

Franz John Heiberger

(4 Mar 1819 – 2 Mar 1901)

Heiberger. On Saturday, March 2, 1901 of heart failure at his residence, F.J. Heiberger in the 82nd year of his age. Funeral services at his residence, March 5, 11 a.m. Interment private.

The Washington Post, April 11, 1901, p. 12

Francis J. Heiberger's Will

Old-time Washington Business Man Divided Estate Among Children



*Franz John Heiberger
1819-1901
photo taken
6 NOV 1868*

The will of the late Francis J. Heiberger, for many years engaged as a merchant tailor in this city, was filed for probate and record yesterday afternoon. The instrument is dated May 5, 1897, and makes disposition of the estate of the testator as follows: The proceeds of insurance policies in the New York Life Insurance Company, aggregating \$8,000, to be divided equally among his children: the proceeds of a policy in the Washington Life Insurance Company, of New York, for \$1,400, and also a policy in the Mutual Reserve Fund Life Association of New York, for \$3,000, together with private funds, to be applied to the payment of debts; to his son, Franz, is left the business of the testator at 535 Fifteenth street northwest; to his three daughters, Minnie, Ida, and Lilla, is left in trust premises 722 Eighteenth street northwest, together with the contents. The American Security and Trust Company is named trustee, and is directed to pay to each of the daughters of the deceased the sum of \$50 per month from the income of the estate. It is stipulated that upon the death or marriage of any of the daughters the real property shall be sold and the proceeds equally divided among the children, with the exception of Franz, who, as stated, is otherwise provided for. A codicil dated July 11, 1899, provides that the testator, having sold his business at 535 Fifteenth street to his son Franz, all bequests to him are revoked.

The Washington Post, February 7, 1915, p. 16

She Controvers Executes

Miss Heiberger Asks Court to Rule on Her Father's Will

Proceedings have been instituted in the District Supreme Court by Miss Ida J. Heiberger against the America Security and Trust Company and others to construe the will and codicil of Francis J. Heiberger. The estate, which is valued at \$125,000, is held in trust by the trust company as executor.

The plaintiff claims a fee simple estate to the extent of her interest in the estate of her father, but the trust company, in its construction of the will and codicil, maintains that the plaintiff has only a life estate, and in order to settle by judicial decree the construction of the will, both in the interest of the plaintiff and others, the proceedings were instituted.

Attorney E. Hilton Jackson appears for the plaintiff.

The Evening Star, February 1, 1925

Rambler Recalls Social Life of District in Days Preceding the Civil War

As He Reviews History of Heiberger's, Tailors

The oldest business house in Washington which has come to the Rambler's notice is that of F.J. Heiberger, tailor, third of that name in the Capital. The business has been carried on for 74 years. Let me tell you the story.

Franz John Heiberger came to Washington in 1851 and opened a tailor shop, called in some of the old advertisements "a fashionable tailoring establishment for gentlemen," under Brown's Hotel. Many Washingtonians know that Brown's Hotel began as the Indian Queen Tavern and at the door was a wooden statue representing an Indian queen. It may have been a statue of an Indian princess or a Pamunkey or Piscataway squaw in festal dress, but in those long-gone days it was said -- I know not by whom, but it was said to represent an Indian queen, and it is plausible that the Washingtonians of a century ago who saw this image knew as much about it as we do today. It was a wood carving after the fashion of the cigar store Indian, but in this case the sculptor left out the uplifted tomahawk and the bunch of cigars with which the wooden Indian threatened and invited passers-by. The sculptor made his statue an image of an Indian woman endowed with beads and plumes. The carver, who was also a painter, did not blanch the face of the figure, paint a fever in the cheeks and incarnadine the lips. He gave the woman a nature-like skin of brown.

Taverns had their signs. Long ago the sign of a tavern was a green bush, and an original chap wrote that "Good wine needs no bush." The original chap was not Shakespeare. He makes Rosalind say in the epilogue of "As You Like It"; "If it be true that 'good wine needs no bush' 'tis true that a good play needs no epilogue." The bard put it in quotation marks and W. Gurney Renham, in his "Quotations," ascribes it to the Latin phrase by Erasmus, "Saleable wine needs no ivy hung out." Whether that Erasmus was the bishop who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian, or was Erasmus the Dutch scholar of the fifteenth century, the Rambler does not know, and is not going back to the Library to find out. He will make this a good story without it. At any rate, in old Rome the wine merchant or vinarius hung out ivy as his trade sign.

Later our ancestors put up a boar's head, a blue dragon or a silver swan at the door and the place of public hospitality became the Boar's Head or the Silver Swan. Thus the tavern on the north side of the Avenue between Sixth and Seventh became the Indian Queen Tavern. On a tall pole set in the footwalk were a bell and rope. When meals were ready in the "ordinary" a slave rang the bell and it could be heard along the Avenue from Four-and-a-half to Ninth street and perhaps further, depending on weather, traffic, and one's ears. The Indian Queen Tavern became the Indian Queen Hotel. Enlarged and remodeled it became Brown's Hotel, and that, remodeled, became the Metropolitan Hotel.

Under Brown's Hotel, as under many hotels then and now, was a row of shops. One of these was rented by Franz Heiberger and the Rambler has been told that the sign was "Farant & Heiberger, Tailors." From such reference as the Rambler has it seems to have been opened as the Washington

store of Hubert Farant, an important Norfolk tailor, who committed its management to Mr. Heiberger.

Franz John Heiberger was born in Germany, March 14, 1819 and learned the tailor's trade in Amsterdam, Holland. There was in London in the 30's and the 40's a tailor of renown in his work whose name was North. From his London house he opened branch tailoring houses in cities on the continent. One of the branches was at Amsterdam, and there Franz Heiberger became a journeyman tailor and rose to the place of manager of that branch. He went to London and held a responsible office in the main house of North.

The New World and its opportunities called him. There had been a connection with the Farant house in Norfolk and the North house in London and North gave Heiberger a letter to Farant. Franz Heiberger sailed -- and "sailed" is the right word -- from England to America with his newly wed wife, Emma Jane Baker of London, and they landed at Norfolk in August, 1847.

You can make the calculation yourself, but you probably will not, so the Rambler tells you that Franz was then 28 years old. He knew the ways of one of the celebrated tailor houses of London, he dressed as well as any man might and he had the air and manner of a man who knew the world and its people.

....

When Franz Heiberger, 32 years old, came to Washington in 1851, he was a smartly dressed and affable man, and began to make clothes for men who were as proud and important in their time as we in ours. His workmen turned out suits of clothes that stood in the Senate and House of Representatives, making speeches eloquent and impassioned. They made suits of clothes that sat on the bench of the Supreme Court and attended cabinet meetings at the White House. From the old shop were turned out suits of clothes that 60-odd years ago stood before little Lucinda and Priscilla, who, wearing pretty curls and seven skirts above her hoops, curtsied and believed that suit of clothes the most gallant and irresistible that ever was. From the old shop under Brown's Hotel went suits of clothes that carried bouquets and tickets to a ball at Carusi's Assembly Rooms, into many a parlor whose site is covered by the lobby of a 10-story office building.

Information which the Rambler gets from early Washington directories is that the Washington firm of which Franz John Heiberger was a part was Loudon & Co. The first reference to Mr. Heiberger in a Washington directory is in 1853 and the entry is: "F.J. Heiberger (Loudon & Co.) boards, Exchange Hotel." The Exchange Hotel was at the northeast corner of the Avenue and Third street, the Washington House being on the northwest corner. Both buildings are standing. Advertisements of Loudon & Co. are numerous and in the directory of 1858 in an advertisement in which the names of the firm are given. It follows: "H.F. Loudon & Co. (G.W. Farant, F.J. Heiberger, J.H. King) Mercers and Tailors, Army and Navy Depot, Brown's Hotel." In the 1858 director is also this: "Francis J. Heiberger (H.F. Loudon & Co.) tailor, 362 Pennsylvania avenue, house 437 Sixth street. The children of Franz John Heiberger and his wife, Emma Jane Baker, all of whom were born in the United States, were: Emma, who married Capt. John E. Lowe, an officer in the Northern army; Isabel J., who married Allie E. Ridgway of Washington; Franz John, 2d, who married Mary Wilson Nairn, daughter of John W. Nairn of Washington; George Walter, deceased, single; Minnie E., living in Washington; Ida J. (Dr. Heiberger) living in Washington; Ruric Cordary, living in Florida; Lilla Josephine, deceased, (died last year in Washington); Adam Eugene, deceased; Florence May, married William M. Stewarts, director of the census, living in Washington, and Mary Blanche, died in infancy.

The children of Franz John Heiberger, 2d, and Mary Wilson Nairn were: Elizabeth Flora, married G.H. Wagner of Philadelphia, both living in Washington; Franz John Heiberger, 3d, single; Fanny L., married George C. Ross and living in Macon, Ga., and Dorothy M., married Carl Hyssen, both living in Milwaukee, Wis.

Franz John Heiberger the first died March 2, 1901, and his funeral was held on March 5. The Rambler searched The Star of those and intervening dates but found no obituary account such as is usual on the death of an old and prominent citizen.

The reason was that it was the time of inauguration of President McKinley and Vice President Roosevelt and the pages of our newspaper were crowded with news of preparation for the inauguration, news of the ceremony, the parade and the ball in the Pension Building, accounts of military and other organizations in Washington, work of the local committees and all that went with an old-fashioned inauguration of President and Vice President. All that the Rambler found for use in this story was the simple death notice: "Heiberger--On Saturday, March 2, of heart failure at his residence, F.J. Heiberger, in the eighty-second year of his age."

Mr. Heiberger bought the interest of other partner s in the firm under Brown's Hotel and the sign and advertisement from a year or two before the beginning of the Civil War gave the name of the house as "F.J. Heiberger." Mr. Heiberger was a charter member of the German-American Fire Insurance Co., was vice president of the company from 1879 to 1893, and president from 1893 till his death. When the Corcoran building was constructed on Fifteenth street from Pennsylvania avenue to F street, the Heiberger store was moved from the Metropolitan Hotel to a store on the Fifteenth street side of the new building.

The Heiberger store remained in the Corcoran Building until much of the ground floor of the structure was taken over for the Café Republic, about 18 years ago, when the store was moved to 1419 F street. The place was ruined by fire, March 11, 1923, and the store was opened at 1405 F, where it is now.

F.J. Heiberger the first, retired from the business in June 1899, being succeeded by his son, F.J. Heiberger, who retired in May 1922, being succeeded by his son, F.J. Heiberger 3d. Some of the old employees of the house of Heiberger whom the Rambler recalls are: Alexander D. Tucker, bookkeeper (R67/98); living at No. 35 P street northwest, Joseph F. Hodgson, deceased, bookkeeper, long a major in the District National Guard (R68/65), Harry Metz, manager, deceased (??R95/285); Fred Duehring and W.F. Meher, cutters, deceased. Some of these men liked to talk of Army and Navy men whose uniforms they made and the Rambler remembers hearing them tell of making uniforms for Gen.'s. Grant, Sheridan, Custer and Miles, and for Admirals Dewey, Sampson and Schley. They would call off scores of names, but the Rambler, having made no notes at the time, the names given are all those he remembers.