

John Hitz III

(14 Sep 1828 – 25 Mar 1908)

The Evening Star, November 6, 1872

The German-American Savings Bank, Mr. John Hitz, President, began business yesterday with a capital of \$150,000.



An undated photo of John Hitz and Helen Keller

The Evening Star, July 30, 1874

Locals

W.B. Todd, Esq. was yesterday elected a director of the National Metropolitan Bank to fill the vacancy occasioned by the residence of Mr. John Hitz.

The Evening Star, September 30, 1874

German American Savings Bank

The annual meeting of the German American Savings bank took place yesterday, and the entire old board of trustees was unanimously reelected, as follows:--Messrs. R.B. Donaldson, Anton Eberly, Geo. Emmert, John Hitz, James M. Lewis, William F. Mattingly, Christian Ruppert, Louis H. Schneider and Frederick Stutz. At a meeting of the board Hon. John Hitz was re-elected president, and Anton Eberly vice president. During the absence of Mr. Hitz in Europe, the vice president will act in his stead and transact all business that would require his attention if at the bank.

The Evening Star, May 16, 1878

Locals

John Hitz, Consul General of Switzerland, A.H. Girard, A. Eberly, and others of this city sailed for Europe from Baltimore today. Quite a party went over to Baltimore by the morning train to see them off.

The Evening Star, June 13, 1879

The German-American Bank Indictments

Today the grand jury returned bills of indictment against John Hitz and Charles E. Prentiss on charge of embezzlement of \$5,000 in German-American Fire Insurance stock and \$6,700 of National Metropolitan Bank stock; John Hitz, Charles E. Prentiss, R.B. Donaldson and W.F. Mattingly making false entries in bank books, (on March 1st 1878, \$10,000 as a remittance to the Importers' and Traders' Bank of New York); John Hitz and Charles E. Prentiss, embezzlement of \$60,000 of the funds of the German-American Bank; Charles E. Prentiss, embezzlement of \$140, and against Charles E. Prentiss perjury in falsely swearing to the statements of the bank. Mr. Mattingly at once came into court and asked that

bail be fixed, and the amount of \$5,000 was fixed, which he gave. The witnesses endorsed on the indictments are Adolf Cluss, B.U. Keyser, Christian Heurich, Christian Ruppert, and G.H.B. White.

The Evening Star, December 6, 1879

Gen. Hitz Called On To Account For Money Held By Him As A Guardian

A rule was issued by Judge MacArthur in the Probate Court yesterday, on John Hitz, guardian to Daisy Casparis, requiring him to file by the 12th inst. an account of his trust. The petition sets forth that James Casparis died March 21, 1869, and Hitz was appointed guardian to his daughter and has in that capacity come into possession of \$8,925.95, and has since August 1873, failed to render any account or pay over any money to his ward.

The Evening Star, April 9, 1880

Locals

Today a suit was entered by Mr. Enoch Totten, for Daisey F. Casparis, agt. John Hitz, Geo. F. Gulick and Florian Hitz--on the bond of the first named as guardian and with the others as surety in \$8,000--he having failed to pay over to her Sept. 29, 1874, when she reached her maturity, \$5,194.25 which she claims was then due her.

The Washington Post, April 10, 1880, p. 3

City Talk and Chatter

Daisy F. Casparis entered suit yesterday, in the name of the United States against John Hitz, her late guardian, and Florian Hitz and George F. Gulick, sureties on his bond for \$8,000, claiming that amount for his default in failing to pay over \$5,194.75, due her on obtaining her majority, September 29, 1874. Hitz has only just filed his account under a rule from the court. It is understood that his defense is that the money was invested after this date by Miss Casparis' orders, she being then of age.

The Evening Star, June 21, 1880

The Funeral of General John A. Sutter, the discoverer of gold in California, took place Saturday afternoon from Mades' Hotel, at the the corner of 3d street and Pennsylvania avenue, many Californians and citizens of this District being present. The funeral services were conducted by Rev. Byron Sunderland, pastor of the Presbyterian church on 4 1/2 street. In his discourse the pastor paid an eloquent tribute to the character of the deceased. The pall-bearers were General John Hammond, New York city; Colonel I.S. Tichenor, Colonel F.B. Schaffer, A.M. Kenaday and Captain Peter Allabach, of this city; Captain C.P. Crandall, Oregon; Colonel James S. Peirce, of this city; E.O.F. Hastings, San Francisco, Cal.; Hon. John Hitz, Swiss consul all Californians but the latter. The remains were sent for interment to the late home of the deceased in Pennsylvania, where his widow resides. General Sutter also leaves a son and daughter in Acapulco, Mexico, a son in San Francisco, and several grandchildren. Mrs. General Bidwell of California, who was present at the funeral exercises, attended by her father, Mr. J.C.G. Kennedy, of this city, contributed a large floral anchor, which was laid on the coffin. The Swiss society, of which Mr. John Hitz is president, were present at the funeral and acted as a guard of honor.

The Evening Star, October 4, 1880

An Estate Claimed by Swiss Heirs

Gen. R.D. Mussey, for Gen. John Hitz, the Swiss Consul and attorney in fact for the parties has filed a caveat to the will of the late Henri Rochat on behalf of a brother and a large number of nephews and nieces of the deceased in Switzerland. A nephew living in New York has also filed a caveat on the ground that will was procured by fraud. He claims to be the sole her-at-law of the deceased. The treat of the United States with Switzerland provides for the mutual inheritance of the citizens of each country in the other.

The Evening Star, April 11, 1881

Legal Rights of Foreign Representatives

The Case of the National Metropolitan Bank Against Consul General Hitz

Today, in the Court in General Term (Judges Cartter, Hagner and James), the case of the National Metropolitan Bank agt. John Hitz, late president of the German-American National Bank was heard. The plaintiffs, having obtained a judgment at law, entered a suit in equity to subject the interests of Hitz in certain property to the judgment, which suit was decided for plaintiff and a decree ordered. Mr. Totten, for Mrs. Hitz, today filed a petition raising the point that Hitz, at the time the judgment was obtained, was consul-general of the confederation of Switzerland, and under the constitution of the United States he can be proceeded against only in the Supreme Court of the United States, and this judgment is therefore null and void. The Chief Justice remarked that in a case where there had been two hearings, and this point not having been raised, he was inclined to regard the representative of a foreign government who had been doing business here for years as a private citizen. Mr. Wilson, representing the bank, said he would not object to the filing of the petition. Mr. Corkhill called attention to the criminal case which was pending against Mr. Hitz as being involved in this question. The court directed the paper to be filed, and set the motion for a hearing tomorrow.

The Evening Star, April 29, 1881

The German-American National Bank cases have been before the grand jury for some weeks, and it is rumored that there have been some new developments made by witnesses who were rather reluctant to testify. The District Attorney has been assisting in the examination the past few days.

The Evening Star, May 23, 1881

The German-American National Bank Case.

Eight Indictments Found

Today the grand jury returned 8 indictments against John Hitz and Charles E. Prentiss, charging them with embezzling, obstructing and willfully misapplying the funds of the bank. These indictments are quite full, covering twelve pages partly printed. The grand jury were engaged altogether 48 days on the case, and have been very thorough in the examination.

The Evening Star, October 3, 1882

Locals

The Swiss minister, Mr. Frey and Mr. John Hitz this morning made a visit to the Peabody school building on Capitol Hill and went through the building to examine its construction.

The Evening Star, October 6, 1882

Locals

Mr. John Hitz and Gen. Frey, the Swiss minister, paid the police court a visit this morning, and listened to the trial of a few cases.

The Evening Star, December 6, 1882

The Case of Mr. Hitz

Decision of Judge Wylie on the Question of Privilege

The Demurrer to the Plea of Mr. Hitz Sustained

This morning in the Criminal Court Judge Wylie announced his decision on the plea and demurrer argued Saturday in the case of the United States against John Hitz, C.E. Pentiss and others. The indictment, he said, averted that on the 12th of July, 1878, Hitz held the office of president of the German American National bank, and while he held that office he was guilty of embezzlement. To that indictment Mr. Hitz filed a plea setting forth that the court ought not to take cognizance of the charge, as he was a native and citizen of Switzerland, and at the time named was consul general and political agent of the Swiss government in the United States.

To this plea the United States by its special attorney, Mr. Perry, filed a general demurrer, setting forth that the plea was bad in substance, the note appended to the demurrer stating that it was double, in setting forth three separate averments.

The Causes of Demurrer Not Well Taken

Judge Wylie said he had come to the conclusion that as to the causes of demurrer they were not well taken. If the plea that Mr. Hitz was consul general was a proper one, then it was proper also to set out that he was an alien, as it might happen that a consul general was a citizen of the United States. The averment of alienage was, therefore not a separate plea, but an important part of the description setting forth the character of the pleader. As to the other separate averments, on the face of the plea, it did not appear; but his appointment, both as consul general and political agent, might have been made at the same time. But, according to the stipulation of consul, the commissions being introduced as part of the plea, it was shown that this was not the case, the appointments being made at different times.

Gen. Butler's Position

Judge Wylie said that Gen. Butler, in the course of his argument, disclaimed for the defense any intention of seeking exemption under the appointment of consul general, resting his claim solely on Mr. Hitz' appointment as political agent. Judge Wylie thought it was within the power of the court to overlook the fault, even if the plea were double; but, after the disclaimer by Gen. Butler, he was inclined to look upon the plea as valid in form, without question. The question of formality would only produce further delay, and both sides expressed anxiety to press the case to a conclusion. So he would regard the demurrer as a general demurrer to the substance of the plea. Although counsel have disclaimed all claim of privilege, by virtue of defendant's character as consul general, yet in the face of the pleading the court would consider that subject.

Consuls Amenable to the Same Laws as our Own Citizens

The court read from Lawrence's Wheaton as to ...

The Evening Star, June 18, 1883

Locals

The German-American Bank cases against John Hitz, C.E. Prentiss and others were called up by Mr. R.R. Perry in the Criminal Court today, and several special pleas having been filed they were set for Saturday next.

The Evening Star, January 5, 1884

The Case of John Hitz

The District Attorney States Why It Should Not Be Heard In The Supreme Court

In the case of John Hitz, formerly the president of the German-American national bank, under indictment for violating the national banking laws, in which the defendant has filed a petition for a writ of certiorari, returnable next Monday, in the Supreme Court of the United States, District Attorney Corkhill has prepared his answer. He states that Hitz came to this country a minor, and having resided here when he attained majority, he became a citizen, engaging in business as a music teacher, merchant, banker, etc.; that, in 1877, he was elected president of the bank which existed till November 1, 1878, when it was placed in the hands of a receiver; that during his whole term as president, he was also a director of the bank, holding stock, and was then, and still is, a citizen of the United States, which citizenship was necessary as a legal qualification for a director in the bank. He further states that Mr. Hitz was for many years consul general of the Swiss Confederation within the United States, and, on February 28, 1868, he was accredited as political agent of the confederation and so acknowledged by the Secretary of State; that he continued to act as such till June 25th, 1881, when the confederation requested his resignation, which request he acceded to, and since that time he has been engaged in business here as a private citizen. He states further that June 17th, 1881, a series of indictments were found against him for certain offenses against the provisions of Section 5.209, of the Revised Statutes, which were alleged to have been committed while he was president of the bank; that one of the indictments specified in the petition of Mr. Hitz charges him as president of the bank with the embezzlement, abstraction and misappropriation of certain securities, and to this indictment he, while protesting his innocence, claimed that he was a Swiss citizen and under the jurisdiction of the Swiss republic, and therefore prayed judgment in his favor. To this plea the United States demurred, and it was sustained, with leave given defendant to plead over, and Mr. Hitz still has the right of having the proceedings reviewed in error by the Supreme Court of this District. For these reasons the district attorney thinks the writ of certiorari ought not to issue in the premises as prayed.

The Evening Star, January 11, 1884

Mr. Hitz Sues the National Metropolitan Bank

Yesterday Mr. W.B. Webb, for Mr. John Hitz, filed a bill against B.U. Keyser, receiver, and the national metropolitan bank, for an injunction to restrain proceedings on a judgment at law. The plaintiff states that on a note given by him, W.F. Mattingly and R.B. Donaldson, payable to C.E. Prentiss, the defendant bank, on April 28th, 1879, obtained judgment against him for \$10,000, and the others made defense thereto; that the money was raised to carry on the business of the German-American bank, and was received and used by said bank; that in 1883 the said Keyser, as receiver, paid said Metropolitan bank, and the judgment was assigned to Keyser, as he believes, and he charges that said Keyser intends to prosecute the judgment against him, when the sole debt was that of the German-American bank, and it was the duty of the receiver to pay the same out of the assets of the bank. He therefore prays an injunction and discovery.

The Evening Star, October 31, 1885

The German American Bank Cases

In the Criminal Court this morning before Judge MacArthur the cases against John Hitz and Charles E. Prentiss, indicted for making false entries, perjury, etc., in connection with the management of the defunct German-American National bank were called up. The district attorney appeared with Mr. R.R. Perry, special counsel for the government and Messrs. R.D. Mussey and Jere Wilson for Dr. Prentiss. The defendant said that they would on being furnished with a list of the cases proposed to be tried at once, prepare the preliminary motions, so as to argue them next Saturday, Mr. O.D. Barrett stated that he had been of the counsel for Mr. Hitz with Gen. Butler, and that the case had been taken to the Supreme Court of the United States, and there argued that since then Mr. Hitz had notified him that he did not want anything to do with him. He now saw no way but to has the court to release him. The court directed an order releasing Mr. Barrett. The court suggested that the case be set down for Monday, and on representations of Mr. Barrett, directed a bench warrant to issue for Mr. Hitz.

The Evening Star, November 2, 1885

The German-American Bank Cases

Mr. O.D. Barrett writes to the Star: "Instead of Mr. Hitz not wanting anything to do with me, he refused to consent to my withdrawal from his cases. I made no representations to secure his arrest. I simply stated the facts of the case to satisfy the court that I was entitled to withdraw from the cases against the consent of Mr. Hitz. The court granted the order I asked."

The Evening Star, November 9, 1885

The German-American Bank Cases

The Bench Warrant Against Mr. Hitz Withdrawn

Mr. John Hitz, who (with C.E. Prentiss) is indicted for making false entries, etc., in the books of the German-American national bank, and for whom a bench warrant was issued last week, was in the Criminal Court today with his counsel, Mr. Wm. B. Webb. The district attorney called the attention of the court to the case, and stated that he was satisfied that Mr. Hitz had not endeavored to evade process and he now asked that the bench warrant be withdrawn.

Mr. Webb said that the whole difficulty seemed to have arisen through a misunderstanding with his (Hitz's) counsel; that he had left the city, but as soon as he learned of the action of the court he had returned to its jurisdiction. The bench warrant was withdrawn.

The Evening Star, October 25, 1887

The German-American Bank Case All Disposed Of

Yesterday in the Criminal Court, the District Attorney, entered a noile pros as to two indictments against Charles E. Prentiss, formerly director of the German-American Bank, charging him with fraudulent entries, etc. This closes the cases growing out of the failure of the bank several years ago.

The Evening Star, September 17, 1898

His Birthday Celebration

A Tribute to John Hitz by His Swiss Compatriots

Mr. John Hitz, formerly consul general for Switzerland and at present director of the Volta Bureau, an international institution and repository of information relative to the deaf and dumb, founded in this city by Alexander and Graham Bell, celebrated Wednesday, the 14th instant, the seventieth anniversary

of his birth. To demonstrate the love and gratitude the Swiss have for their venerable compatriot the representative local societies vied with each other to give expression of their feelings on the occasion. Letters of congratulation, with large bouquets of flowers, as well as many other tokens of their affection, were sent to his residence.

For nearly half a century Mr. Hitz has worked in an unceasing and most disinterested manner for the welfare of the Swiss at the capital. He may justly be considered the founder of the three principal associations, all of which have in view the benevolent assistance, in word and deed, of the needy, and the fostering of a mutual attachment among all of Swiss descent or relationship.

The demonstration in honor of Mr. Hitz was spontaneous and general, and the expressions of good wishes were numerous and sincere.

A surprise party was arranged for him at Arion Hall in the evening, which was graced by the presence of the Swiss minister, J.B. Ploda; the new secretary of the legation, Mr. Deucher, and the chancellor, Mr. Huegit. The societies represented were: The Grutli Verein, founded about forty years ago of which Mr. Dominick Rickenbacher is the president; the Benevolent Association, of which Mr. Theodore J. Mayer is the head, and the Ladies' Stauffacherin Society, presided over by Mrs. Eliza Holer, Minister Ploda, voicing the sentiment of all, addressed Mr. Hitz, extolling his worth as a Swiss representative and as a man, who had devoted his life and manifold talents in behalf of his adopted country. He compared Mr. Hitz's character and deeds with the color and fragrance of the flowers that graced the banqueting hall.

Various papers were read, sent by parties who had not the opportunity of being present in person. Mr. Henry Hurter read a letter sent by Mr. Gobner of New York, who had been Mr. Hitz's secretary while consul general, in which all the good deeds of his former chief were reviewed in a most pleasing manner. An original poem, written by Mrs. Rose A. Braendle, was another tribute. Mr. Emil Welfaner, in behalf of the Grutli Verein, expressed his gratefulness for the many benefits the society has received ever since its foundation through the counsels and disinterested labors of Mr. Hitz.

Music and songs alternated during the evening. A solo in Swiss dialect, by Mr. Emil Huler, and another solo, also in dialect, sung by Miss Hoiht, Mrs. Rhyner, Minister Plode and Mr. Emil Holer, were encored.

Under the direction of Minister Fins, who always succeeds in making his compatriots feel at home in his presence on such occasions, this birthday celebration took on the character of an intimate family affair. All were eager to show their affection to Mr. Hitz, as if he were their father, and the minister himself was glad to cede for the time being such a position he himself so rightfully deserves in the hearts of the Swiss of Washington.

The wishes of all were finally humorously expressed, "that all present may celebrate their own seventieth birthday and each have Mr. Hitz as their guest of honor that he may have again and again a fit occasion to trim his venerable beard."

The Evening Star, January 3, 1906, pt. 2, p. 1

Blind and Deaf Girl

Story of Helen Kellar's Wonderful Achievements

Lecture Before Anthropological Society at the Cosmos Club by Mr. John Hitz.

Mr. John Hitz, the head of the Volta bureau, Dr. Alexander Graham Bell's institution for the aid of the deaf and dumb, delivered a lecture of unusual interest at the Cosmos Club before the Anthropological Society last night on "Helen Kellar, Her Friends, Associates and Achievements." The lecture was followed by a number of stereopticon pictures showing Miss Kellar at various ages, and in company with several of her friends and with her dog pets, for the blind girl is very fond of animals and always has one or more of them for companions. Mr. Hitz was particularly well fitted to tell the story of this remarkable

girl's achievements, as he has had the pleasure of knowing both her and her teacher, Miss Sullivan, and has visited them many times in their Alabama home, has been with them on their vacations in Nova Scotia and has seen a good many of Miss Kellar's triumphs over the barriers that from nineteen months of age were thrown around her senses of sight, sound and speech.

Mr. Hitz told what is not generally known with regard to Miss Kellar, and that is that in her childhood she was of a most violent and intractable disposition. But all accounts of Helen Kellar's later life have spoken in such admiring terms of her kindly and generous disposition that one is apt to forget that she was built up to her present attainments, both of mentality and character, from a sadly handicapped and unpromising condition. The very change in her face as her education has developed was shown in the series of pictures.

The first little miniature taken of her showed a dull and sullen face without life or animation, almost as though it lay behind a mask of death. A little later on, too, this expression was noticeable, though not so pronounced. But in the later pictures, taken after her mind had begun to unfold under the constant care and instruction of Miss Sullivan, there was the most remarkable change in expression, and in all of her later pictures there is a gentleness and sweetness in the composed features that speak eloquently of a soul awakened to all that is best and sweetest in life.

Her Fondness for Pets

One picture taken of her seated at a table with her cheek pressed against the head of a pet bull terrier tells more than any description can of her love for animals, and the kindly patience that has enabled her to master most of what is best in life, while shut out from many of life's harsher and more disagreeable features.

Mr. Hitz told one story that is not generally known of her childhood. It was while she was still in her darkened animal state, and when impish mischief was the only outlet for her animal spirits. She had learned the uses of a key and a lock and deliberately locked her mother in the pantry of her home and then sat on the floor outside the door, apparently enjoying through some subtle sense the storm of unavailing protest that she knew was going on inside.

The story of Miss Sullivan and of her devotion to the task of educating Helen, to which she has given up her whole life, is almost as interesting as the story of the girl's own successes. It was a contest of strong wills when Miss Sullivan first took charge of the wayward little girl. Helen's father was of such an indulgent disposition that he could not bear to see physical force used in coercing her, and he interfered so much with Miss Sullivan's course of discipline and training that she and her charge were obliged to take a little house on the home farm, where they lived together and where the father was allowed to come at intervals and watch his daughter without her being able to see him or know that he was in the neighborhood.

Teaching Her to Talk

The feat of teaching Helen to speak was the work not of Miss Sullivan, but primarily of Miss Sarah Fuller of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Dumb. She had learned the manual alphabet first, and through it was able to understand what her teacher wanted of her. Her mouth, teeth, lips and tongue were placed in position to make the sounds and she was told how to use her vocal organs. At this as at almost everything else, she was phenomenally quick. She mastered six sounds on the first day and needed but ten lessons to master the subject generally. In fact, Miss Fuller said she learned more in two months than many of the merely deaf pupils learned in two years. This seems to be one of Helen's strong points. She hardly ever forgets anything. She has a library of over 300 volumes in the peculiar raised letters for the blind. They are all standard works, and she has been reared largely on only what is best in literature and art.

Her appreciation of statuary is remarkable and she says she believes one can enjoy a statue or a carving more from the sense of touch than from sight. This is, of course, unbelievable to those who can see, but in the case of Miss Keller, with her marvelous and delicately trained touch, it seems almost to be true.

She used the typewriter as readily as though she could see, and to the use of the machine was due much of her success in following the college courses and keeping up with the difficult examinations. Her letters are products of clear and clever English, and one would never think either from the tone or phraseology that they were the work of a blind girl. She used the terms "see" and "hear" as though she really could see and hear, and seems to appreciate the difference between good and bad weather and between day and night as readily as though she were in possession of all her faculties.

Among the pictures shown was that of her watch, a somewhat curious affair with raised knobs on the edge in place of the hour marks and with a single hand that is moved with the fingers and stops at the hour the watch indicates. Yet with this contrivance Miss Kellar can come within five minutes of the time by merely touching the watch without removing it from her pocket.

Reads Only Standard Works

It is, perhaps, owing to her reading of standard works of literature, Mr. Hitz said, that her style is so clear and at the same time so conventional in the use of similes and descriptions that would seem natural to one who could see and hear. Her phraseology is sometimes unique and shows a mastery of language that places her easily abreast of the average magazine writer. But she has many phrases that are evidently the fruit of her reading and not of personal experience. She speaks of the sun and moon shining with various degrees of brilliance, of clear and cloudy weather, of the sweetness of music and of various sounds that she has never heard. But her mastery of the technique of expression is only the more wonderful when one considers the difficulties she has surmounted to gain it.

Mr. Hitz says she is a naturally brilliant girl. She has, of course, had the advantage of the best teaching and the tenderest friendship and most loving care that could be given her. But much of her attainment is due to her innate qualities of mind that have put her in the first rank of the educated deaf and blind, and, indeed, far ahead of many who have not had these handicaps to contend with.

The Evening Star, September 15, 1907, p. 3

Recipient of Honors

Friends of John Hitz Help Celebrate Birthday Anniversary

Passes Both Milestone

Three Local Swiss Societies United in the Festivities

Addresses In Congratulation

Function Takes Place at Volta Bureau, of Which Mr. Hitz Is Superintendent

A resident of Washington, for a longer period than is embraced in the allotted span of man, three score years and ten. John Hitz, superintendent of the Volta bureau, 35th street and Volta place, was the central figure in a unique celebration at the bureau last night when the three Swiss societies of the District united to do him honor on the occasion of his eightieth birthday anniversary.

The function was held in the main hall and reading room of the bureau, which was appropriately decorated with entwined Swiss and American flags, and with flowers. O. Sahil, chancellor of the Swiss legation, made the principal address on behalf of the united Swiss colony in the capital, and Emil Wilauer, secretary of the Gruetli Verein (Swiss Mutual Beneficial Society) and Mrs. Grass, president of the Stauffacherin Reading Circle, also spoke, expressing the sincere regard of themselves and their associates for Mr. Hitz. Several appropriate gifts were presented to Mr. Hitz.

Native of Switzerland

John Hitz was born in Davos, Switzerland, and he was brought to this country in a general immigration of the Hitz clan in 1831. The family settled at once in Washington, and Mr. Hitz has resided here ever since. From 1853 to 1864 his father, John Hitz, was consul general to the United States from Switzerland, and young Hitz acted as his secretary. Upon his father's retirement the son became consul general, and he held that post until 1882.

Mr. Hitz was president of the German Relief Society in the District of Columbia during the civil war, and several years of his life were also devoted to commercial and banking business.

In 1890 Mr. Hitz became associated with Alexander Graham Bell, who had set aside the famous Volta prize of 50,000 francs, given to him by the French government in recognition of his invention of the telephone, and designated it the "Volta fund." This fund was intended to be used for the benefit of the deaf and the ultimate result was the formation of the Volta bureau.

Early work "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge relating to the deaf" was conducted in the laboratory of Dr. Bell's home, 35th and Q streets, but May 1, 1893, ground was broken on the corner opposite Dr. Bell's home for the Volta bureau. Miss Helen Keller lifted the first spade-full of earth on that occasion. In about one year the building was completed and Mr. Hitz was installed as superintendent, a position which he has held ever since.

Scope of the Bureau

The Volta bureau has become a center for the collection and distribution of knowledge relating to instruction of the deaf and a veritable storehouse of statistical information concerning the blind and deaf throughout the country and the world. Complete reports are there from the United States censuses of 1890 and 1900k, showing the number of deaf persons in each state and territory of the Union.

Mr. Hitz has made his home in the bureau building, and his efforts have gone far toward increasing the scope of the work. By reason of his long life in the Capital Mr. Hitz has a fund of interesting stories concerning the growth and development of the city. In the early fifties his grandfather conducted a typical Swiss dairy, with a herd of fifty cows, on what is now Washington Heights. An uncle of Mr. Hitz owned the whole crown of the hill along the line of the present Columbia road, and in 1853, in settling up the latter's estate, Mr. Hitz sold sixteen and one-half acres of land, including what is now the Dean place, for \$10,000 cash.

His many friends in the city of all nationalities extend him felicitations.

Hitz. The funeral of John Hitz will take place from the Vola Bureau, 35th street and Vola place, on Sunday, March 29, at 2 o'clock. Friends and relatives are invited to attend. The interment will be private.

The Evening Star, March 25, 1908, p. 2

Sudden Death of John Hitz

Prominent Resident Victim of Heart Failure

Had Gone to Union Station to Meet a Friend --

Native of Switzerland

John Hitz, superintendent of the Volta bureau, 35th street and Volta place, was taken ill suddenly about 1:55 o'clock this afternoon while at the Union station, where he had gone to meet friends. He

died shortly thereafter, while being removed to the Casualty Hospital in an ambulance. Surgeons at the hospital sated that death resulted from heart failure.

Mr. Hitz, who was about seventy-five years of age, resided at 1601 35th street. The coroner was notified.

Born in Switzerland

John Hitz, superintendent of the Volta bureau, was born in Davos, Switzerland, September 14, 1828. He had been a resident of this country since 1831, having been educated in American private schools. For a time he was engaged in the business of a banker and in commercial ventures. In 1864 he became consul general of Switzerland in the United States, succeeding his father. He served in that capacity seventeen years.

Since 1890 he had been superintendent of the Volta bureau, an institution founded by Dr. Alexander Graham Bell for the increase and diffusion of knowledge relating to the deaf. He had given a great portion of his time to philanthropic work and educational organizations, serving from 1864 to 1865 as a school trustee in the District of Columbia. He wrote a number of monographs on social science, philanthropy, etc., and edited a number of publications relating to the deaf and dumb.

Mr. Hitz was a member of the National Geographic Society, the American Association to Promote Teaching of Speech to the Deaf, National Educational Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Society of American Florists, Anthropological Society, Society of Philosophical Inquiry, American Forestry Association, several Swiss-American societies and others.

Mr. Hitz and Jane C. Shanks were married in 1865.

The Evening Star, March 27, 1908, p. 3

Funeral of John Hitz

Services to be Held Sunday Afternoon at 2 o'clock

Funeral services over the remains of John Hitz, former superintendent of the Volta bureau, 35th and Volta place northwest, who died suddenly Wednesday afternoon at the Union station, where he had gone to meet Helen Keller, the noted blind girl, will be held Sunday afternoon at two o'clock at the bureau. Rev. Frank Sewall, pastor of the Church of the New Jerusalem, will conduct the services. he body will lie in state at the Volta bureau until he funeral services are held.

During the civil war Mr. Hitz was president of the German Soldiers' Relief Society and later when consul general of Switzerland he was publicly credited by M. Riggerbach, engineer of the Rigi-Mountain railway, as having given the original idea for the construction of such railways in Switzerland. Mr. Hitz, it is stated, always urged the utilization of mountain streams as a means for generating electric power and was also instrumental in practically carrying into effect the first international postal order exchange between the United States and Switzerland and had presented plans for and urged the introduction of universal postage stamps. He was awarded a silver medal in 1884 by the Empress Augusta of Germany for Red Cross work at New Orleans.

In 1886 he received a medal while serving as Swiss commissioner to the international exhibition in Philadelphia. He was married in 1856 to Miss Jane C. Shanks of this city. A son, William Hitz, an attorney of this city survives. The interment will be in Congressional cemetery.

The Evening Star, March 30, 1908, p. 7

Last Tribute to The Dead

Services Over Remains Of John Hitz

Sermon by Rev. Frank Sewall and

an Address by Minister Vogel, of Switzerland

The last services over the remains of the late John Hitz, one time representative of the Swiss republic in this country and for many years superintendent of the Volta bureau, took place in the great hall of the bureau, 28th street and Volta place yesterday at 2 o'clock, according to the ritual of the Swedenborgian Church, to which he belonged.

The portico of the building was draped in black, and there were black and purple hangings on the wall before which the coffin was placed. A bust of Mr. Hitz, draped in the Swiss flag stood at its head, flanked by palms. Great quantities of beautiful flowers lay on and about the bier.

The building was filled to overflowing with friends anxious to pay the last tribute of love and respect to one whose life was one long service of love to others. Many unable to gain entrance stood on the broad steps outside in the rain. Among those present were Miss Clara Barton, with whom Mr. Hitz was associated for many years in Red Cross relief work; Miss Helen Keller and her mother, Mr. and Mrs. Macey, President Gallaudet and Mr. Fay of Gallaudet College, Dr. Alexander Graham Bell and Mr. Charles J. Bell, the latter representing the trustees of the Volta bureau.

The services were beautiful in its simplicity, consisting of prayers and a short address made by he pastor, Rev. Frank Sewall, singing by the choir and an address in German by the Swiss minister, Dr. Leo Vogel.

Minister Vogel's Tribute

In recalling his past relations with the deceased, Mr. Vogel told of the great personal friendship which had existed between the subject of his eulogy and himself, and said his love for Switzerland was of much ardor.

"In Washington," the speaker added, "all Swiss people always had a true friend in him, and never would he fail to aid his countrymen. He always had faith in them."

Concluding, Mr. Vogel said: "In spite of our sorrow at this time, we still have the consolation to know that Mr. Hitz lived a grand life, devoting his superb talents to the cause of mankind. That the world has benefited by him is evident to all. His memory will ever remain fresh in our hearts."

Dr. Sewall paid tribute to Mr. Hitz, not only as an earnest worker in the cause of Christ, but as a man whose scientific efforts have resulted in untold measures to help his fellow-men to success.

Mention was made of the engineering feats made possible in Switzerland by the discoveries of Mr. Hitz. His efforts to insure universal postage facilities were related by the clergyman in showing the broad-minded spirit which prompted Mr. Hitz in all actions.

Following the funeral services many friends of the deceased, prominent in scientific, educational and social circles, viewed for the last time the features of the dead.

The Washington Post, March 30, 1908, p. 14

Last Honors to John Hitz

Distinguished Scientists Pallbearers of Late Volta Bureau Chief

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell and Helen Keller Among Mourners --

Swiss Minister Pays Tribute

Representatives of philanthropic and scientific societies to which the late John Hitz, superintendent of the Volta Bureau, belonged were present at his funeral services yesterday afternoon at the bureau. Rev. Frank Sewall, pastor of the Church of the New Jerusalem, conducted the services. Dr. Leo Vogel, the Swiss Minister to the United States, made a brief address in German, extolling the many fine qualities of the departed and his good work in behalf of the afflicted.

The body will be buried this morning in Congressional Cemetery.

The honorary pallbearers, chosen from organizations with which Mr. Hitz was affiliated, are Drs. E.M. Gallaudet, E.A. Fay, and Amos G. Draper representing Gallaudet College; Edward S. Schmid, William F. Gude, and O. Sahll, from the Gruetli Verein, the local Swiss patriotic society; Judge Job Barnard and John Joy Edson, from the New Jerusalem Church, and Paul J. Felz.

Many of Mr. Hitz's associates in the work among the deaf were present, among them Miss Helen Keller, her mother, and her teacher, Mrs. John Macey. Other friends present were Dr. Alexander Graham Bell and Charles J. Bell, trustees of the Volta Bureau; Miss Clara Barton, for whom Mr. Hitz had acted as secretary for some years; Mrs. Gardiner Green Hubbard and Frank W. Booth, of the American Association for the Promotion of the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf.

F.W. Booth, who was associated with Mr. Hitz has been appointed acting superintendent of the Volta Bureau.

The Evening Star, March 30, 1908, p. 7

Will of John Hitz

Direction Given for Plain Memorial Tablet

The Society of the New Jerusalem of Washington city is named as residuary legatee of the estate of John Hitz of the Volta Bureau, by the terms of his will, dated March 9, 1899, and filed today for probate. Justice Job Barnard and Mary L. Barton are named as executors. The New Jerusalem Society is also to have all Mr. Hitz's new church books, including those by Swedenborg and others known as collateral books; also a mahogany bookcase and a Madonna. The executors are authorized to erect in Congressional cemetery a plain monument or tablet on which are to be inscribed the names of the grandparents, parents and other relatives, as well as his daughter's name and the date of her death in Switzerland.

All the books of an educational character in the library of Mr. Hitz are given to the Volta Bureau, with which he was connected for many years.

Mr. Hitz directs the disposition of his papers and other personal belongings among near relatives and requests that any manuscripts not so apportioned shall be destroyed by fire.

Die Stauffacherin, March 31, 1908

Sudden Death of John Hitz

Prominent Resident Victim of Heart Failure

Had Gone to Union Station to Meet a Friend--Native of Switzerland

John Hitz, superintendent of the Volta bureau, 35th street and Volta place, was taken ill suddenly about 1:55 o'clock this afternoon while at the Union station, where he had gone to meet friends. He died shortly thereafter, while being removed to the Casualty Hospital in an ambulance. Surgeons at the hospital stated that death resulted from Heart failure.

Mr. Hitz, who was about 75 years of age, resided at 1601 35th street. The coroner was notified.

Born in Switzerland

John Hitz, superintendent of the Volta bureau, was born in Davos, Switzerland. September 14, 1828. He had been a resident of this country since 1831, having been educated in American private schools. For a time he was engaged in the business of a banker and in commercial ventures. In 1864 he became consul general of Switzerland in the United States, succeeding his father. He served in that capacity seventeen years.

Since 1890 he had been superintendent of the Volta bureau, an institution founded by Dr. Alexander Graham Bell for the increase and diffusion of knowledge relating to the deaf. He had given a great portion of his time to philanthropic work and educational organizations, serving from 1864 to 1865 as a school trustee in the District of Columbia. He wrote a number of monographs on social science, philanthropy, etc., and edited a number of publications relating to the deaf and dumb.

Mr. Hitz was a member of the National Geographic Society, the American Association to Promote Teaching of Speech to the Deaf, National Educational Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Society of American Florists; Anthropological Society, Society of Philosophical Inquiry, American Forestry Association, several Swiss American societies and others.

Mr. Hitz and Jane C. Shanks were married in 1865.

The Evening Star, June 14, 1908, pt. 4, p. 6

"What the Friendship of John Hitz Meant to Me," -- Helen Keller

Many expressions of regret have been heard and many prominent men have honored the memory of John Hitz, former superintendent of the Volta bureau by chronicling his achievements. Since his sudden death in Washington, March 25, scientists have done much to emphasize his work for the deaf and other afflicted people. In the current number of the Association Review, Miss Helen Keller, the blind girl, whose educational attainments have astonished the world tells what her friendship and association with John Hitz meant to her life. The article follows:

Only those who knew Mr. Hitz can realize what his friendship meant to me. Nothing that I can write will recall one who was so noble and beloved. I shall not attempt to outline the facts of his life, but will try to impart to others the sense that a wise, good man has lived among us. With a benediction, that no one more loving man Mr. Hitz has come into this world and gone out of it.

John Hitz was born September 14, 1828, at Schmelzboden in Davos, Switzerland -- a little hamlet in the heart of the Bavarian highlands which has since become a famous health resort. I have a packet full of fine pictures, which he left with us last summer. But it is not half so eloquent as were his accounts of the mountains, five thousand feet above sea level, the sunrise and the radiant Alpine flowers. He always talked to me about Switzerland in his mother tongue, and I have come to love German almost as my own language.

He was a man of wide experience, and he told me many stories about his varied, adventurous youth. In 1849 he went out to California. He saw the west as it was then primeval, full of savage beauty. He saw the endless train of emigrants making their over the prairies to the distant wilds. He observed all manner of men who invaded the vast solitudes. He witnessed the magic with which gold built up cities and spread nations along the Pacific coast. He had occasion often to share in the hard life the brave fight of those who journeyed thither, and he showed the old indomitable Swiss courage.

Selling Pianos

When Mr. Hitz returned east he engaged in the manufacture and sale of pianos, and taught music in various schools. I have been told that before his hearing was impaired he played the piano with masterly skill. He was deeply interested in educational matters, especially manual training. He himself was a skillful wood worker, true to the Swiss tradition that everyone must learn a trade. He exerted his influence to have manual training established in American schools, and, although it is still far from occupying the place it deserves, American educators have begun to appreciate its importance. He traveled extensively in foreign lands and came into contact with many eminent men. He was in Washington during the civil war, and knew Lincoln, Grant and Sherman. On his father's death in 1864 Mr. Hitz succeeded him as consul general from Switzerland, and held that office until 1881.

I can give no adequate idea of Mr. Hitz's varied activity. He was a man of tireless energy, interested in the promotion of every human happiness. He was one of the incorporators of the American Red Cross Society, an early and active member of the American Forestry Association. He told me of he many kinds of grass, grain and trees that he sent to Switzerland to be cultivated.

I met Mr. Hitz first in 1892, and ever since has been like a father to me. In May, 1893, the work on the Volta bureau with which his name is associated, was begun, and I well remember how I turned the first sod on the land for the building. The Volta bureau was henceforth his home. He lived in the work, and gave the rest of his years to realizing Dr. Bell's long-cherished plan. Most of those who knew Mr. Hitz as superintendent of the Volta bureau remember him as a solitary man. But in his solitude his great soul went out to others loving and loved again. He could truly say to me, "I am alone, but not lonely." To the last day of his earthly life he bestowed the greatest care and affection on his work, for which he was qualified by his sound views on education, his wise sympathies and his acquaintance with distinguished men the world over.

Full of Sympathy

In addition to his labors for the deaf, Mr. Hitz has greatly interested in the blind. I have letters from him full of suggestions as to how I might work more efficiently, full of enthusiasm for the new efforts to bring instruction, usefulness and pleasure to the sightless. He followed our endeavors as if they were his own, and cheered us on toward the goal. His constant message was that I should "contribute a share to the inalienable treasures of enlightenment, the betterment of man and the praise of God." The deaf and blind have lost more than they can ever know in losing his sympathy and service. Would that all workers for these two classes were like him, disinterested, broad in their views, more anxious for the good of those whom they undertake to help than for the advocacy of theories.

How shall I write his kindness to me, whom he called "meine innigst geliebte Tochter?" I called him Pflegevater. Once a conductor on a train asked him if he was my father. "Hes," he promptly replied, "I am her foster-father." Every day he had a plan for giving me pleasure. His abundance of resource even to the little intimate needs of daily life used to make us laugh with delight. There was nothing we wanted which he did not have in his pockets, or could not invent. One day we were off on a long drive in search of cardinal flowers and ferns. The thought came over us that they would wither long before we got home. Behold, Mr. Hitz produced on the instant a jar filled with water -- where he had found it we never knew -- and fastened it to the dashboard, saying: "So now, you can carry a bit of the cardinal meadow along with you and enjoy it all day."

At the age of seventy Mr. Hitz learned braille, so that I could read his letters myself. Every morning he worked an hour before breakfast transcribing whatever he thought I should enjoy reading. Thus he copied for me books and articles on a large variety of subjects -- poetical, philosophical, religious, social, also books for happy leisure hours. In a letter he wrote: "I certainly do enjoy transcribing this wonderful work (one of Swedenborg's books) for you, and the well-nigh daily association of thought with you it brings to render beautiful and bright what may seem to some my solitary hours." He also ordered many valuable books for me in French and German.

Responsive to All Moods

Mr. Hitz followed me through college with close sympathy and insight. We discussed freely literature and history, and he sought to give me new aspects of great historical events. We discussed philosophy in which he was widely read, and he urged me to cultivate it long before I thought of a course in Radcliffe. Once he wrote: "As I have already told you several times, you have a natural bent for introspection, which in more advanced years assumes the character of philosophy, and which, added to your gift for literary studies in their various forms, would invest your writings in time with a depth of thought that could not fail to prove enlightening and uplifting to humanity in general." He anticipated

the ardor with which I was to study the history of human thought. He almost exactly voiced the problems of touch, of internal sensation and of mental processes which would perplex me.

To my merry moods, too, Mr. Hitz was responsive. He loved all that brings delight -- the hills, the streams, the sunny spots of green.

"The fresh earth in new leaves dressed,
And the starry night,
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden, mists are born."

He visited my teacher and me every summer, and we spent much time out of doors. I liked best to ramble with him through the woods because he could hear me best in their happy silence. He described the trees and flowers. I could not touch until they seemed a tangible part of my experience. To the last he retained a vitality that made him young with the young. He said I never seemed deaf or blind to him, and I could not think of him as old. His spirit was so gracious and happy it radiated grace and happiness to others. He had more than his share of sorrow and disillusionment. Yet his faith in human goodness never wavered. Even when failing health forced him to walk with painful slowness, I did not lose the impress of his inner vigor and joy. He breathed the fragrance of the fields of the pines and of the flowers as he had done sixty years before. He rejoiced amid the birds, the rocks and the hills with the unalloyed joy of childhood. As we wandered together from one lovely nook to another, he would often exclaim, "How glorious life is!" Winter was on his head, but eternal spring was in his soul. To him all was wonderful yet simple; all was a dream, and yet all was fact. I remember that after our rambles everyone would say, "See@ the old man's face is beaming on us." If he could thus give a sense of delight and freshness to us, the young and strong, what must his example be for those live as he did amid the withering cares of the world.

His Regard for All Men

To my teacher and me he showed constant affection which we appreciate all the more because we know he had a thousand friends. He loved a few deeply and at the same time cherished a warm regard for all men. I have met many people who welcomed him to their homes and cheered his lonely evenings with sociable ilk, games and readings. Each has had an anecdote of Mr. Hitz's kindness or a tender eulogy of him as a faithful friend.

To women he brought a special message, for he was in sympathy with all sane work for their advancement. It was his unceasing effort to foster in us a larger activity. He exhorted us to think, that we might develop a greater capacity for usefulness. He disapproved our shrinking from independent, fearless thought and reflection. With John Stuart Mill he held that a woman must think before she can feel the just value of things, while a man must feel before he can think justly. He desired us to grow, grow with the world's growth, to beware any circumscription of our minds, as we would beware any grudging of our sympathy. When I abandoned a certain scheme for work which appealed to the affectional side of my nature, but which would have interfered with my college studies, he expressed his strong approval.

It was Mr. Hitz who introduced me to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. I have a lasting impression of the superb spirituality of Mr. Hitz's life. The spirit-realm, of which he gave me many beautiful and definite ideas seemed close, real to him. The hereafter was not to him a recompense dreamed of as a refuge from the world's ills. It was a present, eternal, joyous inspiring world that shed its glory upon material surroundings. He was as much himself as thoroughly human, there as here. He lived in the midst of earthly limitations as he believed he would in the freedom of another world. I cannot feel that he is dead now. His departure is to me as that of one living and absent. His unbroken silence alone makes the difference in my life.

Secrecy and Power--The Life of J. Edgar Hoover, by Richard Gid Powers, The Free Press, New York, 1987

Annie Margaret Scheitlin, Edgar's mother, grew up in Seward Square, where her family had been established since well before the Civil War. Her grandmother and grandfather, John and Anna Hitz, had emigrated from Switzerland around 1820. John Hitz was a mining engineer who had worked in the copper areas of Lake Superior and in the gold mines of North Carolina. In 1853, Hitz, who had settled in Washington, became the Swiss consul (at that time the ranking Swiss diplomatic post in the country). Among his three children were Edgar's grandmother, Mrs. Margaret Scheitlin, and great-uncle, also named John Hitz, who succeeded his father as Swiss consul in 1864, at which time the post was upgraded to the rank of consul general. (Hitz and his father probably maintained dual U.S.-Swiss citizenship.)

American Biographical Directory, 1908-1909

Superintendent of the Volta Bureau, was born at Davos, Switzerland, on September 14, 1828, son of John and Anna (Kohler) Hitz. He has been a resident of this country since 1831, and was educated in American private schools. For a time he was engaged in business as a banker and in commercial ventures. In 1864 became Consul General of Switzerland, succeeding his father, where he served for seventeen years. Since 1890 he has been superintendent of the Volta Bureau, an institution founded by Dr. Alexander Graham Bell for the increase and diffusion of knowledge relating to the deaf. He has given a great portion of his time to philanthropic work and educational organizations, serving for a time also (1864-65) as school trustee. He has written a number of monographs on social science, philanthropy, etc., and edited a number of publications relating to the deaf and dumb. He is a member of the National Geographic Society; the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Society of American Florists; Anthropological Society; Society of Philosophical Inquiry; American Forestry Association; several Swiss-American Societies; honorary and corresponding member of foreign associations, etc. In 1865 he married Jane C. Shanks. Residence: 1601 Thirty-fifth street, n.w. Office: Volta Bureau, n.e. cor. Volta Place and Thirty-fifth street, n.w.