



The Egg Crate



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Hello

Well, after almost a year, I am back with a much overdue newsletter. I want to thank Debbie for finally deciding to join me in the creation of the Egg Crate. In the past she has been a client contributor working behind the scenes diligently editing and contributing. Debbie, you're the best! Debbie and I would like to focus a part this newsletter on a very special individual who has been, perhaps, misunderstood or even vilified for the past 56 years. Even I have accepted the accusations against him without proper investigation until I began to delve into his life and see aspects that I never knew existed.

Bob Heskett's Past and Present

Sixty Years Ago – July 22, 1951

by Debbie Scott

Not long ago, I had the distinct pleasure and good fortune to meet three people who have not been heard from or featured in the little that has been written about Bob Heskett, but who were (and are) both important and fascinating parts of his life. Two of these people are sisters, and their story will soon be the subject of a book being written by one of them. The third person is a member of Betty's (and Bob's) own family. Where have these wonderful folks been? Well, I met them in Northern California.



Bob Heskett, appx 1930 – Posing with the cougar shot on the Chimacum farm.

It Began with An E-Mail

As most of Betty's fans know, her first husband, Robert ("Bob") Heskett, was killed in July of 1951, in a skirmish of some kind, while he was living and working in Oakland, California. Several versions of the fight which resulted in Bob's death have been discussed in our Forum. Members found and shared newspaper articles which verified that Bob had been fatally stabbed while defending a "lady friend" from her abusive ex-husband. Since I was living in Northern California, I decided to attempt to locate records from Oakland which might shed some light on what had become of Bob's

attacker, Thomas Blake. I couldn't find any criminal records, however - had Thomas Blake been prosecuted? Did he plead self-defense and was released? After all, Bob had wielded a hatchet at Blake, and had landed at least one blow, wounding him on the forearm. A younger - and perhaps stronger - Blake then stabbed Bob squarely in the chest, hitting his heart. He fell down a flight of stairs, and died. So what happened afterward? Was Thomas Blake put in jail? I wondered if he might still be alive. It was conceivable; he would be in his 80's and perhaps was still in the Oakland area.

But Thomas Blake is a pretty common name, and I didn't get very far trying to locate him. Then, one day I received an e-mail that changed everything. One of Thomas Blake's daughters wrote, and wanted all the FOBM fans to know the truth of what had happened on that warm night in July, 1951. She and her younger sister knew Bob Heskett, loved him, and - unfortunately - were witnesses to the fight that ended his life. Now using the name "Rose," Thomas Blake's daughter assured me that all she wanted to do was "get the truth out about Bob Heskett."

After several e-mails back and forth, we arranged to meet in Northern California, where Rose's younger sister, Peg, still lived. In the weeks leading up to the meeting, Bob and Betty's grandson, Darsie Evans, also made arrangements to meet the Blake daughters. They wanted to tell him about his grandfather, and he wanted to hear everything they had to say.

Bob Hoped to be a Farmer - Again
Rose and Peg Blake are simply lovely people, and it was clear from the moment we all met that they wanted nothing more than to clear up any ambiguity about Bob Heskett. In fact, as soon as we were settled, Peg leaned over the table and looked Darsie



Robert Eugene Heskett U.S.M.C. (1918)

squarely in the eye and said, "Your grandfather was a wonderful man. He was our hero!" You see, Bob and their mother, Thelma, were planning to marry. After years of abuse at the hands of Thomas Blake, Thelma and her girls felt they had found their knight in shining armor in Bob. He took care of the girls, played with them, made sure they had plenty to eat and a roof over their heads. In fact, they had only recently moved into Bob's apartment. The girls had stayed with a friend of their mother's most of the time, since Thelma worked two jobs to support them. That weekend, as most weekends, Bob and Thelma had brought the girls to his apartment in the city. While Thelma worked as a waitress, Bob took the girls to the park to feed the ducks or to the local ice cream parlor for a treat. He loved the girls, and he was looking forward to truly being a father - finally - at 55 years old! Bob told Thelma he had found a cherry farm north of the city, and wanted to buy it and be a farmer (again). Thelma loved the idea of

getting the girls out of Oakland, and getting as far away from Thomas Blake as possible. Her ex-husband was a violent alcoholic, who had put her in the hospital more than once. In fact, he had recently injured her so badly that she suffered a stroke (Thelma was only 35 years old), and had been hospitalized. During that time, Bob cared for the girls, and when Thelma was released, he cared for her during her recovery.

The Sad End of a Dream

So how did it happen? What brought on that explosive fight? Thomas Blake's daughters place the blame squarely on their father's head. He came to Bob's second floor apartment that night, probably drunk, saying he wanted to see his daughters (Note: Thomas and Thelma Blake also had two older sons, but they did not live with Thelma). Maybe he'd heard that Thelma was going to marry Bob and might leave Oakland; no one knows for sure. But the girls were not there when their father arrived; they were still at their mother's friend's house in Oroville. Bob told him they weren't there, and Blake left.

Later that night, around midnight, Blake returned, demanding to see his girls, who were there by then. Bob and Thelma had picked them up for the weekend. But when Blake knocked at the door, Bob told him to come another time, it was late and the girls were asleep. Blake threatened Bob, and Bob grabbed a hatchet, warning Blake to leave. Blake apparently lunged at Heskett, and that is when Bob hit him with the hatchet. This started a scuffle which, unbeknownst to the adults, awakened the girls. They slept in a little alcove in the living room; it wasn't a big apartment. A boisterous fight was more than enough two young children. The fight was quick and loud. Thomas Blake was drunk, angry, and accustomed to

fighting. He was enraged at the hatchet wound, and just plain pissed! He pulled a knife and swiftly thrust it squarely into Bob's chest. Bob didn't have a chance; the wound was right in the heart. He fell down the flight of stairs and probably was dead before he hit the landing on the first floor. Two little girls and their mother stood at the top of the stairs, horrified. Rose says a newspaper reporter captured her standing on the steps, in her slip, looking down at Bob's lifeless body. I'd like to find that newspaper photo, though perhaps Rose has located a copy. That is how dreams end sometimes – in a dark hallway in the middle of the night.

A Little Justice for Bob

As I said at the beginning of this journey, I wondered if Thomas Blake ever was prosecuted for the stabbing which ended Robert Heskett's life. After all, a clever attorney might have pled that Blake acted in self-defense, after Bob Heskett had wounded him with the hatchet. But I am pleased to report that Rose and Peg cleared up the mystery. Their father went to prison – San Quentin! He was there for five years - which doesn't seem like much - but considering he might have gotten off altogether, it is some justice, after all. He went on to live a very odd life, marrying several more times after being released from prison. He died in 1974 in Riverside County, California.

Thelma also remarried, though she never forgot Bob Heskett. Her daughter Rose said she always thinks of her mother and Bob when she smells Atomic Fireballs candy - which they loved munching on - or Evening in Paris perfume, which her mother wore for Bob.

The Blake daughters lovingly shared these stories with Bob's grandson, Darsie – stories that no one else in the Heskett/MacDonald

family had ever heard before! And I was the ever-so-lucky fly on the wall, observing and enjoying that pseudo-reunion between Darsie and two lovely women who may have been his aunts, had things ended differently.

Please visit the Friends of Betty MacDonald web site to see a great photo of Bob's grave marker from the National Cemetery in San Bruno, California. As a World War I veteran, Bob was entitled to be buried in this beautiful National cemetery. (You can also visit the Find-A-Grave web site and leave a note and "flowers" for Bob.)

Betty and Bob's Marriage Announcement

Mrs. Darsie Campbell Bard announces the marriage of her daughter, Elizabeth Campbell Bard, to Mr. Robert Eugene Heskett, son of Mr. and Mrs. Otis Heskett, on Sunday July 10, at the home of Rev. Dr. Gowen, at 1:30 o'clock. After a short stay in Victoria, they will return to Chimacum, Wash., where they will be at home.
(The Seattle Daily Times, July 17, 1927)

(Editor's Note: Betty's full name was actually Anne Elizabeth Campbell Bard; maybe too much for the paper!)

Gammy

I want to thank Cathy Bredlau for sharing these Obituaries for Gammy with us. Cathy has been scouring the Colorado (and many other) newspapers, searching for info on the Bard family. Here are the obits she found for Gammy:

Mrs. Elizabeth Bard
Funeral services were held at 9 o'clock this morning at the home of her niece, Mrs. A. R. Peebles on Hillside Road. Rev. L. G. Reed of

the Congregational Church officiated. After the services the body was taken to Riverside, Denver for cremation. Hall Kelso were in charge of the services.
(Boulder Daily camera, Monday December 14, 1936)

From the same paper a second obit that lists her as Bessie Bard.



Headstone of Elizabeth (Gammy) Bard

Mrs. Bessie Bard, aunt of Mrs. A. Peebles died at Mrs. Peebles' home today.

She had lived with Mrs. Peebles the last six years and was a sister of Mrs. Peebles' mother, the late Mrs. Sara C. Barret. Mrs. Bard was an invalid practically all the time she lived there.

The Hall Kelso Mortuary is in charge of arrangements. The body is to be cremated at the request of the deceased.
(Boulder Daily Camera, Monday December 14, 1936)

Isn't it fascinating how the same person is listed under different first names and different obituaries? And isn't it sad that poor Gammy was "an invalid" her last years in Boulder?

Several years ago, I was given a photo of an elderly woman who the sender claimed was Gammy. I sent the picture to several of Betty's family members but received mixed responses - some said it was, some said "Fake!" ... and a few not sure. So until I can verify the photo's authenticity I won't be able to share it with you. But should it prove to be Gammy, I will place it on the web site.

Housekeeping

The other day I went to a yard sale held by a little old lady. Don't you love "old people" yard sales? They often don't know what they are selling. I bought a handmade quilt one time for \$5 and was offered \$500 for it. (I still have it.) And for 10 cents I bought a cookbook entitled "The Progress Meatless Cookbook," dated 1911. So I thought it would be kind of fun to share a few of the household hints and recipes that are in the book. Some of these hints are strange but effective. I wonder if Sydney and Gammy used any of these methods.

Lockjaw Precaution

When your little one steps on a rusty nail or other metal that causes a wound, bathe it, and hold it for half an hour or more over a burning woolen cloth. A piece of wool may be burned over a shovel of coals, or in any other way, just so the smoke pours on the wound. *(As you wait for this old fashioned remedy to work, you can sit by the window and wait for CPS to come get your wounded child.)*

No wonder people died so young during the early part of the last century. I will share more of these "little gems" in the next newsletter. Some I remember my mother using, some are funny, and some are just plain bizarre.

If you have any home remedies that you would like to share, send them to me and I will be more than happy to include them in the newsletter. I remember my mother using mustard plasters. Betty could have made use of the one for "Blackening" the STOVE, or trimming the wicks on the oil lamps.



Come and get it!

This is a great dessert to serve cold after a meal of fried chicken and mashed potatoes, or BBQ.

Rhubarb Pie

2 pints rhubarb
1 pint sugar
1 cup water
Juice of 1 lemon
½ pint Strawberries (optional)

Peel and cut rhubarb into half-inch lengths, add ingredients and stew until tender. Bake between two crusts. Serve with whipped cream if desired. Personally, I like it cold and made with strawberries. This is also a great recipe made with Splenda™ for those of you who are diabetic or just watching your sugar/caloric intake.

Have a happy and safe summer. See you for the Fall edition. Before I go, we'd like your input on or next edition. We are undecided as to whether to have a Halloween edition or a Thanksgiving edition of the newsletter (of course the Christmas edition will be mandatory). We will let you vote on which

Fall Edition you would like to see. Just send us an email or even a Forum post and, come September, we will start on the Fall issue you voted on.

Happy 4th of July!
John & Debbie