



Lavaca County and The Spanish American War

By Brenda Lincke Fisseler

The next several issues of this newsletter will share the story of Lavaca County during the Spanish-American War and later the Philippine-American War. While both military actions were short term conflicts, Lavaca County men were involved in both and this newsletter will endeavor to share information about these men and their commitments to service. This newsletter series will also highlight some of the individuals whose stories are unique and those who lost their lives in service to their county.



Volunteers in the Spanish American War

In the summer of 1899, an army of 25 U.S. Volunteer Regiments were organized, one regiment of which, the 33rd U.S. Volunteers, was recruited at San Antonio, Texas. Several Hallettsville and Lavaca County boys enlisted in the regiment. The next newsletters will focus on the twelve men who enlisted and served in Company H of this regiment.

Dr. Charles Louis Kopecky
6th US Regiment Infantry Co. D
Enlisted: March 11, 1899
Discharged: April 4, 1902



Dr. Charles Louis Kopecky and his twin sister, Caroline, were born on May 31, 1882 in Sweet Home, Texas to August J. Kopecky and Philomena (Janca) Kopecky. The family later moved to Shiner where Charles attended school. For two years, Kopecky attended St. Edwards University in Austin and also St. Louis (now St. Mary's University) in San Antonio. On March 11, 1899, Kopecky volunteered with the army.

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While serving in the Philippines, he participated in the Battle of the Waterworks at Manila as well as Panay, Negros, Ceby, Bohol and Leyte. He was honorable discharged in 1902.

He briefly returned to Texas, then attended medical school in Louisville, Kentucky and graduated from the University of Fort Worth in 1906.

Kopecky married Emilie Strauss on August 29, 1905 in Shiner, Texas. He began his medical career in Nada, moved to Hallettsville a year later, then Shiner and later to Yoakum, Texas. In 1915, Kopecky enrolled in medical school to become a eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, a profession he practiced until his retirement.

Charles was known as a civic leader and was involved in numerous public and church related groups in his community.

Kopecky died on May 3, 1961 in the Nix Hospital in San Antonio , Texas at the age of 78 years, 11 months and 3 days. He is buried in the Sts. Cyril & Methodius Catholic Cemetery in Shiner, Texas.

Update on Emil Hanzlik

This update comes from Irene Szwarc who became interested in the story of Hanzlik after a previous newsletter.

Emil Hanzlik began his life as Emil Horkel, the illegitimate son of Beaty Horkel, an immigrant from Austria. Emil and his mother arrived in the US in 1882 when Emil was 2 years old. His mother married Frank Staha in Hallettsville in 1883, five months after arriving. Frank had lost his second wife in 1879 leaving him with six children. In December of 1883, Beaty gave birth to the first of five children fathered by Frank. In April of 1884, Emil was adopted by Dominik Hanzlik. Adoption papers were found at the Lavaca County Clerk's office, but had never been recorded. At this point the trail of Emil disappears until August 12, 1899 when he volunteered to fight in the Philippines. He was discharged in April 1901, and according to the local newspaper returned to Hallettsville in May affected with the measles. Emil Hanzlik died on May 25, 1900 at the home of A.E. Graeber.

An interesting, strange and sad story of a young man.

Sources:

www.ancestry.com

www.fold3.com

www.findagrave.com

Shiner Gazette 1961 May 4 &
May 11

Emil Hanzlik by Irene Szwarc

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