

Family History Notes

Fall 2013

History of the people of Canton Glarus

By Duane H. Freitag

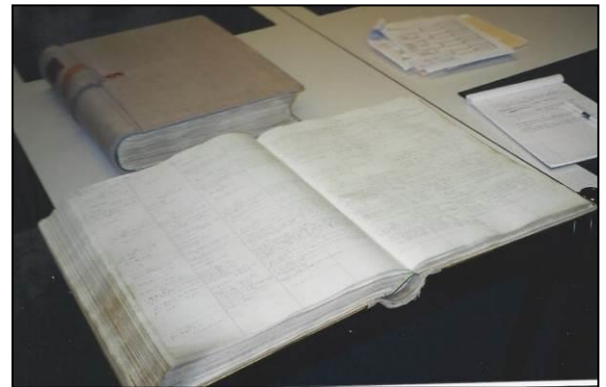
Since many of our Swiss ancestors immigrated from Canton Glarus, one can get a feel for both our genetic makeup and hereditary aspects of our psyche by looking at the span of history of the canton. This is the third of six parts.

Part 3: Family Names Emerge

The transitional era of the late Middle Ages [1300 to 1500 C.E.] was the beginning of recorded history about our individual ancestors from Canton Glarus.

Life then was not easy. While many adults in Glarus lived a long life, average life expectancy was short because of high infant mortality. Outbreaks of the plague and other epidemics (smallpox, cholera, typhus) also took their toll, combined with wars and famine. Europe's population as a whole was cut in half. In the northern part of the land of Glarus, some people died of marsh fever (malaria). The unhealthy marshes were extensive there due to the large amounts of debris that had swept down from the mountains because of deforestation by Glarner centuries before. Avalanches were also a constant concern. Nevertheless, agricultural production was beginning to increase beyond the subsistence level due to better farming techniques and possibly climate improvement. Our ancestors sold their cows, cheese, grain, and wood in exchange for foreign goods – wool, silk, spices, salt, and wine – that passed through the trade routes. More people were turning to the trades in market towns, and that fostered the development of the city of Glarus.

Documents from this late medieval era are the oldest sources of family information. Yearbooks that detail donations to churches, and records of witnesses to business deals, have the earliest occurrences of well-known family names. Baptisms, marriages, and deaths were generally not recorded until the 16th Century. However, as a 1950's history of Canton Glarus says: "Families came and went at that time like today. . . . they were concerned like all people with flesh and blood and all its joys, worries, and strivings." Where once a place of origin sufficed next to a first name [*Elmer from Elm, Luchsinger from Luchsingen, Netstaller from Netstal*], now surnames appeared – some were from occupations [*Legler=barrel maker, Schindler=shingler*], some from baptism names or first names [*Klässi from Nicholas, Ott from Otto, Marti from Martin, Blesi from Blasius*], others were nicknames [*Dürst=thirsty*]. In the earliest Glarus books there are about 25 family names of which 11 still exist [Brunner, Elmer, Grüniger, Hösli, Landolt, Luchsinger, Ott, Schmid, Speich, Stäger, and Tschudi].



Extensive genealogy books of all the families in each community of Canton Glarus, compiled by J. J. Kubly-Müller and based on church and civil records, are kept in the *Landesarchiv*.

The most widespread of the oldest families were the Tschudis. The Tschudi family can be found in the genealogy of many in Green County's Swiss community. The family likely descended from the Knights of Glarus and definitely did intermarry with some of the lesser nobility. As a whole, the family had large land holdings, including the now-ruined Gräpplang castle to the east of Canton Glarus near Flums. Most descendants here can trace their lineage to Heinrich Tschudi of Schwanden and his wife Katharina Netstaller. Heinrich was born in 1382 and he and his brother were orphaned when their father was killed during the movement for independence from the emperor [Heinrich's *Landesarchiv* genealogy number is Glarus Branch I #58]. In the 13th Century, the Habsburgs [whose family origins lie in today's Canton

Aargau] were consolidating its imperial power. They asserted control over the cloisters and their land, including the territory of Glarus. Previously, as part of its management of the land, the Säckinggen cloister exercised a lesser government authority that was comparable to handling misdemeanors. The imperial representatives had power over more serious situations. The Glarner preferred the mild rule of Säckinggen over the harsher imperial rule. But the Säckinggen position of *Meier* faded away and the imperial representative – the *Landvogt* [sheriff or bailiff] or *Untervogt* [undersheriff] – became the sole supervisor of the canton. Knights of the Windegg (or Windeck) family held that position for a while as did members of the von Landenberg and Wichler families. The Windeggs had two castles – Oberwindegg above Niederurnen in Canton Glarus and the more important Niederwindegg across the valley to the north between Schänis and Ziegelbrücke. The Windeggs and the von Landenbergs are connected to the Tschudi family through marriage.

Most of the castles of Switzerland date from this era. Since Glarus was not on a major trade route, there were no massive stone fortresses. There were a few castles in addition to Oberwindegg (pictured), but only very small stone remnants remain today. The oldest of this group likely is Sola, near the village of



Sool. It was probably built in the 12th Century as the seat of the Knights of Glarus, then abandoned in about 1250 when the lesser nobility were being foiled by the Habsburg rule. Another castle was on a small hill at Näfels and appears to have briefly served as the main administrative center for the Habsburgs. Today a Franciscan cloister and retreat center rests on the castle foundation. The Vorburg castle was at a strategic point above Oberurnen and had originally been the seat of the Von Urnen family, *ministerialens* who had been given the land by Säckinggen, and later the Stucki family when they served as *Untervögte*. Benzingen, on a ridge north of Schwanden, guarded the point

where the Sernftal meets the Linthal. There are several other locations where castles may once have stood, some perhaps as an emergency refuge for the general population. At Oberwindegg, a restaurant and vineyard now occupy the site.

During the late Middle Ages there was another migration of people affecting Glarus and for many of us becoming part of our genetic makeup. The *Walsers*, a German-speaking people from Canton Valais, were moving eastward into Canton Graubünden and southwards into Italy. They obtained special privileges in exchange for helping to settle and control Alpine passes, and some of the Alpine names in Glarus reflect that. A number of identifiable *Walser* families eventually immigrated into Canton Glarus, especially the Sernftal, including the families Bräm, Disch, Geiger, Rhyner, Schneider, and Stauffacher.

For many of our ancestors who lived further back in the main valley of Glarus, or in the side valleys, taking part in the rites of the church involved a long journey. Initially there were only two churches, both in the city of Glarus – the main parish church and St. Michael's on the castle mount. The parish church was destroyed in the great fire of 1861 (and the original possibly earlier) and the current St. Michael's dates to 1721. By 1282 there was a church at Matt. Part of the Matt church and part of the Betschwanden church remain as the oldest religious structures in the canton. In winter, the Matt church wasn't close enough for our ancestors at Elm and by 1493 the pope had approved the construction of St. Peter's church, which still is used by the community.

The beginning of two important economic activities also dates to this era: the textile industry and the cattle trade. Textile production first emerged in Canton St. Gallen and spread to Canton Glarus. During the long winter months many people spent their time spinning and weaving wool and hemp. Those living higher in the mountains, with its shorter growing season, raised some flax and wove linen. A simple gray cloth was typical of the weavers of Canton Glarus for many years. A brisk trade in cattle began with cows that had been grazing in the mountain pass meadows. Rather than return these cows to the home valley for winter, farmers drove them to southern Switzerland and Italy for trade. Soon their Brown Swiss breed became one of the earliest of the purebreds.

Next: Independence

Evolving New Glarus

There was a subtle change observed at a recent performance of the Wilhelm Tell pageant. The program, which traditionally stated “Presented by the Swiss of New Glarus”, simply said “Presented by the People of New Glarus”. Looking at the surnames of the cast members it was easy to see why this change had taken place. The Swiss of New Glarus are becoming fewer and fewer. These days there are few Swiss immigrants, few residents of 100% Swiss background, and only a mere handful can claim to be 100% Glarner background. Those who learned the Swiss dialect from their parents are an endangered species.

Today the “immigrants” to the area are not from Switzerland but are likely non-native residents who have built or purchased homes in and around the town and who may commute to jobs in Madison. In the last generation or two, the youth of New Glarus typically leave to begin their adult lives all corners of the country and beyond. These changes are inevitable. And this is not a phenomenon unique to New Glarus. With our very mobile society this occurrence is taking place everywhere.



The close connection to our Swiss past is also changing. In my New Glarus High School class of 1972 there were about 50 graduates. I could count 12 fellow classmates to whom I was related. In the five New Glarus High School classes from 1969 to 1973, there were 46 graduates who could claim to be direct descendants of Joshua and Barbara (Speich) Wild, early New Glarus immigrants. Another way of expressing this is that approximately twenty percent of all the NGHS graduates in that five year span could trace a slice of their ancestry to this *one* pioneer family. Of those 46 graduates descended from the Joshua Wilds, 35 moved from New Glarus and 11 remained. And of those 11 who remained, only about 5 of *their* children have remained in New Glarus.

Pictured are the five children of Joshua and Barbara Wild from whom those 46 graduates could trace a portion of their ancestry. Back row from left are Elsbeth (Mrs. David Hoesly), John Wild, Maria (Mrs. Fridolin Kundert), and seated from left Barbara (Mrs. Fridolin Streiff) and Katharina (Mrs. Julius Eichelkraut).

When further examining my fellow classmates as well as childhood friends and neighbors of 40 years ago, many of them had Swiss immigrant grandparents. Classmates Jim Kundert and Sandy Ziltner had grandmothers born in Canton Glarus. Other classmates having Swiss immigrant grandparents included Harold Legler, Bonnie Roth, Lou Ann Wild, Mary Ellen Hoesly, Debbie Nevil, David Derendinger, Bill Bigler, Ed Disch, Ed Fiez, Paul Vetterli, Beverly Bircher and Rex Hoesly. Friends and acquaintances also had Canton Glarus-born grandparents including Ruth Elmer, Betty Zimmerman, Ken Freitag, and Suzanne Altmann. The Hofer girls – Marsha, Cheryl and Diane -- had two Canton Glarus-born grandparents as well as two Canton Bern-born grandparents. Friends and acquaintances in surrounding classes had numerous Swiss-born parents and grandparents bearing a diverse listing of Swiss surnames such as Kummer, Hess, Lienhardt, Willi, Yaun, Klossner, Stettler, Stampfli, Kuenzi, Friedli, Pulfer, Gerber, Urben, Leiser, Ingold, Luthi, Wytenbach, Buesser, Gmur, Dudler, Waefler, Frick, Ruef, Strickler, Sonderegger, Burkhardt, Pulver, Kehrl, Senn, Brand, Wurgler, Kern, Arnold and Zurkirken. We even encountered a few Swiss-born fellow students by the surnames of Hofmann, Mattmann, and Gruter.

The New Glarus community continues to celebrate its Swiss heritage and traditions. It continues to give the village its identity. Over the past several decades the village Swissness appears to be increasingly driven by the tourist-related businesses. The perpetuation of our history and tradition plays into the narrative and imagery needed to sustain the Swissness required by the Chamber of Commerce for its tourist-dependent businesses. New Glarus is fortunate to have solid groups such as the Jodlerklub, Maennerchor and Tell Guild which maintain genuine traditions.

Yet the New Glarus Village Board appears to lack the will to consistently commit to ongoing financial support the Chalet of the Golden Fleece (which the village owns). The New Glarus Historical Society has done little to engage in local history beyond operating a tourist-focused seasonal museum. The New Glarus Chamber of Commerce actively promotes the Swissness of the community. Yet how much do the Chamber members themselves contribute to the cultural organizations which provide the Swiss narrative desired by the Chamber?

Many questions arise regarding the future of New Glarus? Will the village continue to project a Swiss theme or will this slowly fade away as the population becomes less and less Swiss? Will the Swiss and non-Swiss alike who take on the roles and responsibilities of maintaining the traditions take the time to learn the unique history and traditions of the village? We see an increasing Swiss veneer but a decreasing presence of those with New Glarus roots. Many, perhaps most, residents are now “the people of New Glarus” and less “the Swiss of New Glarus”.

The Oil Baron

Peter Elmer was born between New Glarus and Monticello in 1854. His parents were among the New Bilten immigrants of 1847. Peter, his wife Euphemia née Elmer and their family farmed south of Monticello (later the Wallace Feldt farm) until the early 1900s when they moved to Austin, MN. Peter also owned two sections of land (1280 acres) in Divide County, ND. Divide County lies on the North Dakota and Manitoba border. The county was named Divide since the continental divide passes through it. Divide County waters either flow north into the Hudson Bay or south into the Mississippi watershed. And more relevant today, Divide County lies over the petroleum-rich Bakken Formation. The oil-laden shale in this one county alone is expected to deliver over 17 billion barrels of oil.

In 1954, the very day Peter Elmer celebrated his 100th birthday he was given the news that oil had been discovered on his North Dakota property. Apparently he subscribed to J. Paul Getty’s dictum, “Rise early, work hard, strike oil.” But Peter was not to be an oil baron long -- he died just a few months following his oil strike.

Finding Nemo

Last July, a few days before the cemetery walk, the guides Chris Kiesz, Ann Marie Ott, Mary Funseth, Duane Freitag and I were walking the tour route. We were reviewing each stop along the way. After passing the Theiler monument, someone mentioned a small monument topped with the figure of a lamb at rest. Lambs were often used in the funerary monuments of infants and children. We studied the stone trying to decipher the name and dates. It was difficult as the stone had worn away in places. The name NEMO seemed to appear and the last name perhaps ended in “EST” or “UR”. We wondered who it was and if in fact it was a child. It wasn’t until after the cemetery tour that finding Nemo became a pursuit.

One local family had a son named Nemo. That was the family of Swiss immigrant Edward C. Gmur and his wife Anna Jordi, a New Glarus native. The Gmurs were innkeepers, having operated both the New Glarus Hotel and the Wilhelm Tell Hotel at different periods. At another point Ed C. Gmur owned a meat market which he sold to Eugene Strickler and Hans Saxer. In the mid-1920s Ed C. and Anna (and most of their family) moved to California where they lived out their lives. Ed C. and Anna had 10 children – all boys – born in the 29 year span of 1893 to 1922. The boys were Leo, Edward, Arthur, Benjamin, Bert, Nemo, Verus, Ralph, Nathan, and Montegue. Their son Nemo Ernest Gmur, their only child to die in infancy, had lived only a few months from late 1908 to early 1909. The stone with the recumbent lamb belonged to Nemo Gmur.



The lengthy span between the oldest and youngest Gmur sons afforded this family a rather unique position for one family. The oldest two boys, Leo and Edward, served in WWI. And a generation later, sons Ben, Verus, Ralph, Nathan and Monte served in WWII. And by the time of WWII, there were also three grandsons who served – Gordon and Doral, sons of Arthur (Boogie) and Vera (Hilton) Gmur, and Bud Gmur son of Ben.

And there were other Gmur kin who served in WWII. A 1943 newspaper account wrote of the patriotism displayed by the extended Gmur/Gmuer family in those WWII days. Serving from New Glarus were Kenneth, Dean and Richard Gmur, sons of Joseph and Louise (Jordi) Gmur, Herbert son of Gottlieb and Amalia (Dudler) Gmur, and Robert Gmur son of Robert Sr. and Marie (Dudler) Gmur. Serving from Pittsburgh were Charles Gmuer and Regis Gmuer (note different spelling of the Pittsburgh branch). Charles was the brother of Joseph Gmur of New Glarus and Regis was their nephew.

The Rule of Three

The rule of three is a writing principle that suggests that things that come in threes are inherently funnier, more satisfying, or more effective than other numbers of things. The Latin phrase, "*omne trium perfectum*" (everything that comes in threes is perfect, or, every set of three is complete) conveys the idea embodied in the rule of three. Has anyone ever noticed the “rule of three” found in playwright Friedrich Schiller’s work “Wilhelm Tell”? To illustrate this rule consider how Schiller interweaves three storylines in his Tell drama. One storyline follows the lead character Wilhelm Tell himself. A second storyline highlights of the nobles including Baron von Attinghausen, his nephew Ulrich von Rudenz and Ulrich’s sweetheart Bertha von Bruneck. And a third storyline is that of the common folk - those peasants seeking to live independently from the Habsburg oppression.

Schiller’s opening scene of the play introduces three men who happen upon each other on the shores of Lake Uri. Here Schiller places Ruodi the fisherman, Kuoni the herdsman, and Werni the chamois hunter. These three men occupy different geographical realms – the water, the land, and the mountains.

Schiller’s chief women characters, Tell’s wife Hedwig, Gertrude Stauffacher, and Bertha von Bruneck, represent different three economic classes. Hedwig is a proud peasant woman. Gertrude lives in comfortable means in a handsome home. And Bertha is a noble – a Habsburg heiress.



Three regions of central Switzerland are represented. These are the original three cantons of Switzerland -- Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden. These three regions were not a device invented by Schiller; they are historical fact. But representing these three cantons on the Rütli are three men. They are Arnold von Melchtal of Unterwalden, Werner Stauffacher of Schwyz, and Walter Fürst of Uri. These three men represent the march of time – Arnold the impassioned youth, Werner the determined man of middle age, and the elderly and wise Walter.



The painting of the *Rütli Schwur* show these three men, swearing their oath with thumb and two fingers raised. This raised hand gesture is called the *Schwurhand* and may actually refer to the Holy Trinity rather than the three cantons. The *Schwurhand* is still used by the Swiss Guards at the Vatican when they take their oath. And at the right is Nick Engelbert’s folk art rendition of the *Rütli Schwur* outside his Grandview home near Hollandale.



Schiller was not entirely bound to the number three. His Wilhelm Tell was composed of five acts, not three!

Town of New Glarus Log Cabin

Several years back Doral Disch and his son Keith were tearing down a dilapidated house on a farm which they had purchased. The farmland they obtained was adjacent to their home farm -- both properties being located on Disch Road in Section 33 in the Town of New Glarus. Inside the old farm house was a log cabin. This was not a surprise discovery as it had been known within the family that the log cabin formed the core of the old house. The Dischs decided to salvage the cabin and offer it for sale. A buyer was found and the log cabin was rebuilt in Mineral Point where it sits proudly on historic Shake Rag Street (see photo). Thus this Town of New Glarus log cabin was preserved -- albeit in Mineral Point. But what of the cabin's history?



The story of this log cabin is also the story of how two farms became one farm, then two farms again, and now again one farm. This sequence occurred in one extended family over a period of over 150 years. Neither the original builder of the cabin nor the year of construction appears to have been recorded. The land was first purchased by Rosina (Heussi) Beglinger, a native from the lakeside village of Mühlehorn, Canton Glarus. Rosina's husband Jacob Beglinger, a native of Mollis, Canton Glarus, had died in New Glarus in 1852. In the 1860s David Duerst and his wife Barbara née Schindler owned the land. They had married in 1859. It is probable the cabin was built in the 1850s or 1860s by the Beglingers or the David Duersts.

The adjoining farm was owned by David Duerst's father Johann Jacob Duerst. Johann Jacob Duerst was the 1815 soldier featured in the story "Veterans of a Foreign War" in the Winter 2013 newsletter issue. In 1860, the widow Rosina Beglinger (listed as Rosina Heussi) was living on this adjoining farm with widower Johann Jacob Duerst Sr. and his other son Johann Jacob Duerst, Jr.

Around the late 1860s, David and Barbara Duerst and children left their New Glarus farm for Yolo County, CA where Barbara's brother, David Schindler had settled (see following story). The David Duerst farm was purchased by his brother-in-law Andreas Hoesly. Andreas, who was married to Barbara Duerst, had three sons and it was likely his desire to purchase another farm for one of their three sons. The oldest son Jacob L. Hoesly married Barbara Legler in 1876 and they then occupied the former David Duerst farm and lived in the home which contained the log cabin. After a period of time, Jacob L. purchased the adjoining farm previously occupied by his maternal grandfather and uncle Johann Jacob Duerst Sr. and Jr. The two small farms had become one farm under the ownership of the Jacob L. Hoeslys.



This photo of Jacob L. and Barbara (Legler) Hoesly family dates from around 1912. Back row: John D. Marty, Henry H. Marty, Henry H. Duerst, Fred Ott, Fred Hoesly. Middle row: Barbara (Hoesly) Marty, Rose (Hoesly) Marty, Louisa (Hoesly) Duerst, Bertha (Hoesly) Ott, Alma (Hoesly) Marty, Andrew Hoesly, Barbara (Legler) Hoesly, Jacob L. Hoesly. Front row: Alvin Marty, Louisa (Marty) Buesser, Herman

Marty, Gilbert Ott, Meta (Marty) Buesser. Missing from the photo are Sylvia (Hoesly) Arn and Emilie (Hoesly) Eichelkraut Wenger, and grandson Harvey Ott. Photo is courtesy of Esther Disch.

In 1913 Jacob L. Hoesly died tragically in a shotgun accident. His widow Barbara and their two sons Fred and Andrew continued to reside on the farm. In 1920 Fred married Hilda Disch. Fred and Hilda (pictured in front of the farm home which contained the log cabin) lived for a short time in the old farm home but then purchased the southern part of the Jacob L. Hoesly farm, dividing it again into two separate farms. Fred Hoesly's brother Andrew and his wife Meta née Legler resided on the home farm. Andrew Hoesly died at the age of 30 and at some point after Andrew's death the farm became the home of Elroy and Lorna (Marty) Eichelkraut. Elroy was a nephew of Andrew and Fred Hoesly.



Fred and Hilda Hoesly had no children of their own but raised her nephew Doral Disch after the death of Doral's mother in 1922. The Fred Hoesly farm later became the home farm of Doral and Esther (Waage) Disch and now occupied by their son Keith and Linda (Boley) Disch. Doral and Esther purchased the Elroy Eichelkraut farm, and thus making the two farms again one farm.

The Glarners of Cache Creek

Cache Creek, a tributary of the Sacramento River in California, was known as *Rivière la Cache* by the Hudson Bay fur trappers who cached their furs along its banks. There were at least four Glarner families who ended up in the area of Cache Creek – the first arriving just a few years after the California Gold Rush and subsequent statehood in 1850.

David Schindler and his fiancée Magdalena Schindler were present when New Glarus was founded in 1845. In 1847 they married in Galena, IL and moved to California about 1853. They settled in the Town of Cache Creek in Yolo County. The David Schindlers are listed in the Town of Cache Creek in the 1860 census along with the Dr. S. F. Rodolf family. Dr.



Rodolf, a native of Zurzach, Canton Zurich, and his brothers had immigrated to Mineral Point, WI in 1834. Rodolf family members are known to New Glarus history for the assistance they had provided Judge Niklaus Dürst and Fridolin Streiff in 1845 in their quest to locate land for the New Glarus settlement. The photo at right is the Old Yolo Cemetery monument of David and Magdalena (Schindler) Schindler.



David Schindler's sister Barbara was married to David Duerst. David and Barbara married in 1859 and farmed in Section 33 of the Town of New Glarus (see preceding article). They moved to Yolo County, CA around the late 1860s. Next to arrive in Yolo County from New Glarus was Fridolin Durst, whose parents Fridolin and Magdalena (Streiff) Durst farmed one mile west of New Glarus (see article about these people in "Family History Notes" Summer, 2011). Fridolin Durst (Jr.) was born in Diesbach, Canton Glarus, immigrated to New Glarus then ventured west to Yolo County. He arrived a few years after David Duerst who was his mother's cousin. Pictured here are Fridolin Durst and wife Augusta Fritag who was of German background. Photo is courtesy of Kerry Kasza, a descendant of Fridolin and Augusta.

Fridolin Durst's sister-in-law in New Glarus, Anna (Elmer) Durst, had a brother named Sebastian Elmer. By the turn of the last century Sebastian Elmer had also made his way to Yolo County. There he married Yolo County native Amanda Holverstott. These four inter-related families – the Schindlers, Duersts, Dursts and Elmers – were the Glarners of Cache Creek.

Two of Fridolin and Augusta Durst's great-grandsons still farm in Yolo County. And their farming practices have been earning them praise. Jim and Deborah Durst operate the Durst Organic Growers. They raise such organic produce as asparagus, melons, squash, peppers and heirloom tomatoes. In 2010 the Yolo Farm Bureau named Jim and Deborah the "Agriculturists of the Year". Jim's cousin Fritz Durst was named "2011 Agribusiness Person of the Year" by the Woodland (CA) Chamber of Commerce. Fritz runs a 9000 acre farm with raising beef cattle as well as produce ranging from asparagus to wine grapes. Fritz also received the Farmer Innovator Award for his tillage practices. The persistent erosion of soil from the surrounding hills was significantly reduced by his innovative no-till wheat production. Pictured are Jim Durst (left) and Fritz Durst (right).



Peck-A-Ton-Oka

The book "Peck-A-Ton-Oka: River of Peace" by Erwin Wetzel-Richli tells about the Rodolf family of Zurzach, Canton Aargau who immigrated to the Mineral Point, WI area in 1834. In the summer of 1845, the Rodolfs assisted in the location of land for the New Glarus settlement. By this time they had become influential citizens of the area having known General Henry Dodge, William Hamilton of Hamilton's Diggings, and the Gratiot family. The book is available as a Kindle eBook.

Foods of our Ancestors – Chicory (updated from the Fall, 2010 issue)

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

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. John Luchsinger, in his 1879 history of New Glarus, noted that in Canton Glarus (pre-immigration) "coffee [was] made with the roots of chicory, and is drunk without sugar, and in many families without milk."



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 a lesser amount of chicory is required when compared to ground coffee.

Today coffee and chicory blends are seldom found unless you visit 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 co-ops and health food stores also may 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.

In Switzerland, the chicory plant is called *Wegwarte* which translates as "waiting by the roadside". A charming tale was related by a mother in Canton Glarus to her daughter some one hundred years ago revealing the legend of this lowly roadside plant. It seems that in a time long ago, a young man and a young woman were very much in love. The young man became a mercenary soldier and planned to leave his home and go to fight in foreign lands. He promised to return and begged his sweetheart never to forget him. The young woman cried with a heavy heart upon his departure. And so along the roadside, she watched as her young man disappeared from view. She remained steadfast in that spot, with her bright blue eyes forever watching for his return. So steadfast was she, that her feet took root into the very ground and her bright blue eyes transformed into starry blue flowers.

The Oldest Glarner – More Possibilities

The summer issue of this newsletter discussed the “oldest Glarner” in New Glarus. That honor may belong to Johann Melchior Hässi whose oil portrait hangs above the fireplace of the Chalet of the Golden Fleece. Hässi lived in the 17th century. But the oldest Glarner captured in a photographic image and who actually lived in New Glarus may be Oswald Baumgartner (1795-1879) and his wife Margaretha Hefti (1802-1877). The Baumgartners were early immigrants to New Glarus, likely arriving in 1846. The family had notified the authorities in 1845 of their intent to emigrate -- presumably with the 1845 colonists. But for whatever reason they did not leave. In September of 1846 the Baumgartners again announced their intent to emigrate. The Baumgartner family did immigrate to New Glarus and their family was recorded in the 1847 Territorial Census for Green County.



The Baumgartner family members are credited with the building and ownership of the New Glarus Hotel. Oswald was a *Zimmermeister* and *Schreiner* (master carpenter and cabinet maker) by occupation. Most histories cite Oswald's sons Johann Melchior and Rudolf as the Hotel builders/owners. However a 1940s article about Anna (Figi) Wild, mentions that her grandfather Oswald Baumgartner built the Hotel and his son Melchior went on to run it. The 1860 census lists son Rudolf as the innkeeper. Oswald and Margaretha Baumgartner and all but two of their children left New Glarus and moved on to Berne, MN in the 1860s. There Oswald and Margaretha lived out their lives and were buried in the Berne Cemetery.



Daughter Anna Baumgartner married Mathias Figi in New Glarus. They had two children when Anna died in 1856. Mathias then married Anna's younger sister Salome Baumgartner. There were eleven children from this second marriage. Figi/Figi descendants of Oswald Baumgartner included such New Glarus great-grandchildren as Anna (Figi) Tschudy, Mathias O. Figi, Minnie (Figi) Kubly, Barbara (Wild) Duerst, Minnie (Wild) Elmer, Bill Figi and Matt Wild. Above photos of Oswald and Margaretha are courtesy of Mike and Jen Evans.

History Detective Question

What is the significance of the linden tree at the Swiss Historical Village in New Glarus?

The Halberd

The halberd was an essential weapon of the Swiss soldiers dating from the 13th and 14th centuries. The name is said to have been derived from the old German “*Halm*” for staff and “*Barte*” for axe. Like the ubiquitous Swiss army knife of today, the centuries-old Swiss halberd was used in a variety of ways.



The halberd was effective and versatile in battle due to its various elements. A pike extended from its end and could be used for spearing mounted enemy troops. When used as a spear, the halberd was not thrown, but rather used with thrusting motions. Below the spear end was an axe head and opposite that a hook. The axe was used to damage the armor of the enemy. Sometimes the axe head had a convex shape, while other halberd designs had a concave appearance. And the opposing hook could snare a mounted enemy soldier and bring him to the ground. Additionally, the long handle of the halberd could be wrapped in metal and used to block other weapons, particularly swords.

Halberds can be found in New Glarus. Two historic halberds are exhibited in the entry hallway of the Chalet of the Golden Fleece. And theatrical halberds can be seen used by the soldiers in the local Wilhelm Tell drama as well as by the witch's guards in the “Wizard of Oz”. The next time you see a Swiss army knife, think of its medieval precursor – the multi-functional halberd.