

Nelson George Hensler — A Birth That Became Official 43 Years Later

Nelson George Hensler came into the world on **November 3, 1900**, not in a hospital, but at his family's home on **Ebenezer Road in Hamilton County, Ohio**. His parents were **Henry Louis Hensler and Margaret Carroll Hensler**, and the physician who attended the birth was **Dr. G. H. Musekamp**.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a birth at home was hardly unusual. Neither was it unusual for the official record of that birth to be incomplete—or, as happened in Nelson's case, apparently never filed at all.

A young family—and a mystery

Nelson's parents had been married only a little more than two years. **Margaret Carroll married Henry Louis Hensler on October 12, 1898**, and their son Nelson arrived in November 1900. A surviving photograph shows Margaret as a young bride on her wedding day.

But Margaret then seems to disappear from the surviving family record.

There is a possibility that she **died in 1900, perhaps from complications associated with Nelson's birth**, although the evidence collected so far does not establish that. No death certificate or burial record for Margaret has yet been found.



That uncertainty makes Nelson's birth record especially poignant. The document tells us when and where he was born and names Margaret as his mother, but it cannot tell us what happened to her afterward.

The doctor who came to the house

One small detail helps bring the scene to life.

The physician who attended Margaret and delivered Nelson at the Hensler home was **Dr. G. H. Musekamp**. The biographical clipping preserved on page 3 describes Musekamp as a well-

known physician from **Cheviot, Ohio**, educated at the Ohio Medical College and practicing in the Cincinnati area.

So we can imagine that November day in 1900: not a maternity ward, but the Hensler home on Ebenezer Road, with Dr. Musekamp arriving to attend Margaret as Nelson was born.

Forty-three years later

For reasons we may never know, Nelson apparently reached adulthood without a conventional birth certificate.

JOURNAL ENTRY OF November 15, 1943

IN THE MATTER OF THE
REGISTRATION OF THE BIRTH OF
Nelson George Hensler

FINDING AND ORDER
CASE No. BR 5786

Nelson George Hensler
This cause came on to be heard upon the application of _____
praying that the Court order the registration of the birth of said applicant and the evidence in support thereof, and the report of
John G. Robinson Special Master Commissioner heretofore appointed by this Court.
On consideration thereof, the Court finds that notice of the hearing on said application has been ~~expressly~~ duly
published, according to law, and the Court having personally examined the applicant in open Court and (1) heard the sworn testi-
mony of at least two credible witnesses, namely: Richard E. Carroll, 3672 Herbert St., Cheviot, Ohio,
Gousin, Age 49; Deposition of George I. Carroll E. 35th St., Latonia, Ky., Uncle; and having received
clear and convincing documentary evidence, as follows: (1) Letter from County Board of Health, Hamilton
County, Ohio, dated 8/27/43 - (2) Letter from Probate Court, Hamilton County, Ohio, dated 8/27/43.

and being convinced that the claim of the applicant is true, the report of said Special Master Commissioner is hereby confirmed and
the Court finds that the birth of the applicant should be registered in accordance with the following facts:

1. PLACE OF BIRTH:
(a) County Hamilton, State of Ohio
(b) Meek (City, Village, Township)
(c) Name of hospital or institution:
At Home - Ebenezer Rd.
(If not at Hospital - Institution, give Street Number or Location)
(d) Mother's stay before delivery:
In hospital or institution None in this community (Specify whether prior, months or days)

2. USUAL RESIDENCE OF MOTHER:
(At time of delivery)
(a) State Ohio
(b) County Hamilton
(c) Meek (City, Village, Township)
(d) Street No. Ebenezer Rd.

3. Full name of child Hensler, Nelson George
Applicant Surname First Middle
4. Date of birth: November 3, 1900
(Month) (Day) (Year)
5. Sex: Male 6. Twin or No 7. Age at time of birth 23 yrs.
8. Number months of pregnancy 9
9. Mother married? Yes

FATHER OF CHILD:
9. Full name Hensler, Henry Louis
Surname First Middle
10. Color or race white 11. Age at time of this birth 23 yrs.
12. Birthplace Bridgman, Ohio (City, Town, or County) (State or Foreign Country)
13. Usual occupation Farmer
14. Industry or business _____
15. Children born to this mother:
(a) How many other children of this mother are now living? 1
(b) How many other children were born alive but are now dead? 0
(c) How many children were born dead? 0

MOTHER OF CHILD:
15. Full maiden name Carroll, Margaret
Surname First Middle
16. Color or race white 17. Age at time of this birth 24 yrs.
18. Birthplace Hamilton Co., Ohio (City, Town, or County) (State or Foreign Country)
19. Usual occupation Housewife
20. Industry or business _____
21. Attending Physician or Midwife:
Name Dr. Musekamp
Address Cheviot, Ohio
M. D., Midwife, or other M.D.

It is therefore ordered that the birth of said applicant be registered in accordance with the above finding and that a summary,
duly certified, of the above finding and order be forthwith transmitted to the State Director of Health, at Columbus, Ohio, as pro-
vided by law.

Frank S. Bonhan
Judge of the Probate Court of Hamilton County, Ohio.

Then, in **1943**, when Nelson was about 43 years old, the matter reached the Probate Court of Hamilton County. The remarkable document preserved on page 1 is a **court order establishing the facts of Nelson's birth so that an official birth record could finally be created.**

In other words, this wasn't a birth certificate written shortly after a baby was born.

It was a legal reconstruction of a birth that had occurred **more than four decades earlier.**

The court gathered evidence, considered testimony, and formally established that Nelson George Hensler had been born on November 3, 1900, to Henry Louis Hensler and Margaret Carroll Hensler. Only then could the state create the record that ordinarily would have been made when he was an infant.

Two brides, a generation apart

There is another intriguing visual connection in the family photographs.



Page 2 places Margaret Carroll Hensler's 1898 wedding portrait beside the later wedding portrait of **Irmina Boller Hensler**. The resemblance in the photographs is striking: both women stand beside what appears to be a very similar ornate staircase or studio prop and are posed in much the same manner.

The photographs raise an appealing family-history question: **Were they taken in the same Cincinnati-area photographic studio, perhaps even using the same staircase set, roughly twenty years apart?**

The photographs alone can't establish that, but the similarity is strong enough to make the question worth investigating.

What the document really preserves

The 1943 court order does more than establish Nelson Hensler's birthday.

It gives us a small window into a family moment in **1900**: Henry and Margaret Hensler living on Ebenezer Road; Margaret giving birth at home; Dr. Musekamp attending her; and baby Nelson beginning a life whose official beginning would not be recorded until 43 years later.

And behind that record remains the unresolved story of **Margaret Carroll Hensler**.

She appears in a beautiful photograph as a bride in 1898. Two years later, she appears in the record as Nelson's mother. Then the documentary trail, at least so far, grows quiet.

That may ultimately be the most compelling part of the story. The 1943 court proceeding successfully answered one question—**when and where was Nelson George Hensler born** while leaving another family mystery still waiting to be solved:

What happened to Margaret?



This is the doctor who attended the (at-home) birth of Nelson George Hensler in 1900.

form the great backbone of this nation.

G. H. Musekamp, M. D. Dr. George Henry Musekamp, the well-known and highly successful physician of Cheviot, Ohio, was born in that city September 3, 1862, a son of George H. W. Musekamp and Elizabeth (Hilge) Musekamp. There he passed his boyhood and received his early education, later taking up the study of medicine at the Ohio Medical College, from which he was graduated with the class of 1884, with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Returning to his native town, Dr. Musekamp began his practice in company with his father, and continued in this way until 1890. In that year he removed to Dent, Ohio, and established himself in practice there, where he continued successfully until 1913. He then returned to Cheviot, where he now ranks among the most able and prominent of its physicians. In politics, Dr. Musekamp takes a keen interest and is a staunch upholder of the Republican party. He has also held the office of township treasurer for several years. In fraternal organizations, Dr. Musekamp is a valued member of the Knights of Pythias and the Junior Order of American Mechanics. On April 3, 1890, Dr. Musekamp was united in marriage with Miss Alice Jeffers, a daughter of Thomas E. and Eliza (Carson) Jeffers, of Cheviot, Ohio. To this union have been born two children, Ray, who resides at home, and Ethel, who is the wife of Carl Linden, of Hyde Park, Cincinnati, Ohio, and is the mother of a son, Carl, Jr.

Albert S. ... one of the substantial men of Hamilton