

Family History Notes

Spring, 2011

Doctors In New Glarus

From its earliest days, New Glarus has had a succession of dedicated practitioners attending to the medical needs of the local citizens. The following is a listing of those who have served the New Glarus area with their medical skills.

Johann Jacob Tschudy (1826-1899), a native of Schwanden, Canton Glarus, arrived in New Glarus in 1847 to serve as colony leader, teacher and preacher. J. J. Tschudy, like his father, was a trained medical doctor, and therefore was called on by the first settlers to dispense medical assistance and medicines. Tschudy stayed in the New Glarus area about a decade before moving his family to Monroe. There he served as Green County Register of Deeds and then Clerk – the first Swiss immigrant to hold a Green County office. Tschudy married Barbara Hottinger in 1848 and they had a large number of descendents including Tschudy sisters Maureen Blum and Sharon Hendrickson of New Glarus.

Bonjour was noted as a French-Swiss man who practiced medicine in the earliest days of the village. Little is known or recorded about him.

Dr. Samuel Blumer (1819-1871) was New Glarus' first doctor. His father, Samuel Blumer Sr. was a doctor and surgeon from one of the Blumer family lines of Schwanden, Canton Glarus. Blumer Sr. practiced medicine in the village of Mühlehorn, Canton Glarus, where Samuel Blumer Jr. was born. Dr. Samuel Blumer Jr. arrived here in 1848 as a recent widower. Shortly after his arrival, Samuel married 15 year-old Katharina Legler. Dr. Blumer's home immediately west of the New Glarus Hotel is one of New Glarus' oldest. Dr. Blumer left for California from 1852 to 1855 and then returned to practice locally until 1868 when he relocated to Iowa. In 1860 the *Albany Times* reported that Dr. Blumer, while in the New Glarus Hotel on a Saturday night, was struck over the head with a chair by Rudolf Baumgartner. Blumer was critically wounded and the cause of the altercation was reportedly jealousy. The exact nature of the jealousy was not cited. According to John Luchsinger's history, Dr. Blumer opened a brewery in New Glarus in 1867. Blumer died in Iowa in 1871.

Rev. Wilhelm Streissguth (1827-1915), first minister to serve in the Swiss Reformed Church, is credited as providing medical services during visits to his parishioners and during the absence of Dr. Samuel Blumer in the mid-1850s. Streissguth had some medical training and freely provided his services when and where needed. He was a native of Lahr, Wuerttemberg.

Dr. Friedrich (Fred) Heer (1831-1864) was a medical doctor and a native of Glarus, Switzerland. His father was a doctor and surgeon in Glarus, and who had earlier been a military doctor in the service of the French. Dr. Fred Heer (misspelled as Hees in the 1884 Green County history) practiced medicine locally for a brief period in the early 1860s before enlisting in the 31st Wisconsin (Company B and then G). Heer died in Nashville, TN while in service and is buried in Nashville's National Cemetery.

Dr. Johann Jacob Blumer (1843-1915), son of Dr. Samuel Blumer, arrived in New Glarus to join his father in 1861. Shortly thereafter he joined the Wisconsin 3rd Cavalry Company E in the Civil War. After the war he received his medical training at the University of Pennsylvania. He started his medical practice in New Glarus in 1869, about the time his father left. Dr. J. J. Blumer practiced here until sometime after 1900 when he moved to Milwaukee. He married three times. His first marriage was to Margaretha Legler, younger sister of his step-mother. After Margaretha's death in 1885, Blumer married his first cousin Anna Maria Streiff. And after her death in 1892, Blumer married Anna Maria Weibel, a Swiss immigrant. Dr. Blumer had eleven children with his three wives. His youngest two daughters, Martha and Bertha, were both doctors.



Dr. Elias J. Helgesen was the son of Norwegian immigrants John and Ingebor (Docken) Helgesen who lived in the Town of Perry. Dr. Helgesen's father, John Helgesen, was a Civil War veteran serving with the Wisconsin 15th Infantry Company H. The Wisconsin 15th was made up primarily of Norwegian immigrants and was the only all-Scandinavian regiment in the Union Army. Company H was known as "Heg's Rifles" after Colonel Hans Christian Heg who was killed at Chickamauga. Elias received his medical degree at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Keokuk, IA. He first practiced in Webster City, IA for three years. In 1895 he began his New Glarus practice which included a pharmacy run by a partner, Andrew Ellwood Godfrey, a graduate of the University of Chicago Pharmacy School. Dr. Helgesen had two brothers, Peter and John, who also were physicians. Another brother, Sever Helgesen, married Mary Ann Kundert of New Glarus. Dr. Helgesen also served New Glarus as Justice of the Peace – the first "outsider" to hold that position. Dr. Helgesen sold his practice to S. J. Francois in 1916 or 1917 and moved to Evansville.

Dr. Clarence A. Hefty (1888-1969) was a local man, the son of Thomas C. and Elsbeth (Kundert) Hefty. Thomas C. Hefty was a partner with his brother-in-law, Bartli Kundert, in the Hefty and Kundert general store (today's Glarnerladen). Dr. Hefty was associated with Dr. Helgesen. In 1910 Clarence Hefty married Bertha Schindler, daughter of the Gabriel Schindlers. Mrs. Hefty's nephew was Dr. John A. Schindler of the Monroe Clinic. Dr. Hefty's brother Paul (1892-1925) was also a doctor. Dr. and Mrs. Hefty moved to Los Angeles, CA at some point in the early 1920s.

Dr. Silvan J. Francois (1890-1956) was a native of Green Bay, WI of Belgium-French heritage – probably Walloon. (The Walloons were residents of Belgium who spoke French or a French dialect.) Dr. Francois was a graduate of Marquette College Medical School in Milwaukee. Immediately following his graduation he moved to New Glarus where he purchased the practice of Dr. Helgesen. Francois married Marie Truttman of New Glarus in 1917. Dr. and Mrs. Francois had no children but they honored New Glarus youths with Candy Cane Park and also funded the Francois Scholarship given annually to one male and one female graduate of New Glarus High School. In April of 1956 Dr. Francois helped administer the Salk polio vaccine to New Glarus students. Just weeks later he died suddenly of a heart attack at his home.

Dr. Edward D. McQuillin (1884-1963) was a native of Delta, OH. His ancestors had lived in Pennsylvania where they went by their original name McQuilling which is considered of Scots origin. Dr. McQuillin also had a quarter Swiss blood. His paternal grandmother was born Anna Maria Schläppi in the Berner Oberland village of Lenk im Simmental. He received his medical degree in 1910 from the University of Indiana. Shortly thereafter he became associated with Drs. Helgesen and Hefty in New Glarus. He relocated to Daleyville where in 1915 he married Lenore Sanders of the Sanders/Sanderson family. Lenore (Sanders) McQuillin was the granddaughter of early Norwegian settlers Anders and Aagot (Flaaten) Sanderson. In 1851, the first Norwegian Lutheran service of Daleyville was held in the home of the Sandersons. The landmark 1852 Hauge Log Church of Daleyville was built on land donated by the Sanderson family. Dr. McQuillin purchased what had been a Daleyville mill and divided the building into two separate family homes. Dr. McQuillin returned to practice medicine in New Glarus in 1925. The McQuillins had four daughters -- Ruth, Helen, Lorraine, and Marian. Helen (Mrs. Eugene Stuessy) and Lorraine (Mrs. Kenneth Streiff) lived locally. McQuillin served as New Glarus Village President for a number of years.

Dr. John A. Schindler (1903-1957) became internationally known through his best-selling book "How to Live 365 Days a Year" – a book which has sold over 1 million copies and has been translated into 13 languages. Schindler's great-grandparents Abraham and Anna (Baumgartner) Schindler were original New Glarus settlers and his other grandparents were all immigrants from Canton Glarus. Schindler graduated from the University of Wisconsin and received his medical degree from Washington University in St. Louis in 1931. He had a private practice in New Glarus until 1934 when he sold out to Dr. E. V. Hicks and moved to Monroe. In Monroe he co-founded the Gnagi-Schindler Clinic which became the Monroe Clinic in 1939. Dr. Schindler is also remembered as the author of a historical pageant which was performed at New Glarus' 90th Anniversary in 1935. In 1957 a car accident claimed the life of Dr. Schindler.

Dr. Earl V. Hicks (1902-1965) was a native of Sheboygan, WI. He earned his medical degree at the University of Wisconsin in 1932. In 1934 he married Ruth Heiden of Madison. Dr. Hicks practiced medicine for a short time in Blanchardville before coming to New Glarus. He was on the staff of St. Clare Hospital of Monroe since its opening in 1939. In 1952, Dr. Hicks built a new office in New Glarus and was joined in his practice in 1953 by Dr. P. H. Marty. Mrs. Hicks died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 1963. And less than two years later Dr. Hicks died following surgery in a Houston, TX hospital. The Hicks children, Ruth Ann and Charles (Chuck), were graduates of New Glarus High School.



Dr. Philipp H. Marty (1924-2008) was a New Glarus native and a direct descendent of original settlers Mathias and Verena (Luchsinger) Durst, as well as early Schindler, Zweifel and

Legler families. His parents were Philipp and Florence (Legler) Marty. Marty was a graduate of the New Glarus schools and received his medical degree from the University of Wisconsin. During WWII Marty served in the India Burma China Theatre of War for nearly a year. After the war he served on the staff of the University of Oklahoma hospital. And there in Oklahoma he married Marjorie Molsbee in 1952. Dr. Marty returned to New Glarus in 1953 when he joined the practice of Dr. Hicks. Dr. Marty wrote of his experiences as a small town doctor for the New Glarus Sesquicentennial in 1995. In his article, he credited the local Kammer brothers (see following article) as an inspiration to attend medical school.

The Doctors Kammer

Like the three Helgesen brothers of the Town of Perry who were physicians, New Glarus had three brothers – Adolph, Walter and Huldrick Kammer – who also became doctors. The Kammers each distinguished themselves in various areas of medicine.

The Kammer brothers were the sons of Gottlieb and Bertha (Geissberger) Kammer, both immigrants from Switzerland. The Kammer origins were from the village of Wimmis in Canton Bern. Gottlieb Kammer ran a *Wirtschaft* (pub) called “The Corner Exchange” (Was this the tavern later known as the “Four Corners” and today “Tofflers”?) Gottlieb and Bertha’s family consisted of sons Charles (Kelly), Adolph, Walter and Huldrick, and one daughter, Helen.

Adolph G. Kammer (1903-1962) became an expert in Occupational Medicine. He was chair of the Department of Occupational Health at the University of Pittsburgh and was editor of the Journal of Occupational Medicine. He was a recipient of his field’s highest honors for his role as teacher, researcher and practitioner in the field of industrial medicine. Adolph (known as Dolph) studied at the University of Wisconsin and received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He practiced medicine for four years in the early 1930s in Belleville, WI.

Walter F. Kammer (1913-1969) studied at the University of Wisconsin and Rush Medical College. His



expertise was in the field of coronary artery disease. During WWII Walter achieved the rank of Major in the Army Medical Corps. He later practiced in Muncie, IN and taught at the University of Illinois. He was married to Grace Klemm, also a doctor. Dr. Kammer died while skiing in the French Alps and was buried in Wimmis, Canton Bern.

Photo: 1928 or 1929 New Glarus Boys Basketball Team including two of the

Kammer brothers. From left: Walter Kammer, Reginald Duerst, Homer Zweifel, Otto Puempel, Harley Hoesly, Huldrick Kammer, Joe Haegle, Sylvan Schindler, Morris Marty.

Huldrick C. Kammer (1914-2003), known as “Hoopie”, was an endocrinologist who practiced medicine in Portland, OR. He was a graduate of the Northwestern University Medical School and served in Africa in WWII. He was honored by his professional colleagues for his excellence in medical care, education, research and service to his community. In 2003, the Huldrick Kammer Clinical Achievement Award was established in honor of Dr. Kammer.

The only girl in the family was Helen (Kammer) Twitchell. She was also in the medical profession having trained as a nurse at Madison General Hospital and the University of Wisconsin. Helen died in 2005 at the age of 99.

Charles (Kelly) Kammer was the one Kammer sibling to remain in New Glarus. He may be best remembered for his role as umpire in countless New Glarus ball games. He was also active with the American Legion and served as the Commander of the local post. And for nearly 30 years Kelly portrayed the harsh taskmaster (*Fronvogt*) in the Wilhelm Tell pageant. Just months before his death in 1974, Kelly was honored by the New Glarus Jaycees as Outstanding Distinguished Citizen for his many local contributions.

A Doctor's Social

In 1946, as part of the New Glarus centennial celebrations, Drs. S. J. Francois and E. V. Hicks hosted a dinner and program at the Wilhelm Tell Hotel to honor the New Glarus sons and daughters who had become medical doctors. Attending were Drs. Adolph, Walter and Huldrick Kammer, Fred Kundert, Palmer Kundert (the Drs. Kundert were first cousins), Sam Freitag, Veronica Freitag (the Drs. Freitag were brother and sister), Clarence Hefty and John Schindler (the Drs. Hefty and Schindler were uncle and nephew). The program consisted of three medical professionals speaking on recent medical advances and the musical entertainment featured Swiss music.

Dr. Marti of Canton Glarus

The last of the home town general practitioners in New Glarus was our own Dr. Philipp H. Marty. Nearly two centuries earlier in Canton Glarus was another Dr. Marti who gained a considerable reputation for his work in the area of small pox vaccines. Small pox was a dreaded viral disease which killed millions. It was especially lethal in Europe during the 18th century when an estimated 400,000 people died each year. Inoculation against small pox was present in the Far East centuries ago. This practice was witnessed in Constantinople by British subjects who subsequently brought it to England in the early 18th century. A group of prisoners were used as test subjects and the inoculated prisoners survived. The British royalty accepted the practice of small pox inoculations and inoculations became increasingly available to the public.

After receiving a medical education and degree, Dr. Johannes Marti (1745-1819) returned to Canton Glarus to practice medicine. The following (translated by Sue Wolf) are Dr. Marti's own words about his historic role in the introduction of small pox inoculations in Canton Glarus:

“In the year 1767, at the time when all doctors usually had still rejected vaccinating as a dangerous, unauthorized, indeed sinful act, I had introduced it into our canton [Glarus] and disseminated it with great success. While it was still not much under way in Switzerland, to be sure, indeed, it was universally under way in England and other countries, despite obstacles also being put in the way over there by means of scholarly refutations to it. Also, my success promoted me so much that I had vaccinated approximately 3000 children before I came up against one who died of severe teething-related illness. This slowed down my rapid progress for a while, but more still what presented material for having doubts was that, for a few other doctors, who had also vaccinated children and had pronounced it to be well-done, the trouble started again. That when smallpox was rampant in the canton, their children had again been struck by it as well, and indeed often soon after their vaccinations. This came about, accordingly, because these men, in the opinion that it was very good to do, had selected the most beautiful, ruptured smallpox for the vaccination, which, because the pus had already become sterilized and too gentle, were worthless for the infecting.”

While I myself, on the other hand, in view of this, had always considered the most unruptured and contaminating ones better, since they assuredly and quickly infected and were accompanied with the most favorable success, which the Englishmen had also observed. I continued on uninterrupted with my inoculations. At that time, however, we vaccinated only with the natural smallpox, which was accompanied by many troubles and worries. Indeed, as soon as I had made the acquaintance of the more reliable cowpox and had tested it, I began to give it free to each one who wanted it. The smallpox vaccination is and remains one of the greatest benefits which the medical profession can render to the human race, indeed so great that through it they will uproot the terrifying smallpox plague entirely, as soon as all the people are convinced sufficiently of it one day through prolonged experience. (Note: Marti was prescient. In 1979 the World Health Organization declared smallpox an eradicated disease.)

However, so long as there are still people who neglect the vaccination from ignorance, and the police do not prevent smallpox patients from being transported, either through the canton or from one commune to another, the epidemic will never entirely disappear. Nevertheless, because of the great number of people who are already vaccinated, who stand in its way and prevent its spread, from now on we will never more see universal defeats and atrocious mutilation and disfigurement of the children like that, as we have unfortunately often experienced. I also hope through it to achieve the same benefit, so that I promised to pay 100 new Dollars to anyone vaccinated by me, if he could prove sooner or later that he had been attacked again by the natural smallpox. However, nobody has come yet to fetch the 100 new Dollars, although I have often vaccinated wagons full of poor children, which they brought to me, all at the same time."

Dr. Johannes Marti was the son of Jacob Marti of Glarus and his wife Ursula Zwingli. Dr. Marti's grandfather, Johannes Marti, was a *Landvogt* at the Werdenberg Castle (see *Family History Notes* Fall, 2006 regarding the Werdenberg *Landvögte*) and his maternal grandfather, Johann Balthasar Zwingli, was a Reformed minister who served in Elm. Johannes' mother, Ursula Zwingli, was the sister of Elsbeth Zwingli (married to Mathias Elmer of Elm) who is an ancestor found in many New Glarus family lines (see *Family History Notes* Summer, 2008 regarding ancestors from Reformation times and their connections to various New Glarus families).

Early Green County Medicine:

Nicholas Cornelius was a Green County pioneer. In 1899 he was 84 years old and was said to be the oldest surviving settler of this area having arrived in 1834. An article in the March 6, 1899 *Monroe Evening Times* looked back on Cornelius' memories. He commented, "In those days, no one ever thought of sending for a doctor. . . mandrake root was taken for almost every illness." References to the mandrake plant run the gamut from the Bible (Genesis 30:14), to Shakespeare, to "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets".

WikiLeaks Contributor

Swiss ex-Banker Rudolf Elmer (pictured on right) has recently cooperated with Julian Assange (pictured on left) and Assange's WikiLeaks organization by providing overseas bank account secrets, allegedly those accounts of the rich and famous looking to evade taxes. For eight years, Elmer headed the Cayman Island operations of Switzerland's Bank Julius Bär until his 2002 dismissal. Great Britain's *Guardian* newspaper has called Elmer "most important and boldest whistle-blower in Swiss banking history." Elmer says of himself that he is "a culprit, a witness, a whistleblower, an activist and a reformer."



Elmer, whose ancestry is from Elm, Canton Glarus, is distantly connected with people in this area through a Rhyner connection. Elmer's great-great grandfather, Rudolf Rhyner, had brothers and sisters who left Elm and immigrated to this area including Heinrich Rhyner of Monticello, Verena Rhyner (Mrs. Fridolin Zimmermann) of New Glarus, and Anna Rhyner (Mrs. Isaiah Babler) of Monticello.

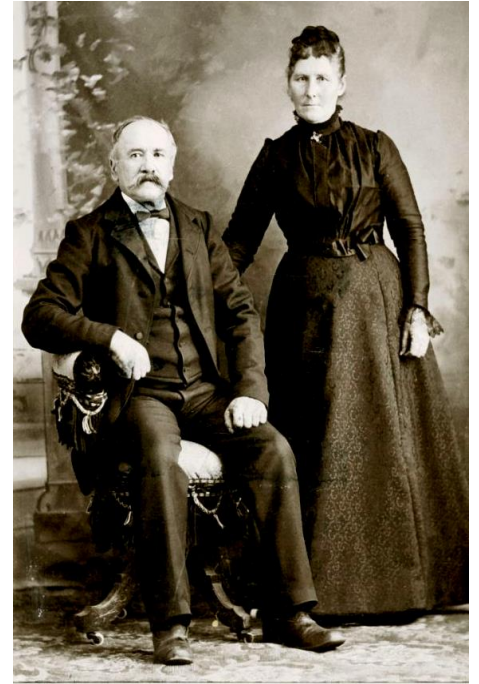
Beer and Sausage: A Local Tradition Continues

“Short speeches and long bologna have always been the order of the day at the New Glarus celebrations. Any lack of rain is likely to be fully made up by a liberal flow of amber fluid.” (From the August 15, 1895 edition of the *Monroe Evening Times* on the 50th Anniversary of New Glarus’ founding.) With brats and beer still found at all local events, some things don’t change!

Sebastian and Minnie Durst

One of the couples likely present at New Glarus’ 50th anniversary celebration was Sebastian and Salome (Duerst) Durst of Albany. Sebastian was a boy of 7 in 1845 when he immigrated with his parents Mathias and Verena (Luchsinger) Durst from Diesbach to New Glarus. Mathias Durst is best remembered for having written the 1845 immigrant diary which has been the centerpiece of New Glarus history. He was a *Spengler* or tinsmith as was his son Sebastian. Sebastian was a volunteer in the 9th Wisconsin Infantry Company D – the 9th Wisconsin known as the “Salomon Guards” made up of German-speaking soldiers.

Sebastian’s wife Salome (known as Minnie) was just 3 years old when she arrived in New Glarus in 1847 with her parents Johann Heinrich and Barbara (Hoesly) Duerst. Both Durst/Duerst (originally Dürst) families were from Diesbach, Canton Glarus. Minnie was named for her grandmother, Salome (Dürst) Dürst, who was the sister of Judge Niklaus Dürst, a founder of New Glarus. (Photograph courtesy of the Monticello Area Historical Society)



Sebastian Durst had 4 siblings – Amelia or Emilie who died as a 10 year old child, Verena who married Heinrich Marty (Dr. Philipp Marty’s great grandparents), harness maker Nicholas C. (married Anna Maria Aebly) and Rosina who married Melchior Schmid (the parents of the late Henry M. Schmid).

Minnie Duerst was the oldest child in a large family. Her sisters and brothers were Barbara (married to blacksmith Constantine Haegele), Rosina (married to Fridolin Hefty), Agatha (married to Henry Hoesly), Magdalena (married to Fridolin (Fred) Luchsinger), Fridolin (married to Emilie Kundert), Andreas (married to Rahel Gredig and Ellen Swan Woodard), Katharina (married to Jacob Mueller), and Johann Heinrich (married to Elsbeth Aebly).

Sebastian and Minnie Durst both lived long lives. Sebastian was an honored elder in his later years. In 1923, Durst and fellow immigrant and Civil War Vet Oswald Babler were guests of honor riding in Monroe’s Cheese Day Parade. Sebastian died in 1925 at the age of 87 and Minnie two years later at the age of 82.

Jass or Yass

A frequent pastime for clubs or at house parties was card playing. Card games played included bridge, euchre, 500, whist, and the Swiss card game *Jass* – generally spelled yass in the newspaper accounts. Today yass is played in a New Glarus tavern or two by the town elders (generally the men), but just a couple of generations ago it was enjoyed widely by men and women.



Hoesly entertained neighbors at their home including the Robert Strahms, Leonard Rindys, Paul Eichelkrauts, Pius Buessers, Gilbert Duersts, Jacob Otts and Ernst Zentners.

The Robert Wild hosted their yass club at their home. Their club members included the Melvin Blumers, Clarence Ittens, Melvin Voegelis, John Blums, Frank Schiessers, Clarence E. Hoeslys, and the Jacob Otts.

And the Carl Blasers, who were about to move to a new home in New Glarus, were feted by their Postville neighbors and friends. This yass-playing group included the Herman J. Elmers, Delbert Elmers, Harold Elmers, Julius Elmers, Ambrose Wengers, Peter Otts, Charles Hoeslys, Orville Bleilers, Charles Derendingers, Herbert Blasers, Lutz Gmur, and Patty Elmer.

A New Glarus women's yass club of the same time period included Mmes. Oswald Altmann, John Kundert, Fred Tschudy, Harlan Wernle, William Scheu, Fred J. Marty, Rose Opfermann, and Margaret Hefty.

So while this game is still played in New Glarus, it no longer is as widely enjoyed by members of the community. It is another of the small traditions which has largely passed from the local scene. In fact, how many card clubs of any kind are still around?

History Detective Question:

Who was said to be the first New Glarus High School alumnus/alumna to graduate from the University of Wisconsin? Hint: the person was in the NGHS Class of 1919 and the UW graduate's father was a Russian immigrant. If you know or would like to venture a guess, please email me – raelmer@charter.net – and I will post the correct answer in the upcoming issue.

History Detective Challenge Answers:

The past issue posed a question about what three New Glarus men – Arnold Marty, Oswald Geiger, and Elmer Figi – had in common. There were a few guesses but no one had the correct answer. Perhaps this challenge was too obscure. A hint -- the answer lies in the Christian names of these men. Two other area men – Elmer Lemon of Monticello and Oliver Maas of Belleville – share the same trait with the three New Glarus men.

Another question asked who was the famous descendent of 19th century Swiss immigrant Samuel Warmbrodt of Illinois. Several people had the correct answer, but it was Virginia Danner of St. Louis who was first to name the late and great actress Elizabeth Taylor.

And the other challenge questioned the historical relevance of the red storage shed (pictured right) found in the backyard of a New Glarus home. The storage



Oak Shade School, Section 21, Mt. Pleasant Township

shed was constructed from the vestibule of the Oak Shade

School house by Herman J. Elmer. In 1963 the country school building was moved from rural Monticello to New Glarus to serve as the country school house in the Historical Village museum. The school with its entry room can be seen in the accompanying photograph courtesy of the Monticello Area Historical Society.



Now nearly 50 years later, the former Elmer home (and its red storage shed) is owned by Christopher and Molly Babler. And as it turns out, the Oak Shade School was located on the

farm of Chris's great-grandfather, Roy Babler. Chris's great-grandmother, Ruth (Holcomb) Ringhand taught at the school. And Chris's grandparents, Milton and Beverly (Spring) Babler both attended the Oak Shade School! So even a little red storage shed has a story to tell. And for the Babler family, that story came with more of a connection to their family history than they even realized.

The Johannes and Barbara (Wild) Luchsinger Family and John Luchsinger's Histories

In 1879 and again in 1892, The Wisconsin Historical Society published histories of New Glarus written by John Luchsinger of Monroe. Both histories (links provided below) offer good insights into the origins of New Glarus and life during the first fifty years. These were written at a time when the earliest settlers were still alive to tell their first hand accounts.

The Johannes and Barbara (Wild) Luchsinger family immigrated from Schwanden, Canton Glarus to America in 1845 and lived in both Syracuse and Philadelphia for a number of years before arriving in New Glarus in the 1850s. The three oldest Luchsinger children – Nicholas, Ursula (Mrs. George Dittman), and Sibilla (Mrs. John Ritter) – remained in the Philadelphia area. The younger children – Samuel, John (the historian), Barbara (Mrs. Jacob Burgy), Katharina (Mrs. Mathias Stuessy) and Fridolin – came to New Glarus. Johannes Luchsinger, the father, was a stone mason by trade. The family farmed the northeastern-most sections of land in the Town of New Glarus. The stone house on Argue Road was likely built by Johannes Luchsinger as the family home.

John Luchsinger (1839-1822), the historian, was born in Schwanden. He became a lawyer in Monroe and served in various local offices such as Justice of the Peace. He also served in the Wisconsin Legislature in the 1870s and 1880s. Luchsinger married Elsbeth Kundert, a Swiss immigrant and they raised nine children.

John Luchsinger's sister and brother-in-law Barbara and Jacob Burgy were farmers south of Monticello where the area is still known as Burgy Flats. John's other sister Katharina was married to New Glarus teacher Mathias Stuessy. The youngest brother, Fridolin (known as Fred) was a farmer on the home farm and later a Belleville businessman. Fred was married to Magdalena Duerst, a sister of Salome (Minnie) Duerst mentioned in a previous article.

John Luchsinger's brother Samuel married a widow Anna (Schneider) Rhyner and after her death married Anna Barbara Freitag. Both Anna and Anna Barbara were natives of Elm. Samuel and his family initially lived in the Renwick, Iowa area and later they moved to San Jose, CA where Samuel and Anna Barbara died.



By the 1880s the eight children of Johannes and Barbara Luchsinger were living as far east as Vineland, NJ and Philadelphia, PA, in the Green County area, and as far west as San Jose, CA. Quite a geographical dispersion for an immigrant family of that era!

Lola Newell of Dallas, TX shared the family photo pictured here of the four daughters of Samuel and

Anna Barbara (Freitag) Luchsinger of San Jose, CA. These California girls – Julia, Anna, Jessie and Minnie Luchsinger – were born within a five year span. The last surviving and youngest sister, Minnie, died in San Jose in 1974. None of the sisters ever married.

The John Luchsinger histories of New Glarus can be now found online by clicking on the following links:

["The Swiss Colony of New Glarus" by Hon. John Luchsinger, 1879](#)

["The Planting of the Swiss Colony at New Glarus, Wis." by John Luchsinger, 1892](#)