

**PIONEERS OF AHNAPÉE**  
**(ALGOMA, WISCONSIN)**

**JOHANN FRIEDRICH HEUER (1808-1872),  
HIS ANCESTORS, DESCENDANTS,  
AND RELATED FAMILIES**



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Researched and Authored by:

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Diane Barbara Heuer Piette  
Martin Frederick Heuer**

“A People That Take No Pride in the Noble Achievements of  
Remote Ancestors Will Never Achieve Anything Worthy to be  
Remembered with Pride by Remote Generations” – Macaulay.

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Printed in the United States of America by Algoma Printing, Inc. Algoma, Wisconsin.

## DEDICATION

The authors dedicate this book to celebrate the loving memory of **David Arnold Heuer**, a great-great-grandson of the progenitor, Johann Friedrich Heuer, rather than mourn his loss. He was a fifth generation American Heuer.

David's vision and organizational skills formed the framework for the book. The entire book was developed from his original outline. His inspiration was instrumental in the ideation and completion of this history.

This book is also dedicated to all the Heuer ancestors and their descendants that have gone before us and to our living Heuer relatives and their families whom we have come to know since this book was started.

***YOUR NAME***

*You got it from your father  
It was all he had to give  
So it's yours to use and cherish  
For as long as you may live.  
If you lose the watch he  
gave you,  
It can always be replaced  
But a black mark on your  
name, Son,  
Can never be erased.*

*It was clean the day you took it  
And a worthy name to bear  
When he got it from his father,  
There was no dishonor there.  
So make sure you guard  
it wisely,  
After all is said and done  
You'll be glad the name  
is spotless  
When you give it to  
your son.*

***Author Unknown***

This poem was found pasted on the back cover of Orland Fred Heuer's scrapbook. Orland was a great-grandson of Johann Friedrich Heuer. The author and date are unknown; however, it expresses how he must have felt about names.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With over 6,100 individual names of our Heuer ancestors, descendants, and related families, it is not difficult to imagine how much effort has gone into the development of this book. Hundreds of people were interviewed and many provided some wonderful personal information to be included in this family history.

The writing of this book – covering ground well trodden by scholars of the present, as well as previous generations – was greatly enhanced by the benefit of their works, which are listed in the bibliography. We were also fortunate enough to draw upon the advice of a number of people, whose suggestions concerning the lines of research to pursue were a major contribution to this book.

This book would not have been possible without the dedicated research of Gertrude Mayme Zimmerman Heuer. As a former librarian, Gertrude had the necessary background and expertise to dig information out of the old church records that had been copied by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Countless hours were spent reading, copying, and evaluating the old German script in microfilmed records as she searched for birth, baptismal, marriage, and death entries for all the ancestors who lived in Prussia. It was a continual struggle for her to translate the script of the old records, and only after learning the handwritten format in which they were transcribed, could they be deciphered. As families moved from one location to another, she traced their movements. This was methodically done by ordering dozens of microfilms through the LDS Family History Library and searching through thousands of entries to find the appropriate ones. With so many similar names, it was a difficult task to ensure that proper statistics matched the correct person. We applaud her painstaking efforts, which made this particular family history much more complete.

To all who cheerfully returned the completed Family History Questionnaires with quick return, thank you. Your input provided the basis for further research. We made many friends and renewed old acquaintances as we slowly processed and verified all data to write this Heuer family history. A special gratitude to those of you who were re-contacted by more than one researcher for the same information. We apologize for any inconvenience we may have caused with our seemingly haphazard approach to acquiring data. Your patience was truly appreciated.

We acknowledge all the help and kindness provided by the staff at the following public libraries in Wisconsin: Algoma, Appleton, Brown County, Door County, Eagle River, Kenosha, Kewaunee, Lake Geneva, Manitowoc, Menasha, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Portage County, Sheboygan, Two Rivers, Watertown, and West Allis. Public libraries in Florida included: Lake Worth, Leesburg, Orange County, and Tampa. Other libraries throughout the country where research was conducted included: Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Wisconsin; Huntsville Public Library, Huntsville, Alabama; Napa City Library, Napa City, California; Carnegie Public Library, Ironwood, Michigan; and Salt Lake City Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; the Latter-day Saints Family History Centers; and the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Certain people at libraries made extra efforts to help us find the exact information needed, and to those people, we owe a special gratitude.

Our thanks go to Marilyn Mueller, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, and her staff members Janet Wolf and Germaine Bertrand for their guidance and assistance during the research of vital statistics and property records. Kewaunee County Historical Society volunteers: Jim Liniak, Tom Schuller, George Miller, and Sandy Van Lieshout assisted immeasurably in cheerfully providing historical data and photographs.

A special thanks to Rita Mae Prokash Heuer for the countless hours spent reading and editing revision after revision and for her advice, ideas, and for her infinite patience during the writing of this book.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to Ronald James Heuer, son of Martin and Rita Heuer, who completed the re-formatting of the text for publication. He also created most of the maps and related images. In addition, he scanned, digitally enhanced, and created captions for all of the photographs, maps, and images and inserted them into the text.

We gratefully appreciate the final editing of Suzanne Emelyn Heuer Vlach who kindly read the proofs and made vital critical suggestions at the manuscript stage.

We want to acknowledge the maps provided by Ronald (Ron) Henry Heuer.

Thanks to researchers including: Gail Moreau and Dolores Bussler from Western Wayne County Genealogical Society, Livonia, Michigan, and Eileen Zimmerman Slaby, a sister of Gertrude Zimmerman Heuer, who gathered information on the Heuer family several years before this book was started. Eileen's handwritten notes with genealogical charts greatly assisted with the development of the Heuer book.

Thank you to those who graciously offered to go a step further and help in any way possible, be it the loan of treasured pictures, a roll of stamps, or a box of envelopes.

Special gratitude is extended to Hans Seebohm who assisted in the translations of the old German hand-scripted records. Since he was educated in Germany before WWII, he had the necessary training and knowledge to accurately interpret old church records. Living in Orlando, he graciously met many times with Gertude Mayme Zimmerman Heuer to study the documents.

Recognition goes to the following benevolent people who provided pictures and information for this book: Fama Stuebs Baxstrom, Judith Jacobosky Bolton, Mabel Hoffmann Braem, LeRoy Boelke, Ruth Toebe Fix, Nancy Stuebs Hemp, Jean

Qualman Holdorf, Janet Bowker Holm, Mae and Maurice Hundley, Alfred John (Jack) Koralewsky, Margaret Zimmerman Kramer, Viola Bathke Lawrenz, Gloria Stuebs Leverett, Terry Lee Marquardt, Ernest Mattson, Regina Stuebs Minkey, Reverend John and Phyllis Neugebauer, David Perry, Joan Charles Pierre, Judy Anderson Raether, Leon Raether, Ramona Heuer Ruhnke, Eunice Siebert, Ken and Nancy Stuebs, Shirley Zeitler Schmeling, Roger Duane and Barbara Schneider, Jean Alberta Yauger Haddix, Isla Heuer Stuth, James Tank, and Ken Wolske. Thanks also to Bernice Moede Haines, Ruth Zastrow Claflin, Paul and Lisa Rogne Emond, Ruth Kachur McNamara, Linda Stuebs Schlavensky, Barbara Baird Dembowiak Wood, Beverly Rabas Murphy, Arvilla Schiesser Harmann, Marvel Bowker Furhmann, Joyce Bowker Phlegar, Harvey and Erna Tess Schneider, Garret Roth, Einhart Braun, Lila Bathke Jeske, Carl and Ruth Micheel Madsen, Marvin and Marie Chike Schiesser, Pat Yauger Dohl, Ruth Diefenbach Yauger, Sheri Schneider Dhein, Chris and Lori Legrave Sampo, Judy Prokash Reimer, Delores Raether Paulick, Gordon Luedtke, Stephen Yauger, Dorothy Heuer Dallapiazza, Edgar Roth, and Audrey Cesar Krautkramer.

We are indebted to Mr. Frank A. Wood, owner/publisher of Tri-County Publishing Company consisting of the *Algoma Record-Herald*, the *Kewaunee Enterprise*, the *Luxemburg News*, the *Kewaunee County Midweek*, and *Sunday Chronicles*. Articles, photographs, obituaries, or any other part of the above publications used in this book are reprinted through the courtesy and permission of Mr. Wood, without limitation or reservation, for which we are grateful. In addition, we want to recognize and express our appreciation to Harold Heidmann, the previous owner/publisher of the *Algoma Record-Herald*, his father, Harry Heidmann, and all reporters and publishers before them who recorded the daily happenings in Algoma for nearly 130 years. It has become the major source of the history of the city and its people.

And finally, a special thank you to those who said in one way or another that they applauded our efforts to complete this effort. Your encouragement inspired us and provided the impetus to complete this first edition of the Heuer history.

## **The Authors**



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## FOREWORD

This book was published to provide a written history and narrative chronology for thirteen generations of Heuer families covering over 300 years. Although the common progenitor researched was Johann Friedrich Heuer, this book includes accurate information on the four generations preceding him, taking the reader back to 1700. The origination of all the Heuers discussed here was Kreis Greifenberg, Pommern, Prussia. The narration describes life in the seaside villages together with social and political conditions that prompted the immigration of the Pomeranian people and other northern Europeans in the mid-1850s. Following the travels and relocation challenges of Johann Friedrich Heuer and his wife, Catharina Sophia Ruhnke Heuer, and their seven children to America and ultimately Kewaunee County, Wisconsin in 1857, provides a prototype of experiences common to all immigrants. The researchers developed great admiration and respect for all those who made necessary decisions, which lead to our collective existence.

During initial research in 1992, it soon became apparent that very little factual information was recorded on the Heuer ancestry. Additionally, the previously compiled family history was not totally accurate, and it usually raised more questions rather than providing answers. As efforts continued to gather copies of actual historical documents, one discovery led to another, resulting in a unique personality created for each ancestor in the minds of the researchers. The realization that what was initially a simple genealogical search was evolving into a comprehensive project, resulted in the selection of talented people with the necessary skills and perseverance to devote hours, days, weeks, and years to complete the project resulting in the publication of this book.

In 1993, after a family meeting of fifth-generation Heuers in Houston, Texas, decisions were made on the breadth of the research to be done, assignments of roles and responsibilities of willing family members, and setting of target dates for completion of activities. A mission statement was written: to provide accurate, historical information of all descendants of Johann Friedrich and Catharina Sophia Ruhnke Heuer in one written document for current and future descendants so anyone may review his/her ancestry; may conduct ongoing documentation of future generations of Heuer, Bergin, Gericke, Zastrow, and Raether families; and may be a resource for geographically diverse Johann Heuer descendants that includes a precise history of the area of Wisconsin where family roots were planted when pioneer immigrant families sought new lives and freedom in America.

This book goes beyond genealogy, usually defined as a history of the ancestry of a person or family; a pedigree or lineage. It also includes details of individuals' lives in each family: what they did, where they lived, how they survived and excelled, and how they coped with the ever-changing world that confronted them. The chronologies of those who have died and of the older family members are at – or nearing – completion, while the stories of the young are being created with each passing day. Many readers may imagine themselves in the context and environment of their ancestors and understand that while they lived, they knew nothing of the future that would bring the modern conveniences that are enjoyed today. Other readers may not, for whatever reason! They will view our ancestors as poor, oppressed, unsophisticated people without a voice. To do so is a disservice to pioneers who were progressive, intelligent, and daring so their descendants could live a better life – a dream that came true for most of the immigrants.

Chapter One is a brief review of the evolution of the tribes of northern Europe who eventually became united and formed the nation known as Prussia. This historical summary leads to the conclusion that descendants of people of these Germanic tribes may not be able to determine their ancient ancestry. The history of Prussia section, especially the 1600s to the 1800s, summarizes the many events that affected the lives of our ancestors.

Chapter Two begins the Heuer genealogy and history. It reconstructs relocations of related families from 1707 to the emigration of Johann Friedrich Heuer and his family of seven children. Included are descriptions of the villages, churches, their homes, and lifestyles.

Chapter Three recounts the emigration of the Johann Friedrich Heuer family to America and the primitive conditions they encountered when they arrived in Wisconsin to settle. A history of the Wolf River in Kewaunee County, and its evolution to Ahnepee, Ahnapee, and Algoma provides a backdrop for the experiences of the immigrants.

Chapter Four details the history of the seven children of Johann Friedrich and Catharina Sophia Ruhnke Heuer and lays the foundation for the lives of their descendants. Included is historical information concerning events that influenced and changed their lives in the small towns and townships that comprise Kewaunee County, Wisconsin. Descriptions of land acquisitions and transactions are thoroughly detailed to give the reader an exact, complete reference to the area.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four contain deliberate redundancies of family information for two reasons. First, the repetitive use of same first names created the necessity to re-identify each person by full names as they were discussed; confusion is inevitable, but without the redundancies, tracking individuals of various families would be very difficult. Second, the deliberate redundancy in Chapter Four precludes Heuer family descendants from having to recreate family histories of the seven children of Johann and Catharina as they follow their specific lineage.

Chapters Five through Ten trace the descendants and relationships of all members of the Johann Friedrich Heuer family through nine generations. Throughout these chapters are the historical sketches of individuals and the reader will notice that

some of the historical sketches are short while others are longer. Keep in mind that the length of the sketch should not be misconstrued as a measure of success of any person, rather it is correlated to the availability of information from published sources or from the family itself. Some families provided extensive biographies and others chose not to do so. In any case, the cutoff for data inclusion was 31 December 2000.

Appendices contain information on subjects that are important but not easily inserted elsewhere. Appendix A, for example, has more information on how this history was developed, researched, and written. Serious researchers may find it useful.

Every effort has been made to present accurate and verified information in this history. However, some of the vital statistics were provided directly by family and relatives, and this data was not verified, especially for living descendants. Because of the sheer size of this family tree, there is no doubt that errors of both omission and recording exist. For family members affected, we apologize for any errors and request that you let us know so they can be corrected.

If “a picture is worth a thousand words,” then the absence of them in this book is its greatest shortcoming. Some people graciously loaned photographs from personal archives and waited patiently as we processed them. Some photos were reprocessed two and three times as technology changed. Since photographs provide a priceless bridge for a “human” connection between the written chronology and a person’s life, we endeavored to make the best use of any and all visuals provided. Those who sent photographs have honored themselves and their ancestors by bringing them back to life so they may continue to live on these pages and be seen by future generations.

We hope you enjoy this history of our mutual family. We have no doubt that most of you, if not all, will have a better understanding of who you are, where you came from, and an appreciation for the foresight, wisdom, and personal sacrifices of our ancestors who gave us the opportunity to be born in the United States of America.

## **The Authors and Editors**