholic Men’s societies in the United States. Knobbe was a stockholder of the Citizen’s Bank of Florissant, and served as Director from 1913-1920. He passed away on October 7, 1934. Both he and Maria Anna Knobbe are buried in the Sacred Heart Cemetery on Graham Road.

The St. Louis Historical Building Commission is planning to present the 2010 Adaptive Reuse Award to The Knobbe House at the May 11 St. Louis County Council meeting. The presentation will take place before the meeting begins at the St. Louis County Government Center, 41 South Central in Clayton. This award is being given to the City of Hazelwood for saving an old building and giving it new life again with a useful purpose.

The Knobbe House in Brookes Park is available for meetings, rentals and social events. For information on how to make reservations, contact Dave Thomasson at (314) 513-5080 or visit the City of Hazelwood’s website at www.hazelwoodmo.org.

PHOTO CAPTIONS



Signing his check for the \$1,000 donation – Stan Busken, the great-great-grandson of John Bernard Henke who built The Knobbe House, generously donated \$1,000 to the Hazelwood Historic Preservation Commission for the purpose of acquiring display materials to show more photos of the Knobbe family and his ancestors.



Stan Busken Donates \$1,000 to the Hazelwood Historic Preservation Commission. The money will be used to acquire display materials for showing more photos of the Knobbe Family and his ancestors. *Pictured left to right:* Mayor Matthew Robinson of Hazelwood; Dorothy Hitt, chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission; Carole Rogers, co-chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission; and Stan Busken, the great-great-grandson of John Bernard Henke who built The Knobbe House.