

Family History Notes

Fall, 2006

Werdenberg Castle and Glarner Ancestry

Near the border of Switzerland with Austria and Liechtenstein lies the Werdenberg Castle (photo below). Clustered at the foot of the castle is the hamlet of Werdenberg with over a dozen well-preserved wooden homes and shops – some of the oldest wooden buildings in Switzerland. Between the village and the castle is a vineyard, and just beyond the village lies a trout-filled lake. This site is one of the most picturesque in Switzerland and often seen on Swiss calendars. The castle has been restored and is a popular museum.



The history of the castle itself goes back to the Middle Ages. The castle construction was likely begun around 1230 by Rudolf I Count of Montfort. Rudolf's sons styled themselves the Counts of Werdenberg. The possession of the castle remained with the House of Werdenberg until the end of the 15th century. In 1517 Canton Glarus purchased the castle and thus began a 280 year relationship between Canton Glarus and Werdenberg. Starting in 1517 and in three year intervals men of Glarus who had sufficient wealth and power became the "Landvogt" (often translated as bailiff or governor) of Werdenberg.

Many of these Werdenberg Landvogts from Canton Glarus are our ancestors. A visit to Werdenberg becomes much more interesting knowing an ancestor served there as Landvogt.

Listed below (and bolded) are several of the 80+ men who served as Werdenberg Landvogt and who have descendants among our New Glarus Historical Society membership. There are so many descendants of these men that it is too difficult to list.

Early Landvogts (1500s): Paulus Schuler (1503-1593) of Rütli became Landvogt in 1535. Evidently he was a strong leader for he later became Glarner Landammann, Glarner Pannerherr, Sargans Landvogt (Sargans is another nearby castle) and a leader of the Reformation. **Heinrich Jenny** (~1490-1555) of Ennenda became Landvogt in 1547. Like Paulus Schuler he was later Glarner Landammann but died while serving in that capacity. **Jacob Stuessi** (died 1588) of Ennenda became Landvogt in 1556. **Wolfgang Blumer** (died 1588) of Engi served as Landvogt beginning in 1577. **Hans Christof Elmer** (died 1603) of Elm followed immediately after Blumer in 1580. Many people are familiar with this member of the Elmer family since the cemetery in Elm has a grave marker for him. **Johann Peter Legler** of Diesbach was the last Landvogt of the 16th century. His term began in 1598. Legler was married to Regula Tschudi, daughter of the Landammann Jost Tschudi.

Later Landvogts (1600s and 1700s): Matheus Egli of Glarus was selected Landvogt in 1616. Egli had at least 3 wives and 13 children from these wives. He was also a Treasury official in the Canton of Glarus. **Salomon Trumpy** (1570-1620) of Ennenda became Landvogt in 1619 but died shortly thereafter. He was succeeded by his brother Rudolf Trumpy who was Landvogt again in 1637. **Jacob Feldmann** (died 1655) of Glarus was Landvogt on three occasions: from 1628-31, 1646-49, and again from 1649-1652. **Joachim Streiff** (1607-1647) of Diesbach was Landvogt beginning in 1642. **Johann Peter Elmer** (1617-1695) of Glarus was Landvogt in 1655. **Paulus Fluri** (1603-1668) of Schwanden began his term in 1664 and died in Werdenberg in 1668. **Heinrich Tschudi** (1625-1678) of Glarus followed Paulus Fluri in 1667. **Johann Rudolf Freitag** (1704-1772) of Elm became Landvogt in 1742 and again in 1769. Freitag's home in Elm is the landmark house today known as the Suvarovhaus.

The last Landvogt (1791-98): Johann Heinrich Freitag (1735-1799), son of Landvogt Johann Rudolf Freitag (above), was the last of the Glarner Landvogts. Apparently Freitag was so disliked that he had to flee the castle in the middle of the night in 1798. An oft-told tale is related that the citizens of Werdenberg were heard to chant "*Freitägli, es ist Zeit, dass du fortkommst, wir wollen einmal Samstag haben.*" In other words the people were tired of Friday (Freitag) and were looking forward to Saturday.

The grand hall on the second level of the Werdenberg Castle has the coats of arms (Wappen) of several of the Landvogts painted on the walls. Among the coats of arms displayed are those of Paulus Fluri and Heinrich Tschudi mentioned above. (Should any members have a specific interest in identifying ancestral links to these Werdenberg Landvogts, please contact Bob Elmer.)

First Girl Born in New Glarus

It has been well documented that the first child born in New Glarus was Thomas Schmid in December, 1845. The first girl was said to be Anna Legler, daughter of Johann Kaspar and Agatha (Speich) Legler, who was born in March of 1846 or 1847 (sources differ as to the year). Anna grew up in New Glarus and in 1865 married Peter Rudolf Tschudi in Berne, MN. (Peter Tschudi was a younger brother of early New Glarus leader Johann Jacob Tschudy.) In the late 1870s, Anna and Peter moved to Beresford, SD, (then part of the Dakota Territory) where Anna died in February, 1939. Her obituary in the New Glarus Post stated she was the first girl born in New Glarus. Anna and Peter were the grandparents of the late Amelia Hoesly of New Glarus and Mel Schiesser of Blanchardville.

Charles B. Stauffacher

Word has been received of the February, 2006 passing of Charles B. Stauffacher. Mr. Stauffacher was a grandson of New Glarus original settler Heinrich Stauffacher. Heinrich, the son of Jacob and Elsbeth (Speich) Stauffacher, arrived here with his parents and siblings in 1845 as a mere 7 month old infant. In addition, Charles B. Stauffacher was a direct descendent of George and Anna (Dürst) Legler, also original colonists. Mr. Stauffacher served in the U.S. Budget Bureau under President Truman and later was an executive with Continental Can Co. Stauffacher's father, Albert, was a native of Dutch Hollow and his mother, the former Anna Marty, was born in New Glarus.



There were five Stauffacher families who settled here in 1845 but none remained with the New Glarus settlement. Over the years other Stauffacher branches – all from the Sernftal village of Matt, Canton Glarus – settled in Green County. All of these Stauffacher lines from Matt descend from a man known as Uli Murer. He is recorded in the Glarus records as being of Walser blood and whose roots went back to Alagna in the Val Sesia region of the Alps which is now part of northern Italy.

Genealogical Research: Understanding Glarner Names

An inquiry was received regarding Christian names found in Canton Glarus, the variations of those names, and also the American version. The following list was made to highlight some of the Christian names commonly found in Glarus and what they may have transformed into here in America.

Swiss Version (Swiss Nickname) = American Versions

Fridolin (Fridli) = Frederick; Fred; Fritz	Dietrich = Dick; Richard
Mathias/Matheus/Mathäus = Matt; Matthew	Ursula = Julia; Celia
Pancratius/Pancrazius = Gus	Regula = Rachel
Andreas = Andrew	Rahel = Rachel
Magdalena = Lena; Maggie	Heinrich = Henry; Hank
Hilarius (Läry) = Larry	Jost = Joe
Salome/Salomea = Minnie	Verena (Vreni) = Fanny
Euphemia/Eufemia = Fanie; Faye	Rosina = Rosa; Rose
Cleophea/Cleopha = Chloe	Elsbeth (Baeti) = Elizabeth; Ellen

The Abraham and Sara (Voegeli) Kundert Family

Over the past few years, inquiries on various branches of the Kunderts have been received by the New Glarus Historical Society. There were many Kundert branches who ventured to Green County – most, if not all, of the various Kundert lines originated in the Linthal village of Rüti, Canton Glarus. The most prolific of the various Kundert branches was the Abraham and Sara (Voegeli) Kundert family. Abraham (1786-1838) died in Switzerland, but his widow Sara (1792-1867) came to New Glarus in 1853 with various members of her family. Sara is buried in the little EUB cemetery on the western edge of New Glarus and was possibly the first burial there. Abraham and Sara had 17 children. Most of the Kundert children lived to adulthood and were widely scattered – ranging from Switzerland, to New Glarus and surrounding communities, to Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, Oregon and California. The Kundert children had large families of their own. Nearly 100 grandchildren have been documented for Abraham and Sara spanning the years from 1838 to 1882.

Wisconsin Vital Records

This issue's tip on a useful internet site for the family historian is the following: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/vitalrecords/> This site, sponsored by the Wisconsin Historical Society, contains a searchable database of pre-1907 vital records (e.g. births, deaths, marriages) for all Wisconsin counties.



