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Hermit of the Wasatch

Julius Kuck, a German lawyer, came to Utah intending to work as an attorney, but found that he needed to take extra classes to learn about American law. To pay for the classes, he took up prospecting in Big Cottonwood Canyon. By 1895, he had filed three claims in the Willow Creek area on the north side of the canyon above Silver Fork. He found the canyon so pleasant that he never returned to school or to the valley, except for supplies.

He was proud of his hermit status. When hikers tried to look into his cabin, he complained, "Hermitting sure ain't what it used to be!"

In 1909, he bought a small sawmill from Alvin Green that was located just above the present-day Spruces Campground. He put out a sign that said *Wasatch Aspen Works*, and soon became famous for the aspen furniture he sold to canyon dwellers.

Once, when his log supplier, George Green, asked to be paid, the old hermit couldn't find his checkbook, so he simply sanded down an aspen board and wrote a check on it. Murray First National Bank was honored to cash it.