How Lincoln Saved My Husband

The Wife of a Civil War Prisoner Remembers

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A Few Words from the Editor
With a Song in My Heart

St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, my unofficial parish for the last 10 years, has a terrific choir. In fact, the choir is one of the reasons I started going to St. Gregory.

But as much as I enjoyed the choir, I never tried to join. They rehearse on Thursday nights, and the group I sing with, the Irish Heritage Singers, rehearses on Thursdays as well. One or the other, I thought.

In 2016, the St. Gregory choir was planning a singing trip through France, from Switzerland through Lyon and Vichy; Chartres Cathedral; Mont Saint-Michel; Normandy and the D-Day beaches; Lisieux, home of St. Therese, the Little Flower; and, finally, Paris, with concerts at Sacré-Coeur and La Madeleine.

I could not resist.

After mass I swallowed hard and made my way up to the choir loft. The music director, a master of the pipe organ, was wrapping up another magnificent recessional. I waited quietly until everyone had left, introduced myself, asked to audition.

He had me read and sing through bits of a couple of scores. His wife, on the main floor, shouted her approval up to the loft.

Then I explained the situation with the Irish group. We agreed that I would come to as many church rehearsals as I could, that when I couldn't come, I would rehearse on my own and know the music on Sunday.

So I was in.

Singing with the choir is how I came to meet Ellen Peirce. Ellen sings alto. I'm a tenor. I sit behind her at rehearsals, so during breaks I heard her talk about her family history research. Eventually I ventured into these conversations, mainly to hear her stories.

My interest in family history is deep, as I had no family history. Dad's father died before I was born, Mom's father was exiled after the divorce in 1939, so no grandfathers, no grandmothers who would tell stories, few family stories at all except from the Irish cousins, and even those were mythical and sparse, more allegory than fact. I was driven to learn, to try to understand where I come from.

When I took the editor job at the Quarterly, I asked Ellen if she had any genealogy she needed to share. It was then she told me about the box of stuff, and the speech.

The Lincoln speech.

You see it on the cover, the white paper changed to gold, an old woman's memory a century ago, of 50 years before, when she was the young mother of three daughters, and her husband was prisoner in the hellhole that was Libby Prison.

The speech was covered at the time it was delivered, 12 February 1912, in the Inter Ocean, one of Chicago's great newspapers at the turn of...
The Illinois State Genealogical Society was formed in 1968 through cooperative effort and forward thinking of Illinois genealogical society representatives, who envisioned a statewide genealogical organization. The Society is a not-for-profit, nonsectarian, educational organization with the following objectives:

- To stimulate an interest in the people who contributed to the establishment and development of the State of Illinois.
- To seek, preserve, and make available information pertaining to individuals, families, and groups who lived in Illinois, recognizing the events that affected them.
- To inform people about the value of and the need for preserving family and local history for future generations.
- To encourage and support local and regional genealogical societies.

The Society is a member of the Federation of Genealogical Societies. The Quarterly Journal of the Illinois State Genealogical Society is indexed in PERSI (Periodical Source Index) and GPAI (Genealogical Periodical Annual Index).

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Editor: Richard R. Anderson  Genealogy Editor: David McDonald  
Copy editor: Open  Maps: David Jahntz

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After reading this speech, it was clear it should be part of the Lincoln record. But this is a journal of genealogy, not a history magazine.

What we have tried to do, then, is present this speech, this intimate memory of our greatest president, starting with the transcript of the speech of 12 February 1912, followed by the history and genealogy of the speaker, Martha Hascall Ten Eyck (pronounced ten IKE).

Ellen has turned out to be a research bulldog. Among other things, she found those wonderful Martha and Tenodor photos. Also, in the course of developing this story, John D. Cameron and David McDonald have been invaluable, as have the wonderful librarians at the University of Arizona Libraries, Special Collections, holder of the Tenodor Ten Eyck papers. Thank you all.

Ellen promises us an in-depth article on Martha’s husband, Tenodor. An amazing story. Look for it next spring.

Two developments of note: In this issue, we begin a series on our Illinois Bicentennial Families with a profile of Willis Hargrave of Gallatin and White Counties.

Also, Newspaper Librarian Teri Barnett of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library kicks off a new feature: columns by our ex officio board members about the institutions they represent.

Finally, as we prepare to go press on the eve of the 75th anniversary of D-Day, we remember and give thanks to our ancestors who gave the last full measure of devotion fighting for our freedom.
How Lincoln Saved My Husband:
A Civil War Prisoner’s Wife Remembers
by Martha Hascall Ten Eyck

Martha Ten Eyck delivered this speech in Chicago on February 12, 1912. Spelling and punctuation are as they appear in the original document. Note that while most records render the surname Ten Eyck as two words separated by a single space, including in a note written in the author’s own hand on the back of a photograph, this transcript preserves the spelling TenEyck, as used in the 1912 document.

A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE OF LINCOLN

It has been told of this man, whom the world delights to honor today, that one of the injunctions laid upon his attendants was that no sorrowing wife or mother seeking his aid should be refused admittance to his presence. Whether or not this was true I do not know, but, from my own experience, I must believe it. Therefore, it is a deep pleasure to add, to the chaplet of loving remembrance woven for the great Emancipator, my leaf of gratitude.

In the terrible battle of Chicamauga, said to have been one of the most bloody in history, my husband, Captain Tenodor TenEyck of the 18th U.S. Infantry, was captured by the confederate forces. It was at the close of the second day’s fighting, when, exausted by the long terrific strain, without food or sleep, that he went to drink from a stream nearby. In the dusk of smoke and nightfall, a party of the enemy was taken for his own men, and it was only when surrounded and made prisoner that he discovered the truth. Then was endured one of the most cruel of the many cruel experiences of war, one which, surely, enlists those left at home into the ranks, where “they also serve who only stand and wait,” that awful waiting for news after a battle!

It was only after a month of intense anxiety, that we were able to obtain trace of Captain TenEyck, and that we learned that he was incarcerated in Libby Prison at Richmond, Virginia. Here he was confined for many months, under conditions which have written a page of darkness into the book of history. It became evident that his strength was failing under the rpivations of that imprisonment, and, unknown to me, his cousin, Senator John TenEyck or New Jersey, and our friend, Senator Howe of Wisconsin, together, obtained for him an order of exchange, from President Lincoln. A joyful telegram informed me that I might expect his return, with the arrival of the exchange boat from Virginia. The time of happy anticipation was short, however, for we were soon informed, that when the order of exchange reached Richmond, “Captain TenEyck had been sent South, with other prisoners.” After that nothing was known for many weeks, then a bit of information would come from various sources—he himself not being permitted to write— that he was in different southern prisons. At last, definite word was brought to me, by a comrade in imprisonment, who had effected an escape.

Captain TenEyck, with a number of other Union officers, had been taken to Charleston, South Carolina, and placed under the fore of the Northern gunboats, bombarding that city. It was hoped, by the confederates, that their presence would divert the firing, But,
so well informed were the Northern officials, and so accurate the marksmanship of the gunners, that but one shell, of the hundreds thrown, touched the hospital in which the prisoners were quartered.

Immediately upon ascertaining the position of my husband I hurried to Washington and upon the day following my arrival there visited the White House. I had with me a note of introduction to the private secretary of Mr. Lincoln stating my desire for an interview with the President. This I gave to one of the clerks for presentation and while awaiting its answer observed that the large room in which I sat was filled with people evidently there with like purpose. I remember a large and gorgeously attired officer who sat beside me and questioned me, and upon learning the intention of my visit loudly advised me to return to my home and children since it would be impossible to obtain audience with the President, he himself having already waited daily for weeks for that privilege. He looked a picture of astonishment when after a few moments the secretary came to me

The Battle of Chickamauga was fought 18-20 September 1863. Capt. Ten Eyck was captured on the second day of the battle, which was a Union defeat. (Kurz & Allison engraving, "Battle of Chickamauga—Sept. 19' & 20' ca. 1890; image from Alamy.com)
and directed me to follow him. Trembling, and with a quickly beating heart, I entered the presence of the greatest American of them all. We were in the office of the President, the cabinet room, a square room, with a large table in the center, and chairs at the sides. In work which has fallen me to do, I have seen several subsequent presidents, in this same room, and then observed it, but, I was at that time conscious only of the great personality before me. Mr. Lincoln was seated, at the table, and standing, was a group of negroes, of evident intelligence and prosperity. This was a delegation from Baltimore who had just presented the beautiful, gold- mounted bible, which lay upon the table before him, a token of the gratitude they had endeavored to express, for the emancipation proclamation recently issued. The President seemed deeply moved by what had been said, and after they reverently passed out, sat for some in silence, his eyes covered by his hand. I waited until he turned and quietly, asked what he could do for me. The impression I received of him was that of deep sadness and gentleness. I explained the circumstances of Captain TenEyck’s capture and imprisonment, and my desire to obtain an order of exchange for him. “But, I gave that to Senator TenEyck and Senator Howe months ago,” said Mr. Lincoln, quickly. That he should have remembered a matter of the sort, in those times of national stress, has always seemed to me most remarkable.

I told him how the order had reached Richmond, too late, and that it was my hope to have it renewed, and, myself, take it to the lines. “That is impossible, I cannot do it,” said Mr. Lincoln. I hardly heard.

I think Mr. Lincoln saw despair in my face, for he said, suddenly, “wait!” and, drawing a large sheet of paper to him, began writing. He filled most of the page, then folded, addressed, and handed it to me. “Take that to General Hitchcock,” he said, gently; “ I think he can arrange this for you.”

Almost unable to speak my gratitude I hurried from the room. I lost no time in reaching General Hitchcock and conveying the letter to him. He proved to be an acquaintance of former years and showed me great kindness. I was desirous of retaining the letter written and signed by Abraham Lincoln which General Hitchcock read to me but he explained that it was his “orders from the President” which he must retain. I remember that it began:

“I send to you this good woman, Mrs. TenEyck,” placing me in the care of General Hitchcock and explaining how he should act to carry out my desire.

A great battle had just been fought in the South, and every method of transportation was greatly crowded, so I was obliged to wait several days in Washington, until arrangements could be made for me; much of this time I passed with a friend, Mrs. Beal of Wisconsin, at a hospital, in which she was nursing her wounded
They were Quakers, quiet and serene though in deep trouble, for they were going to the battle-field in an endeavor to find their son who was dead or wounded there.

On one occasion while I was there, there passed through the big, rough barracks-like building with its white aisles of pain, the President, on a visit to the wounded. The whole atmosphere seemed electrified, as by a breeze that blows from a mountain height.

At last I was embarked for Fortress Monroe in a rickety old boat which, tho’ leaking, was crowded to suffocation. It was night and I was too fatigued to be interested in my fellow-passengers until I saw the sad faces of an old man and woman among them. They were Quakers, quiet and serene though in deep trouble, for they were going to the battle-field in an endeavor to find their son who was dead or wounded there.

I had been provided with one of the few cabins, and also a chair, so I was able to make these dear old people comparatively comfortable during the night we passed together. We parted at the landing, when the boat reached Fortress Monroe, in the morning, and I never knew what fate held for them.

I had expected to go to a hotel at Fortress Monroe, and breakfast, but the hotel had been partially destroyed, by fire from the monitors, and was deserted. So I presented my papers at once to the proper officials at the Fort, being received with great courtesy.

I had learned that the exchange boat by which I had expected to sail, to Charleston had just departed, and would not sail again for ten days. My disappointment was extreme, but I resolved to wait, and go upon the following trip. That this was impossible however, was explained, since the Fort was crowded ready for instant action, and I was the only woman there. Besides this I could not take the papers, as they must pass through officials hands. So all I could do was to give them to the proper officer on receiving his word of honor that no delay should occur in their transmission. Then, after some refreshment, and a tour of the Fort, seeing its great guns and all the grim equipment for destruction, I returned to the boat which reached Washington on the following day, whence I journeyed home.

It was still some months, again owing to the removal of the
From a Box of Stuff, a Lincoln Connection

by Ellen Peirce

There are families who treasure and value their history and genealogy. They often pass down a family bible, filled with records of births, baptisms, deaths and burials. They display treasured pictures on gallery walls, and keep records of their history in safe deposit boxes. They organize family reunions, so that it is possible to meet family members and relatives they do not know. Often, they can list the web of their tree from memory, and know the locations where their family has taken root.

And then, there of those families who have a box of stuff. Always random, perpetually disorganized, at risk of disposal with every family member’s move or death.

My family had a box of stuff. When my parents downsized and moved, no one in the family wanted to take possession of these papers, photographs and documents, which had been stored for decades. I had occasionally looked through the papers, and felt gratitude for every ancestor who wrote a name on the back of a picture, but all of it seemed a hodgepodge to me.

And then, Ancestry.com came along.

I had read the speech that is the foundation of this article, but did not know who wrote it, or how I was connected to this woman. It seemed unimaginable to me that someone in my tree had met with Abraham Lincoln, but I am now able to document that Martha Ten Eyck is my third great-aunt.

Through research, I learned that she gave this speech at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago, on February 12, 1912, during a commemoration of the 103rd anniversary of Lincoln’s birth by the Daughters of 1812, whose fathers had fought in the War of 1812.

I am proud to be an indirect descendant of Martha Ten Eyck. Her determination and love for her husband and her country are evident in this speech. Her research and careful records allowed me to document my heritage and, like her, become a member of the Chicago Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

An inspiring story has emerged from my “box of stuff.”
Martha Hascall Ten Eyck: A Life of Courage and Determination, From the Frontier to Chicago by Ellen Peirce

Women born fifty years after the American Revolution had little power. The primary duties of women for many years in the early history of our country were to marry, bear children, keep an orderly house, and live within the limits of a definition of a good wife. Opportunities for education or leadership were few, yet Martha Hascall Ten Eyck rose to demonstrate independence, courage, a fierce love of her husband, and the fortitude to protect her family. Her patriotism and determination to help others are evident in how she met the challenges her life presented.

Like other more celebrated female leaders of her generation, she also made an impact beyond her domestic role and helped to redefine the space for women in American society. She left Upstate New York for frontier Michigan, cared for their children during her husband’s long absences, operated a boarding house to support their family, survived a bankruptcy, and was a tenacious fighter for her husband's survival and reputation. In addition, when Martha Ten Eyck saw suffering or need in her community, she made efforts to help.

Martha Hascall was born on 15 July 1826 in Mt. Morris, New York, to Wealthy Spalding Ellis and William Hascall. Her younger sister, Helen Hascall, my great-great grandmother, was born in Mt. Morris on 4 January 1831. Shortly after Helen’s birth, the family moved to Wayne County, Michigan. Michigan was still a territory at that time; it did not become a state until 1837.

Some time later, the Hascalls moved to Pontiac, Michigan, in neighboring Oakland County, which is where Tenodor Ten Eyck and the Hascall family apparently crossed paths. Tenodor married Martha’s older sister, Mary Ann, and they had a son, Thomas Huver Ten Eyck, born in April 1846. But Mary Ann died, perhaps in childbirth; extensive efforts to document the date of her death have been unsuccessful so far.

Michigan records show Tenodor and Martha married on 25 May 1847. The Ten Eycks left Pontiac soon after they married, as their first child, a daughter named Mary, was born in Watertown, Wisconsin, on 9 March 1848. On 4 February 1849, their daughter Alice arrived and on 29 April 1850, daughter Minnie Lane was born, both in Green Bay.

During these years, Tenodor pursued a variety of trades. After working in a dry goods store in Pontiac, he entered the grain trade and general merchandising in Watertown. He then became an engineer for the Fox & Wisconsin River Improvement Company for five years, moving to Green Bay, did survey work in Wisconsin and Michigan, and had charge of government land to guard against lumber thieves.

The 1860 US Census lists Tenodor Ten Eyck’s occupation as engineer, and it was at this time that he left Martha and the children for Pikes Peak in Colorado, where he established more than 30 claims as a gold miner. For most of the following decade, the Ten Eyck family would be separated for long periods of time.
While on this mining expedition, Tenodor kept a daily journal, and on 4 June 1860, he describes his departure from Green Bay on the boat Benton, headed for Oshkosh, and the land journey to the West during the Colorado Gold Rush of 1860.

The journal often refers to writing to or receiving letters from Martha. On 19 August, he wrote a letter that included “a little dust to my wife,” apparently a sample of gold. On 30 August, he stayed in camp in the afternoon because of a rainstorm and wrote letters to Martha and to his half-brother Junius. On 19 September, he writes that “Mr. Morris returned last night, we had a mail last night from the east. No letters for me what can it mean?” But on 15 October, Tenodor writes: “Went to express office and received letter from wife and the girls. Was much relieved in mind they were all well. . . . This is the first letter I’ve had since the one dated Pontiac Aug. 8.”

Martha and Tenodor and the family had little time together. With the attack on Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861, and the outbreak of the Civil War, Martha watched as her husband, now 42 years of age, enlisted in the Union army as a humble private in the Wisconsin Volunteers; he soon was commissioned as a captain of H Company in the Eighteenth Infantry Regiment in the regular Army, as his skill as an engineer and education were recognized.

In September 1863, Ten Eyck fought at the Battle of Chickamauga, and on the second day of the battle, he was taken prisoner by the Confederates.


Martha evidently was notified of her husband’s capture but did not know his whereabouts. As she says in her speech: “Then was endured one of the most cruel of the many cruel experiences of war, one which, surely, enlist[s] those left at home into the ranks, where ‘they also serve who only stand and wait,’ that awful waiting for news after a battle”\(^\text{13}\).

Tenodor had been taken to the infamous Libby Prison near Richmond. Conditions were severe, and he remained there through the winter of 1863-64, suffering from illness, which did not prevent him from assisting the men who dug a tunnel to escape. On the night of the escape, he feared that his cough would alert the Confederate guards and made the decision to stay behind.\(^\text{14}\)

News of Tenodor’s imprisonment came from an escaped fellow prisoner.\(^\text{15}\) In April of 1864, Martha left her three children behind in Wisconsin and traveled to Washington, DC, hoping to gain an audience with President Abraham Lincoln and plead for his help in gaining her husband’s release.\(^\text{16}\)

We can only speculate as to why she thought this would be a possibility. Tenodor’s cousin was Senator John Conover Ten Eyck of New Jersey, and other members of his family were prominent in politics, sports, and the arts. Did she believe she could gain an audience based on the family name? How did she fund her stay, and who took care of her children? There are many questions. But her speech details her meeting with President Lincoln, on 10 September 1864, and his reaction to her plea.

Tenodor Ten Eyck’s trials as a prisoner were not over. In 1864, as the city of Charleston, South Carolina, was repeatedly being hit by bombs launched from Union ships in the harbor, Confederate Maj. Gen. Samuel Jones attempted to protect the city’s citizens by proposing to confine 50 Union officers in a house converted to a prison at the center of the bombardment, thus putting the lives of the officers at risk. Ten Eyck was among the 50 unfortunate officers, including five brigadier generals, who were transported to Charleston. Negotiations between Union and Confederate officers to conduct a prisoner exchange proved futile, until Abraham Lincoln gave permission to arrange such an exchange, which took place on 3 August 1864.\(^\text{17}\) But poor Tenodor was not in that group. He had been transferred yet again, ultimately winding up in Columbia, South Carolina.

“It was still some months, again owing to the removal of the prisoners, before the order reached Columbia, South Carolina, and become (sic) effective,” Martha recalled in her speech. “There, in an open field, in rags, which were his only protection from the Autumn rains of many days and nights, Capt[ain] Ten Eyck heard it read. The cheers, and tears of joy with which his suffering, enfeebled comrades greeted it made one of the most sacred and touching memories of his life.”\(^\text{18}\)

Martha’s timely intervention may have saved her husband’s life. He had been imprisoned under brutal conditions at Libby Prison,\(^\text{19}\) where he suffered from dysentery; in Columbia, the Union prisoners were kept in an open field, exposed to the weather.

After his release 9 December 1864,\(^\text{20}\) Tenodor returned to Army service at camps in Ohio and Indiana, where he was an administrator under Gen. Henry B. Carrington, who would become a key figure in his life a few short years later. He served as a guard of honor to Lincoln’s bier in Columbus, Ohio,

\(^{13}\) Ten Eyck, Martha, *A Personal Reminiscence of Lincoln*, speech given to Daughters of the War of 1812, 12 February 1912, manuscript privately held by Ellen Peirce, p. 1.

\(^{14}\) Currey, *Chicago, Its History and Its Builders*, p. 611.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.


\(^{18}\) Ten Eyck, Martha. *A Personal Reminiscence of Lincoln*, p. 3.

\(^{19}\) Smith, *Give Me Eighty Men*, p. 65.

as the funeral train traveled from Washington, DC to Springfield, Illinois.\textsuperscript{21}

In March 1865, Tenodor had been brevetted (temporarily assigned) the rank of major, and after the war, he opted to stay on in the Army. He was sent west as part of an expedition to pacify the Indians in northeastern Wyoming along the Bozeman Trail, under the command of Carrington. At Fort Phil Kearny, an event known as the Fetterman Massacre would haunt Martha’s husband for the rest of his life.

Capt. William Judd Fetterman led a patrol of about 80 men to guard a timber-cutting party from the fort. Decoyed by a small band of “hostiles,” he ultimately led the patrol into an ambush by thousands of Lakota alliance warriors. Fetterman and his entire patrol were overwhelmed, slaughtered, and left gruesomely mutilated on the battlefield. Ten Eyck was in command of the party sent out to retrieve the bodies and return them to the fort.\textsuperscript{22}

When news of the massacre reached the East, it would become a national scandal, not unlike Custer’s Last Stand at Little Big Horn a decade later. From that day, 21 December 1866, blame for the massacre would be assigned to different officers, reputations would be questioned, and Ten Eyck would be accused of cowardice, drunkenness, and unprofessional conduct for not rescuing Fetterman. This, in spite of the fact of his unquestioned “gallant and meritorious services during the war.”\textsuperscript{23} He chose not to defend himself publicly from the accusations related to the Fetterman massacre.

Ten Eyck was stationed on the frontier for another year and a half before returning East. He was then briefly appointed an Indian agent by President Ulysses S. Grant, before being relieved and ordered home in August 1869. He would be honorably mustered out at the end of 1870.\textsuperscript{24} In the meantime, he settled in with Martha and the girls, who had moved to Chicago after the Civil War. Even while he was still on active service, Tenodor’s name appears in city directories beginning in 1866. But their residence at first may have been intermittent, as on 30 March 1867, Frances Ten Eyck, their fourth daughter, was born in Green Bay.\textsuperscript{25} Now over 50, and suffering from infirmities due

\begin{figure}[h]
  \centering
  \includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Tenodor_Ten_Eyck_Inscription}
  \caption{Tenodor Ten Eyck. Inscription on back of photo: "To Alice Father Christmas 1891" (photo from Papers of Tenodor Ten Eyck, 1860-1890; used by permission of the University of Arizona Libraries, Special Collections).}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} "Returns from Military Posts, Camp Thomas, Ohio, April 1865” and Daily Ohio Statesman, Columbus, Ohio, "Order of Procession," April 29, 1865, p. 1. (Ancestry.com : accessed June 5, 2019).
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Smith, Give Me Eighty Men, pp. 94-127.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Evening Star, Washington, DC, 5 January 1871, p. 1. (Newspapers.com : accessed 3 June 2019).
  \item \textsuperscript{25} “Wisconsin, Birth Index, 1820-1907,” (Ancestry.com 2000, Reel 0009, Record 000652 : accessed 3 June 2019).
\end{itemize}
to his military service, Tenodor would find only intermittent employment. To provide a family income, Martha had taken on the task of taking in boarders. In the 1870 Census, the Ten Eyck family is living at 661 Wabash Ave. with the four daughters, nine boarders, and two servants. By 1872, the city directory finds the family at 750 Michigan Ave.

The Ten Eycks moved frequently through these years. On New Year’s Day 1877, Martha and her daughters were receiving callers at their home at 1015 Wabash Ave., a custom that allowed young women of respectable families to meet eligible men for marriage. This invitation was repeated the following New Year’s at the same Wabash Avenue home. In June 1880, the family is listed as living at 2242 Wabash Ave., where they are still renting rooms to boarders. Daughter Mary is married to a former boarder, Clarence G. Sholes, and her sister Alice is married to another boarder, W.P. Campbell. Fifteen other boarders and two servants also shared that home.

Tenodor, a loyal Republican, had lost his city job after Democratic Mayor Carter Harrison was elected in 1879. Later that year, financial challenges would temporarily force him into bankruptcy. By 1885, however, he had secured another government position with the post office, working out of the old federal building downtown. The family also possibly received some support from the husbands of his daughters.

During these years, Martha once again resumed her advocacy on behalf of her husband, traveling to Washington, DC to lobby for his military retirement pay. In February 1891, Tenodor’s rank was restored following passage of a bill in both Houses of Congress. A week later he retired and was awarded his retirement pay.

With their fortunes on an upswing, Martha and Tenodor were able to purchase a fine home in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood at 5704 S. Madison Ave., (later renamed Dorchester Avenue). They lived on that street with daughters Pauline and Alice, and their husbands and children, for the rest of their lives.

In March 1890, Martha’s civic activism led to her selection as an alternate delegate representing Hyde Park for the Lady Managers of the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, held in what today is Jackson Park. In the article which describes her appointment, it was noted that Capt. Tenodor Ten Eyck “by some gross oversight or injustice . . . was not tendered his papers and having been disabled for life he was in a condition to do little or nothing for his family. The political and social world is well aware how bravely the wife of this noble soldier had to fight her way in the world, and how she spent her spare time in Washington trying to secure justice for her husband.”

Martha would go on to join the Chicago Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1892, only two years after the national society was formed, thus becoming a member of the first DAR chapter in the country. This membership was based on her ancestor Capt. Joseph Spaulding, who served in the Connecticut Militia in the Revolu-
On the Street Where She Lived
by Ellen Peirce

As I stood on the corner of 57th Street and Dorchester Avenue, in front of Martha Ten Eyck's house, I realized that I had been on that corner a few years ago. The realization came to me that my maternal grandmother's mother, Kate Chase, lived on that corner . . . so . . . that is how my grandparents met.

I can almost visualize Burt Wallace Peirce visiting his great aunt Martha, and stopping to notice the beautiful young girl, Ysobelle Chase, at her mother's house. Oddly, both Ysobelle and Burt were descended from Aquila Chase and his wife, Anne Wheeler, who lived in Newbury, Massachusetts in the 1650s. Their marriage united the offspring of two of the sons of Aquila and Anne. And, when Burt Peirce died at the age of 29, the Ten Eyck family donated the plot in Mt. Greenwood Cemetery in Chicago in which he is buried.

Now I am left to puzzle as to why this family history was never shared with me. My grandmother Ysobelle Chase Peirce Erlebach lived until I was 18 years old. My parents, and especially my father, knew of the contents of the box of family documents and photos. A completed application for the Daughters of the American Revolution, outlining our heritage, rested in that box. Beautiful photographs taken by Burt Wallace Peirce are extraordinary works of art. A handwritten copy of a war record, written by William Henry Harrison Peirce, my great grandfather, and including all the battles of the Civil War in which he fought, lies in the original envelope. Family lineages were completed by professional genealogists more than 120 years ago, and they have rested in the box for decades.

Knowing these stories has enriched me and affirmed that I am part of a long chain of ancestors, and that each of them through their experiences has shaped me in some way. I hope to pass this knowledge, and an organized file of papers and photographs, to the younger generation in our family.

“When you put your hand in a flowing stream, you touch the last that has gone before and the first of what is still to come.”
—Leonardo da Vinci

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Her husband was also descended from a Revolutionary War patriot, Abraham Ten Eyck. Her membership in the DAR allowed her and other women in this organization to have a voice in establishing a Women's Building at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.

Her contacts through the DAR with Bertha Palmer, Frances Willard, and other powerful women in Chicago Society also no doubt aided her work to establish homes for women visiting the World's Fair. As one of the officers of the Board of Lady Managers of the World's Columbian Exposition, a Woman's...
Dormitory Association was created to ensure that the many thousands of single women expected to visit the fair would have safe, secure, and affordable places to stay. It was an important cause: It was during the fair that the notorious serial killer, H.H. Holmes, the so-called Devil in the White City, would entice young women visitors and murder them in his “castle” in the Englewood neighborhood. The dormitories, built adjacent to the fair, would house 5,000 women in rooms with beds and toilets, and that would be presided over by “motherly women.” A stock company was formed to fund this project, and stock was sold for $10 a share, ensuring that stockholders would have first choice at securing rooms.³⁹

After noting that the dormitory association had finished its mission in the black, the unnamed author of a story in the Chicago Inter Ocean wrote:

“One eminent citizen, whose wife is still more eminent, said he had figured it out with great care, and the project could not be carried out for the amount of money it was proposed to raise. . . . Hereafter if any cynical son of Adam sneers at Eve’s daughters as incompetent to a public trust of a business character . . . he should be bidden to look at the final report of the Chicago Woman’s Dormitory Association.”⁴⁰

In the early minutes of the Chicago Chapter of the DAR, this motion is recorded:

Mrs. Ten Eyck introduced the following resolution: “Resolved that the D.A.R. of Illinois provide a home for helpless members of their order whom misfortune has rendered homeless.”⁴¹

The speech which is featured in this article was given on February 12, 1912, at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago, located on the northwest corner of LaSalle and Madison Streets, during a commemoration of the 103rd anniversary of Lincoln’s birth.⁴² Martha spoke to a meeting of the Daughters of 1812, as she was a “Real Daughter,” meaning her father, William Hascall, had fought in the War of 1812. The carefully typed speech, held together with a rusty straight pin and containing a note on the left margin in her hand, detailed her meeting with Abraham Lincoln and her efforts to gain her husband’s freedom from Confederate captivity.

Tenodor Ten Eyck died on 27 February 1905, at age 85 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.⁴³ Martha Hascall Ten Eyck died on 17 March 1917, and joined her husband at Arlington.⁴⁴

Martha Hascall Ten Eyck valiantly fought twice for her husband. She fought to gain his release from Confederate imprisonment and then returned to Washington, DC years later to fight for his retirement pay. She fought for a place to uplift and celebrate women at the great World’s Fair of 1893, at a time when women had little power or freedom, including suffrage. She fought to establish safe housing for women who wanted to visit the Columbian Exposition. Throughout these battles, she was often a single parent with four young daughters, and followed a path from New York to Wisconsin, and finally to Chicago, all the while demonstrating a fierce determination to both her family and her values.

Martha cradles great-granddaughter Felicia James as Tenodor looks on. Second row, from left: George Francis James Jr.; Martha’s granddaughter Pauline Sholes James; her father, Clarence Gordon Sholes; and his wife, Mary Ten Eyck Sholes. Photo ca. 1901 (photo from Papers of Tenodor Ten Eyck, 1860-1890; used by permission of the University of Arizona Libraries, Special Collections)

³⁹. The Inter Ocean, Chicago IL, November 2, 1892, p. 9 (Newspapers.com : accessed 3 June 2019).
⁴¹. Minutes of the Chicago Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1890-1893, from the Archives.