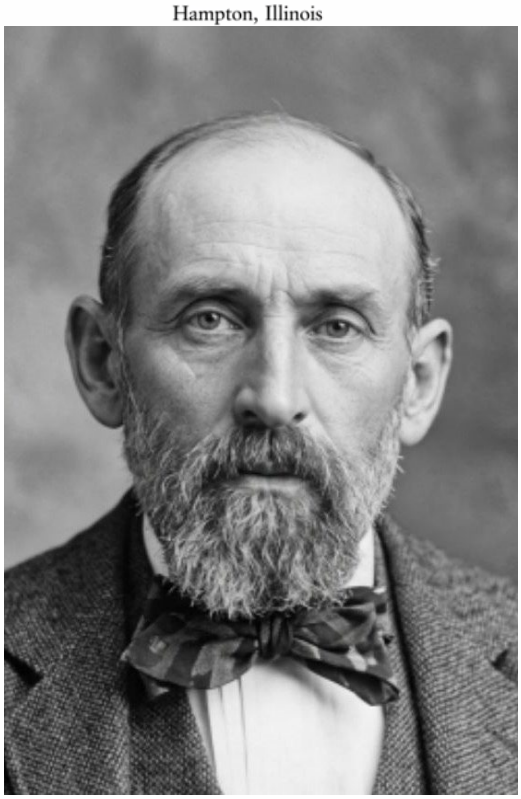


HERMES, JOSEPH
August 2, 1840 – March 4, 1920

Overview

Joseph Hermes was a Civil War veteran, skilled tradesman, railroad employee, and community officeholder whose life connected military service with the development of Hampton, Illinois. His obituary records his birth in Germany on August 1, 1840, and states that he came to the United States early in life. A later local history describes him as coming from Ohio and moving west about 1866. These accounts can describe different stages of his migration rather than conflicting birthplaces.

Hermes settled into family and working life after the war and remained closely associated with Hampton. He died on March 4, 1920, according to the March 5 obituary, which reported his death the previous afternoon. The newspaper attributed his declining health to hardening of the arteries and age-related infirmities.

The surviving accounts present a man remembered for sustained service rather than national prominence. His biography draws on the military summary, the 1920 Moline Dispatch obituary, George McNabney's 1938 "History of Hampton," and newspaper accounts preserved in the preceding record. Differences between these sources require care, especially concerning his wartime wounds.

Family and Career

Hermes married Mary Mohr on January 13, 1867. The local history states that they had eleven children and that Mary died in 1913. His obituary names nine surviving children:

Nicholas, John, Andrew, Jake, Theodore, Mike, Rebecca Sykes, Philip, and Henry. Several lived in Hampton, while others had established homes in Wisconsin and Oklahoma. The accounts therefore depict a large family with both enduring local ties and connections beyond Illinois.
Family life also included severe losses and hardship. Newspaper accounts describe the death of their daughter Margaret in May 1907, reported as suicide, and Mary's serious burns in a household accident in April 1909. The supplied material does not establish a connection between that accident and Mary's later death.
A cooper by trade, Hermes later worked as a railroad section foreman. His obituary credits him with thirty years of employment with the Milwaukee Road. A section-gang photograph caption also identifies him among railroad workers. An additional 1926 account recalls his employment hauling cordwood for work to remove a dangerous rock near Campbell's Island. Pieces of that granite were later intended for a soldiers' monument foundation.

Political Contributions

Hermes's documented political contributions were local. McNabney's "History of Hampton" states that he served for many years as a village trustee and school director. These positions place him within Hampton's civic institutions and identify public service as an important part of his life beyond his trade and railroad employment.

The available record does not supply election dates, length of individual terms, party affiliation, or particular measures that he supported. It would therefore be misleading to credit him with specific legislation, construction projects, educational reforms, or campaign achievements. His contribution can be described more securely as sustained participation in village government and school oversight.

His membership in Hampton's McDaniel post of the Grand Army of the Republic adds another dimension to his public identity. Although that membership is not evidence of an elected political position, it connects him with the local veterans' community. The later account linking his river work to stone intended for a soldiers' monument also places his memory within Hampton's commemorative history. Together, these references support a portrait of community involvement, while leaving the details of his political influence unresolved.

Military Record

The military summary identifies Hermes as a private in Company F, 107th Ohio Infantry Regiment. He enlisted on August 18, 1862, at the recorded age of twenty-one and entered service on September 9. His obituary places his enlistment at Cincinnati. The recorded age differs from what his obituary's birth date would imply, illustrating a detail that warrants verification against original records.

On September 1, 1863, Hermes left the 107th Ohio Infantry and transferred to the 93rd Company, 2nd Battalion, United States Veteran Reserve Corps. He continued serving until June 30, 1865, when he mustered out at Madison, Indiana. This chronology shows continued military service after his transfer rather than a final discharge in 1863.

The sources agree that he was wounded, but differ in specificity. The local history mentions an arm wound; the obituary reports wounds at Gettysburg and Fredericksburg. The supplied military summary does not independently confirm those battle locations. They should remain attributed claims pending further research. His postwar veterans' membership and the funeral arrangements reported for Hampton Catholic Church and Hampton cemetery reflect the enduring place of his military identity within community remembrance.