

Family History Notes

Winter 2006

Family Farms

Our museum docents are occasionally asked whether descendants of early settlers still live on the farms of their ancestors. The Hefty-Blum and the Voegeli farms come to mind. Another of the oldest is the Hoesly farm north of New Glarus, where the Dwight Hoesly family lives on the farm of his great-great grandparents, Andreas and Barbara (Duerst) Hoesly. In 1946 there was an article in the New Glarus Post (22 May 1946) about the Hoesly farm having then been in the family for nearly 100 years.



The photo to the left is of Andreas and Barbara Hoesly (seated middle) and their 3 sons and daughters-in-law. The Hoesly sons were: David (seated right) and wife Elsbeth nee Wild (seated left); Jacob and wife Barbara nee Legler (couple upper right); and Andrew and wife Barbara nee Eichelkraut (couple upper left).

This old photo was “rescued” from an area antique mall by Hoesly descendent Barbara Marty.

More On-line Family History Research Tools

On-line searchable databases have proven useful tools in finding family information. One such database is the Dalby Database and it was developed by John and Jan Dalby of Faribault, MN. For the past 20-some years the Dalbys have been walking Minnesota cemeteries, collecting the inscriptions and now posting the information on their award-winning website. Of particular interest to local historians would be the cemeteries of Dodge County, MN. Dodge County was an early Swiss settlement area where a number of early New Glarus residents moved on to. Among the people found buried in Dodge County were the Baumgartner brothers (credited with building the New Glarus Hotel) and first blacksmith Marcus Luchsinger and his wife (and original settler) Regula Legler. This Dalby site can be found at the following address: <http://www.dalbydata.com>

The other database of note is that for pre-Ellis Island immigration information. Before Ellis Island existed there was an immigration facility known as Castle Garden. This Castle Garden database covers 10 million immigrants from 1830 to 1892 (the year that Ellis Island opened.) This site is found at <http://www.castlegarden.org>

Yet another site operated by the Immigrant Ship Transcribers Guild specializes in the transcriptions of immigrant ship manifests. This site is found at <http://immigrantships.net>

Immigrant Ship S. S. Bellona

Some data found at the Castle Garden and Immigrant Ship website led to the published lists of the immigrants arriving in New York on the S.S. Bellona on 20 March 1868. The Bellona’s manifest shows a variety of ethnic background including a number of Glarnerers heading toward New Glarus. Among the families listed were Paulus and Katharina (Hefti) Figi, Fridolin and Verena (Kubli) Schrepfer, Fridolin and Sara (Trumpy) Hoesly, Joseph and Anna Barbara (Babler) Schindler, and Fridolin and Sara (Kundert) Voegeli. Also traveling on the Bellona were Niklaus Elmer and Wernet Elmer of New Glarus who had returned to Elm to visit relatives. These Elmer families had arrived in New Glarus in 1847.

New Glarus Church Records

One of the foundations of the family history data collected by the New Glarus Historical Society has been the transcribed and translated records of the New Glarus Swiss Reformed Church. These records go back to the very early days of our village. Having them accessible on alphabetized index cards has been a real benefit to those looking up family entries. Marion Streiff's dedicated efforts to copy these records are much appreciated. Some of the sacramental records of the former EUB Church can be found on microfiche at the Wisconsin Area Research Center (Southwest Wisconsin Room of the Karmann Library) in Platteville. A recent donation to our collection was received from Charles Hopper of Walpole, NH. Mr. Hopper (a Rhyner descendent) compiled and published the congregation records of the New Elm church in Winnebago County, WI.

People from Thalheim, Canton Aargau

At least three early families in New Glarus originated in the wine-growing village of Thalheim in Canton Aargau, Switzerland. These people were the Caspar and Elizabeth (Schneider) Schneider family, the Johannes and Verena (Stammach) Schneider family, and Samuel Wernkli who was married here to Katharina Disch. All appear to have emigrated in the early 1860's. Has anyone ever determined how and why these people from this small Aargau village ended up in New Glarus? Read more about this village at: <http://www.gemeinde-thalheim.ch/portrait/english.htm>

Broadwood Pianos

John Broadwood & Sons is the oldest and one of the most prestigious piano companies in the world. Broadwood instruments have been enjoyed by musicians such as Mozart, Haydn, Chopin, Beethoven and Liszt. The Broadwood firm holds the Royal Warrant to Queen Elizabeth II and has been a supplier of musical instruments to British monarchs since King George II.

However, John Broadwood was not the founder of the company. His father-in-law, Burkhart Tschudi (later Burkat Shudi) began a workshop in London in 1728. Tschudi and his wife, the former Katharina Wild, were natives of Schwanden, Canton Glarus. Their son, Burkat, and their daughter Barbara's husband, John Broadwood continued in the family harpsichord and pianoforte business.

A Historic Loss due to Katrina

A small wooden house (1887) built by and owned by a former slave, Pleasant Reed, was one of the Biloxi, MS historic homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. While many of America's historic homes tell the stories of the rich and famous, the recently-restored Reed house was to relate the story of post-Civil War blacks. There is a Glarner connection to this home. Pleasant Reed bought the land from Jacob Elmer, a native of Bilten, Canton Glarus, who was a Biloxi businessman in the mid-to-late 1800s. More on the Reed story at <http://www.georgeohr.org/reedcoll.htm>

Landvogthaus zu Nidfurn

One of the historic homes of Canton Glarus is the Bailiff House (or Langvogthaus) in Nidfurn. It is said that part of the foundation may date from as early as the 12th century. One of the home's earliest documented owners was Peter Blumer (1587-1669). This Peter Blumer is an ancestor of many area people with Schwanden roots.



Captain and councilor Peter Blumer founded an actual dynasty of officials in the 17th century. He himself became cantonal official in the Free District [today part of Canton Aargau] in 1645. Of his sons, J. Jakob Blumer of Nidfurn became cantonal official in Baden in 1661-62, and the Protestant cantonal treasurer in 1672-76. A second son, Fridolin (born in 1619, died in 1696), who, after his marriage to the councilor's daughter, Barbara Trümpi, settled in the Thon [in Schwanden], later moved to Glarus, and bought the Tagwen rights of the capital in 1672, [and] was cantonal official to Laus [Canton Ticino] in 1670-72. [Gottfried Heer, 1920; translated by Sue Wolf, 1999.]

Dürst Genealogy On-Line

The 1895 booklet documenting the descendents of Joachim and Regina (Elmer) Dürst of Diesbach, Canton Glarus can now be found on-line at the following address: www.lib.byu.edu/fhc/ This address brings you to the Brigham Young University Family History Archive. Once you are at the site enter the name "Durst" and hit the search button. The New Glarus Historical Society archives has a copy of the booklet and also the large family tree diagram. Among the New Glarus people listed in the booklet are brothers Samuel and Barbara (Becker) Duerst and Thomas and Ursula (Geiger) Duerst.