

# Family History Notes

Fall, 2010

## More Green's Prairie Cemetery Links to Early American History

The Green's Prairie Cemetery west of New Glarus is a hallowed place where family history, local history, and natural history intersect. The stories of the people buried there tell of our local history. The ancestry of these people provides links to earlier chapters in American history. And even the land on which the cemetery is situated is coveted prairie from our natural history past.

The little one acre cemetery in the Town of York dates from 1846. It is a small remnant of what was once a 5000 acre tallgrass prairie. The cemetery boasts one half of the compass plants found in Green County as well as wild quinine, rattlesnake master and flowering spurge. Early Green's Prairie settlers and the Green's Prairie Cemetery have been mentioned in the Family History Notes (Fall 2005, Summer 2006 and Fall 2009) regarding the Peebles Family and their Mayflower heritage, the Swiss family Halder, and the Hilton Family and their Maine heritage. Two other burials in this cemetery with historic family ancestries were Elisha B. Gorham and Gorham's stepson, John Crafts.



Elisha Gorham (1784-1873) is one of two War of 1812 veterans buried at Green's Prairie. And like the Peebles family, Gorham possessed a Mayflower heritage going back to his great-great-grandparents John and Elizabeth (Tilley) Howland, and Elizabeth's parents John and Joan (Hurst) Tilley. John Howland and John, Joan and Elizabeth Tilley were among the 102 passengers who sailed on the Mayflower in 1620. Both John and Joan Tilley died in the first winter in Plymouth, MA. Their orphaned daughter Elizabeth was taken in by Governor John Carver and his wife Katherine, but both Carvers also died within the year. Elizabeth married John Howland in about 1623. The Howlands had ten children all of whom survived and had numerous descendents. Notable descendents of the Howlands run the gamut from the White House to Hollywood including Franklin D. Roosevelt, George H. W. and Barbara (Pierce) Bush, George W. Bush, Sarah (Heath) Palin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Mormon prophet Joseph Smith and Mormon leader Brigham Young, and actors Humphrey Bogart, Alec Baldwin, and Anthony Perkins.

Elisha Gorham's step-son, John Crafts (1823-1846), was also buried at Green's Prairie. His 1846 burial was one of the earliest in the cemetery. Crafts was the grandson of John Crafts who fought in the War of 1812 and the great-grandson of Edward Crafts who fought as a Minute Man at Lexington on April 19, 1775 and the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. Mrs. Edward Crafts (née Eliot Winship) was a heroine in her own right. According to family legend, Mrs. Crafts supplied bullets to the Continental Army troops. She was approached by a British officer who enquired what she was doing. She replied, "I am running bullets to shoot your soldiers with, and were I a man, I would use them, too." It was said the dignity of manner and bravery expressed by Mrs. Crafts so impressed the officer that he did not arraign her for her actions. Edward Crafts and his brother Thomas (who took part in the Boston Tea Party) grew up in Boston's North End and were neighbors of another revolutionary hero, Paul Revere.



Local historians and prairie enthusiasts hold two Green's Prairie Cemetery walks each year – one around Memorial Day and one around August 1. The walks are informal yet highly informative. The speakers tell of the cemetery's history, biographical sketches of some of those interred, and also explain the native prairie plants found within the historic one acre site.

Above cemetery photographs courtesy of Fred Underhill. To view some lovely photography of Green's Prairie Cemetery by Julie Raasch follow this link: <http://reflectionsfrom.wordpress.com/page/2/>

### **The Blums (and Blooms) and Beckers of New Bilten**

The 1847 settlement of New Bilten (located between New Glarus and Monticello) was founded by families from the village of Bilten in Canton Glarus. Recent research into the settlement showed that majority of the New Bilten immigrants had either the surname Blum or Becker. In Canton Glarus, the Blum and Becker names are generally associated with village of Bilten, although there are different Becker family lines from the villages Canton Glarus villages of Ennenda and Ennetbühls. In the New Bilten settlement, there were numerous Blum families among the immigrants. But only a few of these various Blum families were closely related. They were, however, all distant kin being descendents of Peter Blum and his wife Angela Grünenfelder. *Stammvater* Peter Blum, who died in 1616, is listed as Blum #1 in the genealogy records held in the *Landesarchiv* in Glarus. The accompanying charts show the inter-relationship between the various Blum family lines who settled in New Bilten or the New Bilten area. Also shown on the chart is how other New Bilten family lines, such as Becker, Salmen, Elmer, Sigrist, Oswald and Marti, can show their descendency from the same Blum progenitors.

Becker is also a family name closely associated with Bilten and New Bilten. The Bilten Beckers are all descendents of Jacob Phillip Becker (who died in 1640) and his wife Magdalena Winteler. There were eight Becker-related families who settled in New Bilten. Unlike the Blum families who were all distantly related, the Beckers were all very closely related. Six Becker siblings -- Johann Georg, Johan Jacob, Johann Peter, Johann Caspar, Dorothea, (Mrs. Jacob Blum) and Rosina (Mrs. Matt Wittenwyler) all immigrated to New Bilten. A seventh sibling, Johann Heinrich Becker, did not immigrate but his son and daughter -- Peter J. Becker and Anna (Mrs. Fridolin Wagner Blum) -- did.

The name Blum or Bloom is commonly found in Green County today attesting to the numerous Blum branches which settled here. But the Beckers in the area have become few and far between. Even in Bilten today the surname Blum is found in only three households and the surname Becker is found in only two.

To complicate the Blum and Becker family research, there were non-Swiss Blooms and Beckers living in Green County in the early years. Barney Becker of the Town of Washington lived among the Swiss Beckers but he was originally from New York. George Bloom and Michael Bloom, both born in Pennsylvania lived in Sylvester and Mt. Pleasant, respectively.

A thorough report of the New Bilten settlement and the families who came from Bilten can be found in the "Review" (July, 2008) a history journal published by the Swiss-American Historical Society.

### **The Dutch Hollow Frog Leg Company**

One of the amusing tales related by Manuel Conrad Elmer (1886-1988) in his book "Rudy's Hill" was the story of the Dutch Hollow Frog Leg Company. The tale dates to about 1897 and involved Manuel Elmer and his childhood friend and neighbor, Albert D. Stauffacher. Dutch Hollow boasted a country school, a country church and cemetery, dairy farms and cheese factories. A little creek began in the hollow and flowed northward toward the Little Sugar River. The swampy area adjacent to the creek was home to an abundance of frogs. When the frogs were heard croaking on warm evenings, the adults would joke that the French would like living here. The puzzled children asked what was meant by this comment and were told that the French ate frogs. Not knowing if the adults were kidding, the children asked their country school teacher if indeed the French ate frogs. Their teacher replied yes, and that she had been served frog legs at a Milwaukee restaurant where it was considered a delicacy. As further proof, the next day she brought a Chicago brokerage firm circular which quoted prices for various commodities including frog legs.

After school, Manuel and Albert walked to the bridge over the creek and sat down with their legs dangling down toward the water. A frog hopped into the water breaking the silence.

Manuel spoke, "I'll bet we could make a million dollars if we had all the frogs in this swamp in boxes."

Albert observed, "But if we caught all of them, there wouldn't be any left and the business would play out."

“That’s easy,” Manuel countered, “why not raise them like your father raises sheep and my father raises cattle?” And thus the Dutch Hollow Frog Leg Company was born.

A ditch running along the roadside from the school to the creek was dammed. Older boys were encouraged to help in the dam-building endeavor with the promise of boat races in the resulting pond. The water built up to a depth of two or three feet in the ditch. Albert and Manuel set about to catch frogs by the dozen in the swamp. The frogs were brought to the ditch in gunny sacks and released in their new home. The scheme worked and soon the make-shift pond was filled with frogs and their resulting tadpoles. But the tadpoles brought about an unanticipated chain of events. The neighborhood girls now became interested in catching the polliwogs. The girls got muddy and wet causing the mothers to complain their husbands about the activities down by the new pond. The fathers complained to the School Board, and soon School Board member Leonard Norder told the teacher and students the dam must be removed and the ditch drained.



That evening after chores, Albert and Manuel set about to drain the ditch – but not before catching all the frogs they could. Every spare container they could find was soon stuffed with frogs. The boys took the containers to Schultz’s Station on the Illinois Central railroad line over two miles away. The containers were addressed to the Chicago broker seen on the circular with the return address given as Dutch Hollow Frog Leg Company. The two boys eagerly awaited word from Chicago and the anticipated riches it would bring. But no response came. Finally the boys drafted a letter to the brokerage firm inquiring about the frogs they had sent. A courteous response finally arrived. “We have received a consignment of unskinned and unselected frogs which arrived in the most unspeakable condition. This is due us for freight, warehouse charges, and disposal, the sum of \$13.85.”

Nothing was said as the boys returned to sit on the bridge. A frog hopped into the creek.

“I’ll bet there are a million frogs in the swamp,” Manuel sighed.

“Well,” answered Albert, “the Frenchmen can have them!”

\* \* \* \* \*

The two frog entrepreneurs eventually left Dutch Hollow. Manuel Elmer became the founding Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Elmer died in 1988 at the age of 101. Albert Stauffacher was a Congregational Minister who served as Executive Secretary of the Congregational Missions Council in New York City. Dr. Stauffacher died in 1978 at the age of 92.

Dutch Hollow was a farming area located between Monticello and Monroe settled by a mix of Yankees, Germans and Glarners – the latter primarily from the neighboring Canton Glarus villages of Engi and Matt. The first Glarners to settle there were believed to be the Jacob and Elsbeth (Speich) Stauffacher family who were original colonists of New Glarus. Other early Glarner families associated with the Dutch Hollow settlement included Johann Ulrich and Verena (Marti) Elmer, Jacob and Anna Katharina (Marti) Luchsinger, Rudolf and Elsbeth (Stauffacher) Zentner, Jacob and Barbara (Stauffacher) Marty, Esaias and Margareth (Hämmerli) Stauffacher, Jacob and Anna Katharina (Altmann) Norder, and Leonard and Magdalena (Stauffacher) Norder. The Dutch Hollow Evangelical Association Church congregation was closely associated with the New Glarus Evangelical Association Church (i.e. the White Church) and its families.

**Male Fraud** (from an event reported in the “Waterloo Evening Courier”, Waterloo, IA of July 26, 1919) Around 1919, an advertisement appeared in a Monroe newspaper. The ad indicated a Swiss girl was looking for a husband. The ad possessed a powerful allure. Some 30 men in the area responded. And to prove their earnestness, each man advanced various sums from \$5 to \$40 to the “Swiss Miss” – totaling around \$300. Unfortunately, the ad was a fraud. It was the scheme of nineteen-year-old Pauline Nelson who had no intentions of marrying. Miss Nelson had experienced hard times. She learned of scarcity of prospective Swiss wives for the men of Green County and created her appealing advertisement. Her stepmother learned of the scheme bringing it to an end. Pauline was held in Sioux City, IA on mail (or perhaps male) fraud.



## Hauser/Zweifel/Zimmerman 4 Generation Photo

This circa 1913 photograph was submitted by Barbara Kuehni of Manassas, VA who is a Mani and Zweifel descendent. The 4 generation group pictured here is the great-grandmother Anna Katharina (Schmid) Hauser



(1840-1919), the grandmother Anna Katharina (Hauser) Zweifel (1866-1936), the mother Anna Katharina (Zweifel) Zimmerman (1894-1975), and baby Sylvan Zimmerman (1912-1990). Anna Katharina Schmid was an original New Glarus colonist of 1845, arriving as a five-year-old with her parents Mathias and Anna Katharina (Schmid) Schmid. She married Caspar Hauser an 1853 immigrant from Elm, Canton Glarus. Their oldest daughter, Anna Katharina Hauser, married Heinrich (Henry H.) Zweifel. The Zweifels farmed on the Zweifel homestead northwest of New Glarus. And their daughter, Anna Katharina (Katie) Zweifel, married John Zimmerman, son of David and Verena (Becker) Zimmerman. The John and Katie Zimmerman family left their New Glarus roots and farmed near Palmyra, WI.

The repetition of the name Anna Katharina is evident in this family and attests to the Glarner tradition of naming children after their grandparents and parents. But like most other families, the tradition ended in the early 1900s. Sylvan Zimmerman and his siblings (e.g. Erwin, Iona, Viola) did not possess the traditional family names.

Local descendents of early settlers Caspar and Anna Katharina (Schmid) Hauser include Erwin Zweifel, Marilyn (Disch) Duerst, Gregg Erickson, Nic Hauser, and the late Claudette (Truttmann) Freitag,

## Foods of our Ancestors – Chicory

Each summer, chicory grows abundantly along the roadsides. It appears to be everywhere, yet is not a plant native to America. And while it is not an attractive plant, it has flowers possessing beautiful blue-hued petals. It was cultivated by the Egyptians and Greeks who used it in herbal remedies. Charlemagne had chicory grown in his garden as did Thomas Jefferson centuries later.

Perhaps the culinary use people may associate with chicory is its roasted and ground root which is used as a substitute for, or a supplement to, ground coffee. When coffee beans were unavailable or when coffee prices were high, roasted chicory provided pioneers with an economical alternative. And contrary to common wisdom, when blended with ground coffee beans chicory does not make coffee taste bitter but actually makes coffee more mellow and balanced in flavor. Roasted chicory is more soluble in hot water than coffee, thus less chicory is required. Today coffee and chicory blends are seldom found unless you are at New Orleans' Café du Monde where their coffee and chicory café au lait is legendary. Some supermarkets (like Woodman's in Madison) carry roasted chicory called Coffee Partner (pictured left). Some food coops and health food stores also carry roasted chicory. A roasted chicory and coffee blend should be tried for its smooth taste and for the link it provides to our culinary past.

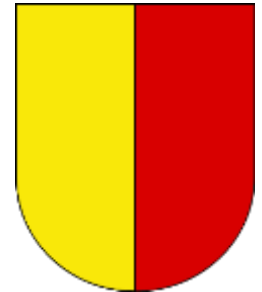


Closely related to the common chicory are those slightly bitter leafy chicories which yield endive, radicchio and escarole. In recent years, the lowly chicory root has been found to contain a natural polysaccharide (complex carbohydrate) called inulin. Inulin has found its way into many low calorie food products due to its bland taste and negligible caloric content. Inulin is classified as a soluble fiber (like oat bran), is indigestible (hence no calories), and is considered beneficial to colon health.

## **Introduction to a Gateway Ancestor**

The definition of a gateway ancestor in the United States has typically referred to a small group of early Americans whose ancestry could be traced to medieval (generally English) royalty. Genealogist Gary Boyd Roberts has documented 500 colonial immigrants who had proven ancestral links to medieval nobility. Thus, if one can claim descendency from one of these 500 immigrants, you are descended from medieval royalty. Every four years this information is dusted off when articles appear telling of the degree of relationship between the U. S. Presidential candidates. We learned that George W. Bush, Al Gore and John Kerry were distantly related based upon mutual medieval ancestors. We learned that Barack Obama is a direct descendent of Edward III, King of England and William I, King of Scotland.

But since many or most of New Glarus people are not of Yankee stock, these early American gateway ancestors are of little value. A Swiss gateway ancestor was documented in 2002 by John Kester in his book "In Three Millennia". Kester's ancestor and the ancestor of countless other Glarner and New Glarner was Baron (*Freiherr*) Johann Christof von Hohensax (born 1548). Because of Baron Hohensax's place in sixteenth century noble society – albeit on a lower rung – his ancestry can be traced back many centuries. In fact, Kester traced Hohensax ancestral lines back several centuries before Charlemagne. Other notable Hohensax ancestors documented by Kester included King Alfred the Great of England, Rollo the Viking leader who became Duke of Normandy, and the Ottonian and Salian Kings of Germany who reigned approximately one millennium ago. (Pictured is the yellow and red Hohensax Family crest).



The Hohensax ancestry includes many more people of historical interest – Holy Roman Emperors, Kings and Queens, Saints, Crusaders, troubadours, religious leaders and other nobles such as dukes, marquises, counts and barons. In future issues of "Family History Notes" the medieval ancestry of Baron Hohensax, the gateway ancestor of about half of the newsletter readers will be explored in more detail. The next issue of "Family History Notes" will contain an introduction to a medieval ancestor -- Rudolf I, King of Germany. Rudolf was from the House of Habsburg and played a unique role in the formation of Switzerland in 1291.

It has been claimed that Americans genealogists possess a thirst for royal connections. While this may be true to some degree, it could also be argued these gateway ancestors provide a springboard from which to explore and study historic figures from times past. Matt Crenson was on target when he wrote "It is human nature to wonder about our ancestors – who they were, where they lived, what they were like. People trace their genealogies, collect antiques and visit historical sites hoping to capture just a glimpse of those who came before, to locate themselves in the sweep of history and position themselves in the web of human existence."

## **Local Evidence of the Hohensax Connection**

Although Johann Christof von Hohensax lived 400 years ago, there are tangible links to him locally. As has been mentioned in various issues of Family History Notes, the tradition of naming sons and daughters after their grandparents was in use for hundreds of years -- until the twentieth century. The name Johann Christof was found in the New Glarus area, and these men named Johann Christof (or Christof) received the name by way of 400 hundred years of it having been passed down in families descended from the Baron Hohensax.

Three local cousins -- Johann Christof Durst of New Glarus (known locally as John Z. Durst), Johann Christof Elmer of Monticello (father of Willis Elmer), and John Christoph Stauffacher of the Stauffacher farm south of New Glarus Woods -- all were named after their grandfather, Johann Christof Elmer (1832-1887) who was a Hohensax descendent. This Johann Christof Elmer was named for his grandfather, Johann Christof Elmer (1766-1828), who was named for his grandfather, Johann Christof Elmer (1698-1756), who was named for his grandfather, Johann Christof Elmer (1647-1733), who was named for his great-grandfather Johann Christof von Hohensax.

Other area men who had the name Christof or Johann Christof were Johann Christof Marty (also known as John G. Marty), Christof Speich, Christof Babler, Christof Rhyner and Christof Marty. All of these men could trace their name Christof back to Johann Christof von Hohensax.

## **History Detective Follow-Up**

Congratulations to those who found the differences in the two circa 1910 postcard images of New Glarus found in the last issue. Of course the big difference was the presence in the lower postcard of the biplane above Main Street.



According to postcard collectors these novelty postcards were particularly common in Iowa and Wisconsin. The postcards to the left are from Gladbrook, IA and West Chester, IA and show not only a biplane (in fact the exact same plane as is found in the New Glarus image) but also street cars. In his New Glarus history “Mirror of Switzerland”, Millard Tschudy included an image of a street car approaching the Four Corners Tavern!

Buildings pictured on the old New Glarus postcard image which are no longer standing are the Hoesly Hardware building, the 1910 Bank of New Glarus (both replaced by the current Bank building), and the old Sunday School building (whose steeple is just noticeable in the background) which was replaced around 1924 with the current Zwingli House. The Swiss Reformed Church had decorative gothic spires at prominent points along the roofline and steeple most of which are no longer present. And the door to the Fellowship Hall (basement) of the church was installed some years after the photograph was taken. The pioneer cemetery is visible on the old image but is virtually undetectable today. And the Pioneer

Monument, erected in 1915, is not seen on this pre-1915 image. Wayne Duerst pointed out that the Levitan-Steussy store (today’s Anderson Mall) is shorter today than in the old photo due to a late 1950s fire which destroyed the second floor bowling alley. And it was another 60 or so years after the original photograph when a Swiss-style balcony was added to the exterior of the New Glarus Hotel.

Tom Danner of St. Louis, MO had the most correct answers to the history detective challenge. Tom, a descendent of the Stuessy and Ruegg families of early New Glarus, visited in June, 2010 with his wife Debbie. As they were leaving town, Tom snapped a photo of Main Street from approximately the same place as the old postcards. Comparing his new image with the historical ones, Tom was able to determine the correct answers. Not bad for someone who only visited New Glarus one time!

## **And a New History Detective Challenge**

Can anyone name the New Glarus area landmark which was named for a Polish Muslim? Hint: this landmark has been around for well over 100 years. If you know the answer to this historical trivia question please email me – [raelmer@charter.net](mailto:raelmer@charter.net) – and I will post the correct answer in the upcoming issue.

## **Mapping our Family History**

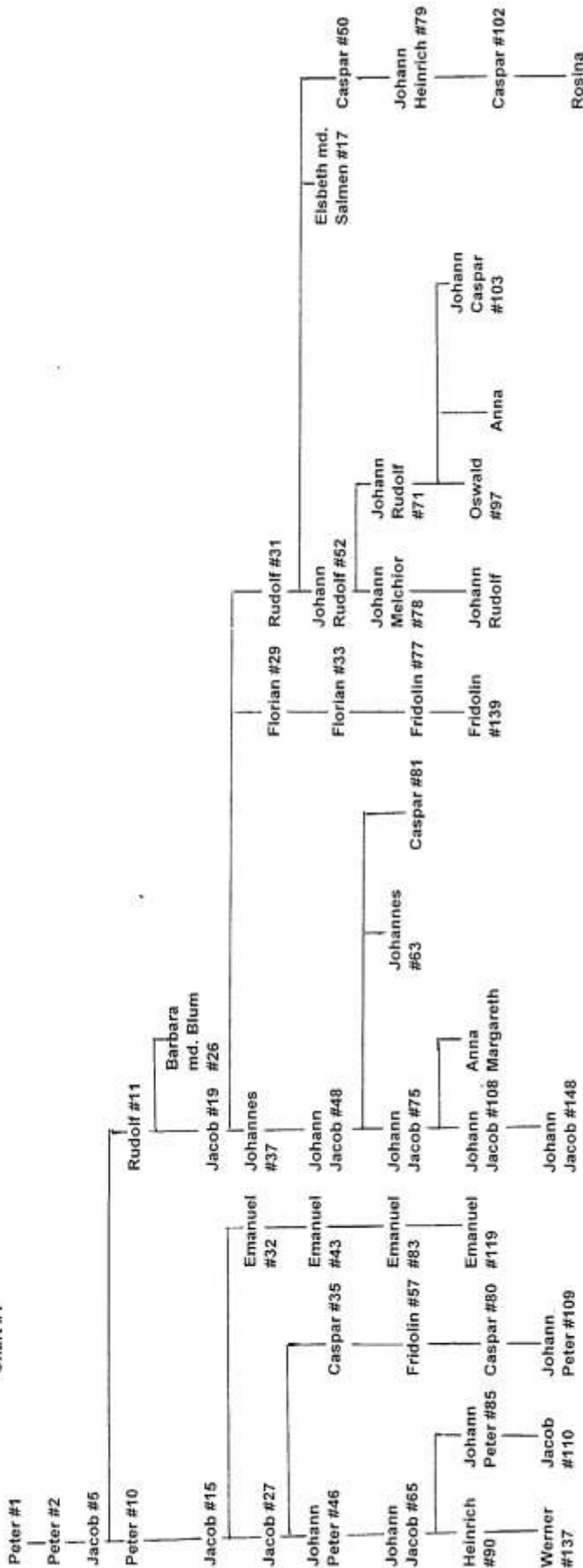
Township maps can provide interesting family history information. These maps show farm locations as well as the sites of country schoolhouses and area cheese factories. The maps show the network of the roads over the years. And these maps were hard to access – until now. The website “Historic Map Works” has made township maps available online. Online Green County atlases and plat books begin in 1873 and include the 1891, 1902, 1918, and 1931 issues, and continue on to the most recent issue of 2006. Village of New Glarus maps are also found within many of these atlases. The 1931 edition includes a map of the country school districts. And these maps are not just limited to Green County, but all Wisconsin counties as well as all other states. These maps are actually easier to view online than the original plat books because they can be enlarged with the click of your mouse.

The following is a quick link to the Green County portion of the “Historic Map Works site: [http://antiquegalleryprints.com/Browse/United\\_States/Wisconsin/Page/9/](http://antiquegalleryprints.com/Browse/United_States/Wisconsin/Page/9/)



# BLUM FAMILY LINES OF BILTEN, CANTON GLARUS

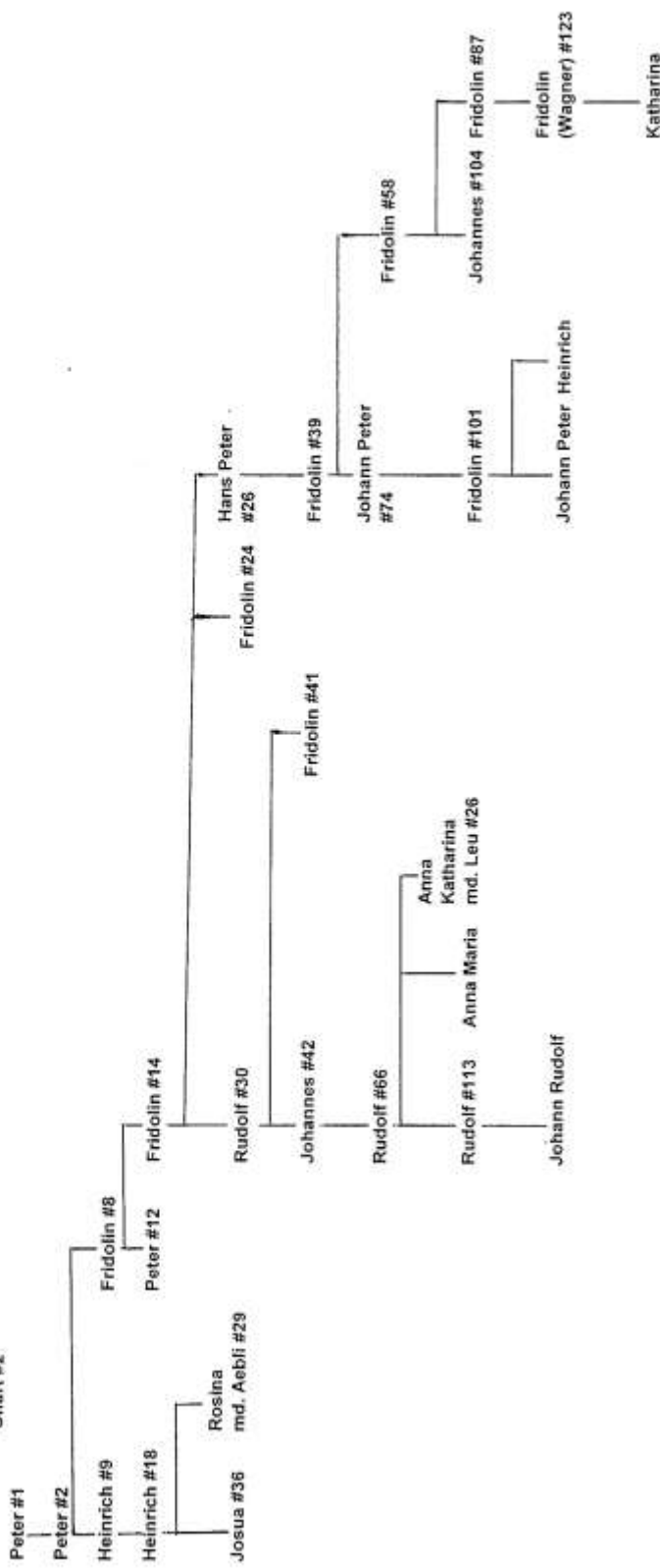
Chart #1



#1-1 Werner Blum md. Barbara Zwicky; Monticello	#1-2 Jacob Blum md. Dorothea Becker; New Bilten	#1-3 Johann Peter Blum md. Maria Elisabeth Schmitter; New Bilten	#1-4 Emanuel Blum md. Salome Lienhard; New Bilten then Dubuque, IA	#1-5 Johann Jacob Blum md. Katharina Zweifel; Monticello	#1-6 Anna Margareth Blum md. Adam Blumer; Monticello	#1-7 Descendants include Salmens of Louisiana	#1-8 Descendant in this line includes Alfred Blum of Toronto	#1-9 Fridolin Blum md. Sibilla Kundert; Monroe	#1-10 Johann Rudolf Blum md. Verena Luchsinger; New Bilten	#1-11 Oswald Blum md. Verena Iselin 1) Verena Barbara Hefti; New Bilten	#1-12 Anna Blum md. Jacob Elmer #10 Bilten. Descendants include Johann Peter Elmer and Mrs. Johann Caspar Becker (née Anna Elmer) both of New Bilten	#1-13 Johann Caspar Blum md. Anna Maria Blum; New Bilten (see #2-5)	#1-14 Descendants include Caspar Salmen (aka Solman) of New Bilten then MN	#1-15 Rosina Blum md. Christian Schuler; Monticello
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# BLUM FAMILY LINES OF BILTEN, CANTON GLARUS

Chart #2



#2-1 Descendants include Johannes Oswald family of New Biltlen	#2-2 Descendants include the Becker families of New Biltlen	#2-3 Descendants include Mrs. Johann Caspar Salinen (née Columbina Lienthard)	#2-4 Johann Rudolf Blum md. Anna Becker; Monticello	#2-5 Anna Maria Blum md. Johann Caspar Blum #103; New Biltlen. (see #1-13 on Chart #1)	#2-6 Descendants include the Heinrich and Caspar Altmann families of New Glarus	#2-7 Descendants include Melchior Marti of Monticello and Mrs. Jacob Sigris (née Verena Steinmann) of New Biltlen then NE	#2-8 Descendants include Henry Rosenberg, Galveston, TX and Peter Staub, Knoxville, TN	#2-9 Johann Peter md. Rosina Blum dau. of #110; New Biltlen (see #1-2)	#2-10 Heinrich Blum md. Katharina Blum dau. of #123; New Biltlen (see #2-12)	#2-11 Johannes Blum md. Anna Laager, New Biltlen	#2-12 Katharina Blum md. Heinrich Blum; New Biltlen (see #2-10)
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