

Family History Notes

Summer, 2007

1845 Baptismal Records

An unexpected find from the archives of the German Evangelical Congregation (today's St. Peter's United Church of Christ) in St. Louis, MO yielded two baptismal records of interest to New Glarus historians. The date of the two baptisms was 29 July 1845. It was at this time in the summer of 1845 that the original New Glarus colonists were staying in St. Louis, uncertain of their fate and awaiting directions to their new home. The two infants baptized in St. Louis on that day were:

Wilhelm Stauffacher, son of Rudolf Stauffacher and Euphemia Stauffacher. Mathias Dürst wrote in his diary about this boy's birth on 19 July 1845 as the immigrant group was passing through Cincinnati. Rudolf Stauffacher was accompanied on the trip by his second wife, Anna Beglinger, who died at sea en route to America. And also accompanying Stauffacher was his pregnant mistress Euphemia Stauffacher. And Wilhelm was their son. The LDS Family database says Rudolf and Euphemia married on 9 November 1846 in Dubuque, IA. Apparently Wilhelm died young since he does not appear in the 1850 census with Rudolf and Euphemia (then in Galena, IL).

Johann Caspar Legler, son of Johann Caspar and Agatha (Speich) Legler. The baby was born 4 July 1845. This child does not appear in the New Glarus Swiss Church records nor in the 1850 census, so it is speculated he also died early in his life.

170th Anniversary of the First Glarner Ascent of the Tödi

In August of 1837 three men from Linthal, Canton Glarus succeeded in climbing the Tödi, the highest peak in the Glarus Alps. These three climbers – *Gemsjäger* (chamois hunter) Bernhard Voegeli, Bernhard's son Gabriel Voegeli and Thomas Thut – were the first climbers to reach the Tödi summit from the north (Canton Glarus side). The Tödi rises 3614 meters (11857 feet). Considering that the village of Linthal lies at 622 meters (2172 feet) this is a formidable ascent of nearly 10,000 feet. (Linthal village crest to the right.)



Bernhard Voegeli (1778-1847) was nearly 60 years old when he climbed the Tödi in 1837. Bernhard was married to Anna Schiesser and they were the parents of several children including son Jost and daughter Verena, both of whom immigrated to this area.

Jost and Barbara (Oprecht) Voegeli immigrated to America arriving in New York on the ship Siddons in May of 1853. They started their Green County farm in 1854 and this farm is now in its fifth generation of Voegeli stewardship. In 1869, the milk from the Voegeli cows went to supply Green County's first Swiss cheese factory begun by Nicholas Gerber at the nearby Dietrich Freitag farm. Jost and Barbara had a family of 15 children all born within the twenty year span of 1854 to 1874. All but 3 children lived to adulthood. Jost and Barbara are buried in the EUB Cemetery of New Glarus.

Verena Voegeli, daughter of *Bergsteiger* Bernhard, married Johann Rudolf Zweifel. Members of this branch of the Zweifel family settled near Brodhead, WI.



2007 also marks the 150th anniversary of the formation of the Alpine Club – the world's first mountain climbing club. The first hut of the Swiss Alpine Club (*Schweizer Alpen Club* or SAC) was built in 1863 on the Tödi ascent. This refuge is known as the *Grünhornhütte* and the historic hut is still used today.

In the years following the formation of the Alpine Club, mountain climbing flourished in the Alps. Climbers required increasingly accurate and more visually useful maps. Two Glarner of that time became pioneers in the world of map making. Rudolf Leuzinger (1826-1896) of Netstal, Canton Glarus was a mountain cartographer. In 1863/64, the Swiss Alpine Club added a map section to its annual book. Their choice was Leuzinger's innovative colored relief maps.

Fridolin Becker (1854-1922; pictured left) born in Linthal, Canton Glarus, took Leuzinger's innovations further by exploring more natural colors and providing sun-lit and shaded perspectives of the mountains. Becker's maps achieved a three dimensional appearance. In 1889 the SAC published his relief map of Canton Glarus. Becker, whose paternal roots were in the Glarner village of Ennetbühl, was a distant relative of Jost Becker (1790-1871), an original colonist of New Glarus.

Immigrant Ship Zürich

The immigrant ship Zürich arrived in New York from Le Havre on 11 May 1853. Included on the ship's manifest is a group of Glarner heading to New Glarus as well as destinations such as Galena and the New Elm settlement near Oshkosh. Among the names which many may recognize as ancestors are Oswald and Barbara (Schrepfer) Kubli, Johannes and Susanna (Schrepfer) Disch, Oswald and Anna (Kubli) Hauser, Fridolin Stuessi and children, and Johannes Blumer and children.

Johannes Blumer was a widower with five children. On the trip to America he met fellow passenger 26 year old Maria Stuessi. Shortly after arriving in Green County, Johannes married Maria. They farmed between New Glarus and Monticello and were among the original patrons of Green County's first Swiss cheese factory (1869) located on the Dietrich Freitag farm.



Barbara (Schrepfer) Kubli and Susanna (Schrepfer) Disch were sisters. Their brother Fridolin Schrepfer and their sister Rahel Schrepfer (Mrs. Nicholas Schneider) also came to the New Glarus area later in the 1800s with their respective families. Barbara, Susanna, Fridolin and Rahel were all children of Paulus and Susanna (Zentner) Schrepfer of Elm. The name Paulus (Paul) survived among local descendants such as Paulus Schrepfer, Paulus Kubly, Paulus Disch, and Paulus Schneider.

The Zürich was a 3-masted square-rigged ship build in New York and launched in 1844. It sailed between New York and Le Havre until 1863 when it was sold to a British concern. In 1879 laden with coal and coke, the Zürich was grounded in sands off of the Norfolk coast and was lost.

Many immigrant ship listings can be found by using the Ancestry.com database -- a subscription service available to individuals and libraries. Our South Central Library System is a subscriber and card holders can access this database at their local libraries.

The Walsers

In a previous issue reference was made to an Uli Murer having Walser blood. (Murer was the 16th century *Stammvater* of the Stauffacher family of Canton Glarus.) A reader inquired about the Walser people. The Walser were an alpine people who originated in the Berner Oberland and migrated centuries ago. One thousand years ago these people lived in Canton Wallis (Valais) hence the name Walser. Some 800 years ago for reasons not entirely clear, the Walsers left Wallis and settled elsewhere in the Alps. The Walsers are characterized by their language *Walserdeutsch* an ancient Alemannic dialect, and the fact that they settled high in remote valleys in Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and Liechtenstein. It has been speculated that the when the Walsers migrated the better land had already been occupied and only the land lying at the higher altitudes of 1500 meters or greater was available for settlement. Other speculation theorized the more remote the Walser community, the more independent lives they could lead. An impressive website (much in English) regarding Walser history, culture, and an interactive map of the Walser settlements can be found at: <http://www.walser-alps.eu/view>

Black Hawk War of 1832

2007 marks the 175th anniversary of the Black Hawk War, a seminal event in the history of pre-statehood Wisconsin. A link to this war can be found today in the nearby Montrose Pioneer Cemetery where Major William Deviese (1793-1885) is buried. Deviese is considered the first permanent white settler in Green County. Upon hearing of Black Hawk's threat, Deviese assisted William S. Hamilton (son of Alexander Hamilton) in constructing a fort at Hamilton's Diggings (Wiota). Deviese then took part in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend (Bloody Lake) on the Pecatonica River in Lafayette County. Besides Black Hawk himself (pictured at right), other players in the Black Hawk War included Zachary Taylor, Jefferson Davis, Henry Dodge and a young Captain in the Illinois militia by the name of Abraham Lincoln.



Family History Research: Spelling Challenges

Those who spend time deciphering old records and reading reference materials from years past understand the frustration when the basic facts just don't seem to add up. Dates and ages don't always agree and the spelling (particularly the early census documents) can be particularly bad. An example from the 1891 Memorial & Biographical History of Northern California: "Mrs. Barbara Durst, manager of a farm near Madison, Yolo County, was born in Switzerland, in 1836, daughter of Boldsauer and Anna M. (Swerl) Schengler, natives of that country." In fact, Mrs. Barbara Durst was born Barbara Schindler in 1840 (not 1836 as stated in the passage) and was the daughter of Balthasar and Anna Maria (Zweifel) Schindler (not Boldsauer and Anna M. (Swerl) Schengler). Imagine the frustration of family researchers trying to track down the Swerl and Schengler families!

Joel Jordan of New Wilmington, PA can relate to that frustration. He hit a dead end when researching his early Green County roots. An 1848 Green County marriage record listed his ancestors as Henry Vest and Angeline Spine. With a bit of local assistance, Joel learned that his maternal ancestor was actually born Angelika Speich in Matt, Canton Glarus. Joel has now learned of his Swiss roots deep in the *Chlytal* of Canton Glarus. One of his new-found ancestors is Johann Heinrich Elmer (1600-1679) four-time Canton Glarus Landammann and Swiss ambassador to the courts of Kings Louis XIII and Louis XIV of France.

*An unusual perspective on family history -- this one courtesy of the late comedian Rodney Dangerfield . . .
... "I looked up my family tree and found three dogs using it."*