

Family Roots

by
Karen Zach

Since my other new grandson didn't arrive in time for me to brag about him this month, I needed another subject and while I was cleaning in my clown room, one naturally fell into my lap (not a clown, a subject) when I moved my large portable file.

Actually, I've probably written about this topic once or twice, but it's a well-deserving subject; therefore, here goes again! Quite awhile back, I started an interest in collecting information on immigrants (pre-1900) arriving into our county.

My dream is to either (1) create a Montgomery County home page on the Internet with these folks as the main topic in a searchable database or (2) publish it in hardback form — any of you readers have extra money to fund the project, be my guest!

Until then, let me highlight a few of the ones I think more interesting so that you can see why I'm so mesmerized by these men and women who left their homelands to come to our own Montgomery County.

William "Dcaux" Tilney (one of my favorites) was born in Kirby, Breadon, near Norwich, England on July 7, 1841. While in his birth country, he joined His Majesty's Army and fought in Calcutta, India. He got his education at Oxford.

One wonders why he chose to leave England and why he decided to come to Montgomery County. But, it's good he did as his mark on our history was sure made.

Tilney practiced as a doctor for 45 years here. His professionalism was well-known and when he arrived here in 1865, his doctoring was done by horseback visiting his patients. One would wonder if he was real cracked-up on that part of practice since he was one of the first in the area to purchase an automobile.

Wickham, who died two years before her husband. His death occurred on Oct. 11, 1925.

He fathered four children, one of whom, "Deak" was quite a colorful Montgomery County citizen in his own right. Deak likely inherited his sense of humor from his father, as Deak's real name was Arthur (named for an English uncle) Centennial Tilney, the middle name coming from being born in 1876, our nation's 100th birthday.

When 13 years old, Deak lost his leg due to a snake bite. His father performed the operation on their kitchen table. The good doctor constructed a tricycle so Deak could get around to do his chores.

On Deak's 16th birthday, Dr. Tilney gave his son a real bicycle. About this time, Deak fashioned himself a peg leg so that he could ride his bike. The bicycle became his joy as well as a moneymaker (he became an excellent bicycle repairman as bicycling was quite the sport in the latter part of the 19th century).

Deak bet and won bicycle races many times. Dr. Tilney encouraged Deak to become a bookkeeper, but Deak was expelled from college (lack of interest, wacky sense of humor). In 1902, the father again took the life of his son into his hand when his housekeeper made a trip back home to Tompkinsville, Ky.

The doctor encouraged her to have eligible young women write Deak. One, Minnie Walden (a doctor's daughter and a schoolteacher) made quite an impression on the Tilneys and when the two met, it was love at first sight.

Four of Dr. Tilney's six grandchildren belonged to Deak and Minnie. So, as you see, not only the immigrant but his children as well were an interesting part of Montgomery County history.

Dr. Tilney was never satisfied with just his Oxford education and was continually advancing in his profession, studying medicine at the Louisville Medical College and taking courses in Indianapolis.

Twice widowed, he married first Belle Brackett who died March 1, 1895, then Josephine

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