

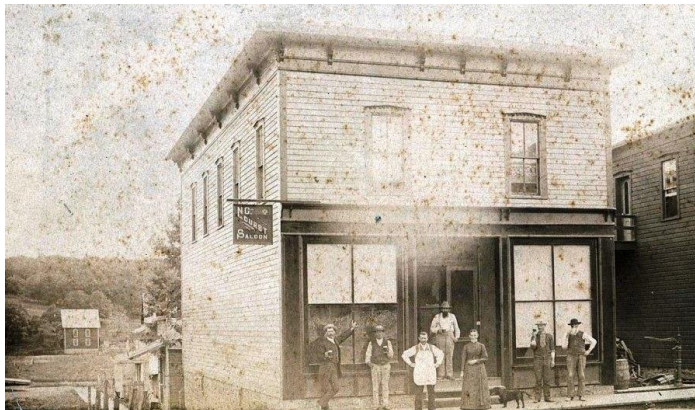
Family History Notes

Winter 2013

N. C. Durst Saloon and The Alpine Cafe

An early saloon of New Glarus was operated by N. C. Durst. Nicholas Conrad Durst was born in New Glarus in 1850. He was the son of original immigrants Mathias and Verena (Luchsinger) Durst. Mathias Durst was the *Tagebuchschrreiber* -- the diarist who chronicled the trip to America by the original 1845 immigrants. In 1874 N. C. Durst married Anna Maria Aebly, the daughter of Heinrich and Anna Maria (Becker) Aebly. The Dursts had no children who survived to adulthood.

The establishment (pictured below from the online collection of the New Glarus Historical Society) was located at the corner of First Street and Fifth Avenue in downtown New Glarus. The Durst Saloon has

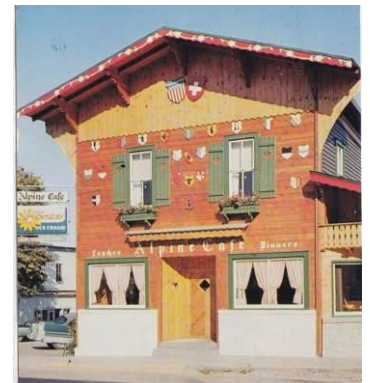


been misidentified at the online site as the building located at 116 Fifth Avenue. The online site also incorrectly states that this historic building was destroyed by fire. It was the Gabriel Schindler's Peoples Cash Store which was located at 116 Fifth Avenue and which burned (then operating as Kleeman's Bar and Grill) in 2011.



This photograph is instructive in that it shows what a New Glarus business sign looked like in the late 1800s. The little barn seen in the distance was located on the east bank of the Little Sugar River and was probably built by Samuel Luchsinger.

Decades after operating as the Durst Saloon the building became home to the Alpine Cafe (pictured right). Helena (Haas) Schuetz, an immigrant from Canton Lucerne, purchased the restaurant in 1946. She operated the cafe assisted by her two children, Martha and Gottfried (Godie). Helena's husband Gottfried had immigrated to America in 1930 in advance of his family, becoming a cheese maker in the nearby Town of Springdale. Gottfried was unable to convince the U. S. government that he was financially able to fully support his family. Therefore his wife and children remained in Switzerland. The depression dragged on followed by WWII. Finally after 16 years of waiting, Mrs. Schuetz and Martha immigrated to Wisconsin followed by Godie two years later.



During the 16 year absence, Helena divorced her husband under the belief that she, as a single woman, could more easily find employment. She also had admitted some loss of faith in Gottfried Sr. But upon the family reunification in 1946, Helena and Gottfried remarried at St. Mary of Pine Bluff Catholic Church.

In 1955, the Schuetzs transformed their plain store front into a building with a Swiss flavor. The Alpine Cafe now boasted a pine paneled front adorned with flower boxes, shutters and the full complement of canton shields. Godie Schuetz did not stop there. In 1958 he purchased a pool hall on the same block and renamed it the Glarner Stube which he also designed, in and out, with an old world flair. The following year the Glarner Stube was sold to Swiss immigrants William and Clara (Trachsel) Ruef and family. In 1961, the Alpine Cafe was purchased sight unseen by Swiss immigrants Karl and Helene Hofmann and family. Karl's parents had visited New Glarus and told son Karl of the Alpine Cafe.

It has been said that the closing of the Pet Milk plant in 1962 brought on the transformation of downtown New Glarus into “Little Switzerland”. But Godie Schuetz had renovated two main street buildings into Swiss-style restaurants in the decade before the closing of the factory.

Godie Schuetz longed for the outdoors and mountains. He left New Glarus and became a ski instructor in such places as Lake Tahoe and Aspen, Colorado before settling in Taos, NM where he taught skiing for 35 years. He also owned and operated the Casa Cordova, a popular Taos-area restaurant in Arroyo Seco. Among his guest included Hollywood celebrities such as Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, Jack Nicholson, Mae West, Dennis Hopper and Michelle Pfeiffer. Godie died in 2008 at the age of 87. His obituary made note of his love of the mountains and in addition to his skiing it mentioned how he had climbed the Matterhorn on several occasions.

Sunrise in the Martinsloch

The Summer 2012 issue of the "Family History Notes" mentioned the two natural mountain holes found in Canton Glarus. Well known is the Martinsloch above Elm. Here the morning sun shines through the hole on a few consecutive days each year in March and again in October. The lesser known hole, the Mürtschenfenster, is in the Mürtschen peak above Obstalden. The afternoon sun shines through this natural tunnel on particular days in February and November.



On March 8, 2012, the day of the Martinsloch phenomenon in Elm, a new Swiss stamp -- actually a series of three stamps -- was issued depicting the sun streaming through the Martinsloch and onto Elm's church tower. The hands on the church clock read 8:53 which is the actual time of the event. The scenic panorama includes some of Elm's centuries-old homes (including the historic Suvarovhaus) on the left, the Martinsloch itself on the middle stamp and Elm's illuminated church tower on the right.

The stamp was designed by Peider C. Jenny, a graphic artist of Canton Glarus. Jenny's graphic design firm is called Mürtschen-Media and is located in Obstalden. Views from Obstalden extend from the Walensee below to the Mürtschen peak above. His company logo includes the rays of the sun shining through the Mürtschenfenster. Peider Jenny's family line descends from the village of Ennenda.

History Detective Question - Martinsloch

On the morning of October 1, 1989 crowds gathered in the center of Elm to witness the sun shining through the Martinsloch. It was a clear day and the spectacular semi-annual show was expected at 9:32 a.m. However, the sun did not shine through the hole that morning despite the clear blue sky. Can anyone explain what happened to the sun that year? If you think you know the answer please email me.

History Detective Answer – New Glarus Movie Theatre

The question was posed in the last newsletter issue as to how many seats that the New Glarus Movie Theatre contained. According to newspaper accounts the theatre had 450 seats.

A Tragic Date in Elm

September 11 has become a date synonymous with our national tragedy. In the tiny village of Elm, Canton Glarus, September 11 has also been associated with another historic disaster – the landslide or *Bergsturz* of September 11, 1881. One hundred fourteen residents lost their lives when the side of the mountain gave way and swiftly spilled down into the valley in three waves destroying everything and everyone in its path. Years of improper and unsafe slate mining practices had weakened the mountainside which finally gave way. The considerable loss of life on that late Sunday afternoon devastated the surviving village population. Everyone knew everyone and most were related in one way or another by blood or marriage. And those relatives in New Glarus also shared in the grief.

The tragic news from Elm was likely received by in New Glarus by Verena (Elmer) Ott. Verena was an Elm native and an 1847 immigrant with her parents Wernet and Anna Maria (Elmer) Elmer. (See the Fall, 2009 “Family History Notes” for more on this Elmer family.) Verena married Schwanden immigrant Johann Jacob Ott (pictured) in New Glarus in 1857. They were a childless couple until adopting a young orphan boy, Dietrich Stauffacher, in the 1870s.



Verena routinely corresponded with her Elm relatives sending them the news from New Glarus. In his book “Natives Return”, Herbert Kubly commented upon seeing “a packet of [Verena’s] letters [in Elm], yellow pages on which the faded lines are a ghostly shadow, and each letter is the chronicle of a New Glarus season.”

Verena Ott’s relatives in Elm were particularly hard hit by the avalanche. Verena lost an elderly uncle and aunt, seven first cousins, and seven children of her first cousins. One of Verena’s cousins in Elm was particularly devastated. This cousin, Verena Elmer-Elmer, lost her husband, her parents, her only sister, her only brother along with her brother’s wife and all three of their children. The only blessing for cousin Verena was that her own child, daughter Sara, was not harmed in the landslide. Other family groups hard hit by the tragedy included:

The Johann Caspar Zentner Family: Johann Caspar lost his wife, Barbara née Hefti and their three children – sons Georg, Johann Caspar and Oswald. Zentner also lost two nephews, Johann Peter Zentner and Johann Caspar Zentner. Johann Caspar remarried after the landslide. His daughter from his second marriage, Barbara (Mrs. Jesse Wichelt), later immigrated with her mother to New Glarus.

The Mathias Rhyner Family: Rhyner lost his wife Katharina née Disch and five of his eight children. These people lived in the Untertal area of Elm in the path of the landslide. A few massive boulders have been left in the meadow as a reminder of the disaster. One of the boulders bears a plaque in remembrance of this family.

The Jacob Disch Family and Peter Elmer Families: It could be argued that seven-year-old Katharina Disch and eight-year-old Oswald Elmer were the two individuals most devastated by Elm’s landslide. Both Katharina and Oswald were left lone orphans having lost their respective parents and all of their siblings. Katharina’s parents, Jacob and Katharina (Hauser) Disch, all five of her siblings, her aged grandmother Anna (Elmer) Disch and her uncle Johannes Disch all perished. Little Oswald Elmer lost his parents, Peter and Susanna (Elmer) Elmer and all four of his siblings. It is interesting to note that Katharina died in Elm in 1959 just shy of her 85th birthday and only weeks later Oswald Elmer died at the age of 86.

Little Katharina Disch’s life in the few days leading up to the tragic landslide has been retold in the book *Die Steinflut* (The Stone Flood) by Franz Hohler. A copy of the Hohler book (in English) can be found in the New Glarus Public Library. This book was a gift of Katharina’s granddaughter, Katharina (Rhyner) Freitag of Elm. This book is also available at Amazon.com.

There were other area residents with close connections to the landslide victims. Heinrich Würgler, Elm’s blacksmith, was killed in the landslide. His widow, Anna Kubli, was an Elm native and a niece of the Oswald Kublys of New Glarus. Heinrich and Anna Wurgler had one three-year-old son, Fred Wurgler, at the time of the avalanche. Fred Wurgler later immigrated to New Glarus and married Emilie Schmid. Mrs. Christof Speich (née Ursula Schneider) of the Town of Sylvester was only one year old when her father, Adam Schneider, was killed in the rockslide. And Adam Hauser of Elm was one of the older casualties of the landslide. Three of his sons, Johannes, Sebastian and Josef, later lived in the Green County area. The widowed mother as well as the brothers and sisters of aforementioned victims Johann Peter and Johann Caspar Zentner all immigrated to the Monticello area around 1882.

Pictured below is Verena (Elmer) Elmer, wife of mountain guide (*Bergführer*) Peter Elmer. This photograph appears in Julie Heierli's five-volume work on Swiss costumes (see accompanying article on costumes). Verena Elmer's photograph was included in Heierli's work to illustrate the Sunday costume (*Kirchentracht*) of the Sernftal of Canton Glarus. And it was on a late Sunday afternoon that the landslide took place. Perhaps it was in this very attire that Verena attended the September 11 baptism of her nephew, Johann Heinrich Nigg. Baby Johann Heinrich was killed by the landslide on that day along with his mother, Cleophea (Elmer) Nigg, and Aunt Verena Elmer. These two women were the great-aunts of the late Henry Elmer and Verena (Elmer) Grossenbacher of New Glarus.



The story of the landslide is still told. On the 125th anniversary in 2006, the *Schweizer Fernsehen* (Swiss national television) ran a week-long series reflecting back on the *Bergsturz* in Elm. And Elm commemorates the landslide victims. Their names are inscribed on a memorial tablet located on the north side of Elm's church. And as mentioned in the one-time debris field (*Trimmerfeld*) of the landslide, a boulder or two have been left as a stark reminder of the devastation.

America's Tragic 9/11 – One Person's Encounter

The landslide of September 11, 1881 was a seminal moment in Elm's history but largely a local event. America's 9/11 rocked the world and is one of those events which occur perhaps once in a generation where we all remember where we were and what we were doing when we heard the news. That date brought then 34-year-old Eric Fjelstad into the sphere of the tragedy.

Eric is the son of New Glarus natives Don and Sonja (Blaser) Fjelstad. Eric hails from the Fjelstad line written about in the "Family History Notes" Summer, 2012. Eric's paternal grandmother, Palma (Yaeger) McFadden, a daughter of Canton Schwyz immigrants, is remembered for her art, her music and her support of all things Swiss. Eric's maternal ancestors include Bern immigrants Carl and Bertha (Roth) Blaser and a variety of early New Glarus families including Thomas and Anna (Hauser) Schmid, Esaias and Barbara (Hoesly) Stuessy, Samuel and Katharina (Disch) Werndli and Jacob and Anna (Disch) Zimmerman.

Destiny put Eric, a pilot for Milwaukee's Midwest Express Airlines, in the air over New York City just a few minutes before 9 a.m. on September 11, 2001. Eric and Captain Gerald Earwood were given their landing instructions on a flight path which took them over the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and then straight into LaGuardia with Manhattan just to their left. It was a crystal clear morning. When flying over New Jersey they noticed smoke coming from the World Trade Center (WTC) and they speculated perhaps there was a fire in the air conditioning systems.

Around 9:01 a.m., when descending into an altitude of 4000 feet on their approach they were suddenly given orders from air traffic control to turn as quickly as possible to the left. "Roll left. Now! Now! Now!" came the command. They did so and were then given orders to turn sharply to the right. Then came the order "Roll right as hard as you can." These commands were not in themselves unusual. But the sharpness and urgency in the tone of the commands was clearly noted by the pilots. What they didn't know was that closing in behind them from the rear at 500 miles per hour was Flight 175 out of Boston -- the second commercial jet to hit the Twin Towers with impact occurring at 9:03 a.m.

After these urgent orders and unaware of what was unfolding around them their aircraft continued on toward LaGuardia. Earwood heard another pilot message saying the WTC had been hit. Earwood looked out and saw the fireball caused by the Flight 175 strike. Earwood estimated that only sixty to ninety seconds had passed between the near-collision of Midwest and hijacked Flight 175.

Only when Fjelstad and Earwood landed safely at LaGuardia did the news emerge about the WTC attacks. The crew and passengers were whisked out of the airport by authorities unsure of possible terrorist attacks yet to occur.

All U. S. air traffic was halted on that day. And commercial air traffic remained grounded. On September 13, Fjelstad, Earwood and a host of stranded Midwest crew members were the first flight allowed to fly out of LaGuardia.

Sexy Lady!

Occasionally historic New Glarus photos are put up for bid on eBay. One such photo (pictured) was recently offered under the heading “Young Couple with Sexy Woman”. Only a handful of New Glarners may still recognize the hundred-plus year old photograph. The couple is Johann Jacob Figi (known as J. J. or Jake) and his wife Anna Maria (Mary) Elmer. Mary was the sister of my grandfather.



J. J. Figi was the son of Canton Glarus immigrants Sebastian and Katharina (Hefti) Figi. He was the Cashier and Director of the Citizens Bank and later Cashier at the Bank of New Glarus. J. J. was a volunteer fireman and was the long-time organist at the Swiss Reformed Church. He led various boys’ bands around the turn of the last century. In later years, J. J. was the curator of the local museum. Mary was born in 1878 to Caspar and Emma (Eichelkraut) Elmer. She had the distinction of being the first great-grandchild born to Joshua and Barbara (Speich) Wild, early New Glarus residents. (Incidentally, the last great-grandchild of the Joshua Wilds was David Hefty who was born in 1938 – sixty years after Mrs. Figi!)

The Figis lived in a red brick home at the corner of Third Street and Second Avenue on the north side of New Glarus. This home was originally built by Marcus F. and Verena (Freitag) Hoesly. If you look closely at the home there is a stone in the front pediment bearing the initials MFH. The house was later home to the Figi’s daughter and son-in-law Kathryn and Melvin Streiff. Across the street was the home of the Figi’s other child, son Elmer Figi and his wife Della Kleppe. Two Figi grandsons still live in the area – Dennis Streiff of New Glarus and Steve Streiff of Monroe.

George and Barbara (Schindler) Legler Family

Several past issues of "Family History News" have included seldom seen photographs of original 1845 colonists of New Glarus. These original settlers included Oswald Babler, Anna Katharina (Schmid)



Hauser, John Legler, Afra (Stauffacher) Fisher, Sebastian Durst, and now George Legler. Each of the people arrived here in 1845 as children between the 7 and 15 years of age.

The Monticello Area Historical Society has two photographs of original settler George Legler. George Legler arrived here with his parents Fridolin and Barbara (Hefti) Legler and brothers Fridolin Jr., Nicholas, Andreas, and Johannes. Mathias Durst commented in his 1845 diary “the sons of Fridolin Legler, Sr. were outstanding; they

were always, during the whole voyage, the most obliging of all passengers.”

George Legler married Schwändi immigrant Barbara Schindler in New Glarus in 1855. They farmed in Legler Valley west of the village and were the parents of 14 children – ten of whom lived to adulthood. The children were (oldest to youngest): Barbara (Mrs. J. C. Steinmann), Fridolin, George (married Magdalena Baumgartner), Elsbeth (Mrs. J. C. Blum), Johannes (Elsbeth Schuler), Abraham (Katharina Disch), Andreas (Emilie Schlittler), Nicholas, David (Bertha Schlittler) and Edward. Barbara died four days after the birth of their 14th child Edward in 1876. She was buried in the New Glarus Swiss Reformed cemetery. At age 45 George became a widower with ten children.

The descendants of George and Barbara Legler include many Monticello, Belleville and New Glarus people past and present such as architect John Steinmann, Royal Karlen, Ron Legler, Allen Legler, Liz Babler, and Damion Babler.

As previously stated, the George Legler photograph is from the Monticello Area Historical Society (MAHS). It was one of many photographs from the Mata (Steinmann) Lynn collection donated to the MAHS. Mata was the granddaughter of George Legler. Under the able direction of volunteer Roger Dooley, many historic photographs have been arranged into online albums found on the MAHS website.

Which Heinrich Hoesly?

For generations the people of Canton Glarus employed a system for naming their children. The oldest sons and daughters were named for their grandparents, the next children named for the parents, and subsequent children were named for assorted great-grandparents. As a result the same names appeared in families over many generations.

The name Henry (originally Heinrich) was frequently found in the Hoesly (originally Hösli) families. There were many Henry Hoeslys found in the New Glarus area over the years. Some of these men included original settlers Henry Hoesly-Zwicky and Henry Hoesly-Babler, Primrose farmer Henry Hoesly-Baumgartner, dentist Dr. Henry H. Hoesly, hardware owner Henry B. Hoesly, farmer Henry G. Hoesly and even Shullsburg Mayor Dr. Henry F. Hoesley.

Consider the story of Anna (Hoesly) Hoesly of New Glarus circa 1870. Anna was the wife of a man named Heinrich Hoesly and the daughter-in-law of a Heinrich Hoesly. Anna was the daughter of another Heinrich Hoesly and the sister of a Heinrich Hoesly. In fact, her brother Heinrich was the fourth generation named Heinrich. And Anna's brother Heinrich continued the tradition with a son Heinrich and a grandson Heinrich (Henry Chester Hoesly of Monroe).

Anna Hoesly and her husband Heinrich did not have a son to name Heinrich. After husband Heinrich's death in 1870, Anna married a second time to Johann Jacob Legler. They moved to Coon Valley, Sac County, IA where a son Henry Legler was born. Anna died in Coon Valley in 1919.

The Two Annas -- Tragedies in Grasshopper Falls

Anna (Durst) Engler (1840-1935) and Anna (Legler) Marty Elmer (1848-1906) were first cousins. Anna Durst was an original 1845 colonist arriving with her immigrant parents Balthasar and Magdalena (Durst) Durst. Anna Legler was born in New Glarus the daughter of original colonists George and Anna (Durst) Legler. The mothers of the two Annas were sisters. (Note: George Legler in this story is different from the George Legler pictured in the earlier story.)

Both young girls were raised on the farms of their parents. The Durst farm was located roughly between the village and what is today New Glarus Woods State Park. And the Legler farm was located about a mile west of New Glarus in Legler Valley. Anna Durst married Canton Graubunden immigrant Albrecht Engler in 1861. Shortly thereafter Albrecht enlisted in the Wisconsin 31st Infantry. Anna Legler married after the war to Joachim Marty an immigrant from Engi, Canton Glarus and a returning Civil War veteran of the Wisconsin 9th Infantry.

Both young married couples moved from New Glarus to Grasshopper Falls, Kansas (today called Valley Falls). But tragedy struck the husbands of the two Annas – in one case literally.

In 1869 Anna Engler's husband Albrecht lost his life when he drowned in a mill race. Just three years later Anna Marty's husband Joachim lost his life when he was struck by lightning. Both Annas were now young widowed mothers. Anna Engler was age 29 with 4 little children when Albrecht drown. Anna Marty was 24 and also left with 4 little children when Joachim was killed.

The widowed women and their children returned to New Glarus. In 1875 Anna Marty married a second time to Mathias Elmer of Dutch Hollow. They took over the Legler farm west of New Glarus and in the 1890s built the large home in New Glarus at the corner of Second Street and Sixth Avenue. Matt Elmer died in 1901 followed by Anna in 1906.

Anna Engler did not remarry. She raised her children in New Glarus. At some point Anna suffered from mental issues. By the 1890s she had a legally appointed guardian. Anna died at age 94 in 1935 and had the distinction of being the longest surviving original colonists of New Glarus. Unfortunately it appears she may not have fully participated in the various anniversary celebrations of the founding of New Glarus due to her illness.

Anna Engler and Anna Elmer are both buried in the small Evangelical Association cemetery on Highway 39 immediately west of New Glarus. Neither of the women has descendants living in New Glarus today however descendants who did live here in the past included Barbara (Reardon) Lester, Margaret (Mills) Haglund and Dorothy (Engler) Urben.

Veterans of a Foreign War

Two area graves, one in Monroe and one in New Glarus, are not decorated on Memorial Day or honored on Veterans Day. Yet the graves mark the final resting places of two soldiers who participated in a foreign invasion nearly two centuries ago. These two men, Mathias Duerst and Johann Jacob Durst, were sent into France from their native Canton Glarus, Switzerland in the final days of the Napoleonic Wars. Both men, originally named Dürst, were born in 1790 in the Canton Glarus hamlet of Dornhaus. They were related but not closely.

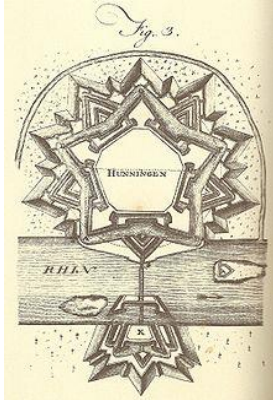


Mathias and Johann Jacob were young lads when France invaded Switzerland in 1798. The French re-created Switzerland as the Helvetic Republic. Canton Glarus ceased to exist. A new canton named Linth was formed using all of Canton Glarus and parts of neighboring Cantons Schwyz and St. Gallen. The years under French rule were harsh and the sovereignty of the cantons was abolished in favor of more Federal power. By 1803 Napoleon recognized things were not working in the Helvetic Republic. He dissolved the ill-conceived republic and agreed Switzerland could once again establish its cantons and confederation format.

This same era also marked the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars which raged throughout Europe for more than a decade. Finally in 1814 Napoleon was exiled to Elba, but in 1815 he escaped and returned to France. He rallied his troops but met his final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo on June 18 of the same year. This short timeframe which signaled the end of the Napoleonic Wars is sometimes referred to as the 100 Days of Napoleon.

Despite Napoleon's defeat, the French fortress of Huningue remained under the control of a small band of supporters loyal to Napoleon. This strategic fortress was located on the Rhine River in the Alsatian town of Huningue, France and just a few miles downstream from Basel, Switzerland. The star-shaped Huningue fortress was built in the late 17th century during the reign of King Louis XIV. From its beginning this bastion of French power was feared and hated by the Swiss -- particularly by the people of Basel.

A bridge led from the fortress over the Rhine to a fortified entrance on the opposite bank. The fortress controlled the river. Today a sleek pedestrian bridge spans the Rhine River in approximately the same location as did the fortress bridge. This pedestrian bridge is located near the common boundary of France, Switzerland and Germany and so is called the Three Countries Bridge, *Dreiländerbrücke*, or *Passerelle des Trois Pays*. It is the longest single span pedestrian/cyclist bridge in the world.



In 1815 Switzerland broke with its policy of neutrality and sent troops to lay siege to the Huningue fortress. Additionally, and again conflict to its neutrality, Switzerland allowed thousands of Austrian troops on their way to Huningue to pass through Swiss territory. The siege began on June 26 and just two months later French General Barbanègre surrendered. Estimates differ on the number of troops. Those holding the fortress tallied only about 500 while the Allied troops numbered 25,000 or more. The Treaty of Vienna of 1815 re-established Switzerland's independence and confirmed their policy of permanent neutrality. At the insistence of the Swiss, the massive Huningue fortress was razed to the ground.

After the siege and back in Canton Glarus, Mathias Duerst returned to wife of two years, Sibilla née Knobel. Johann Jacob Durst also returned and married Rosina Wichser in 1821. Both men immigrated to New Glarus as widowers accompanied by their children. Mathias Duerst arrived in 1852. His son-in-law David Klassy (married to Duerst's only surviving child Katharina) was a miller in New Glarus and later ran a Town of Cadiz mill. Mathias Duerst died in 1879 and is buried in Monroe's Greenwood Cemetery.

Johann Jacob Durst had several children most of whom immigrated to New Glarus. Jacob and daughter Barbara (later Mrs. Andreas Hoesly) immigrated in 1847. He died in 1877 and is buried in the Swiss Reformed Cemetery in New Glarus. Unlike Mathias Duerst who had no grandchildren, Johann Jacob Durst had many children and numerous New Glarus descendants to this day including Dennis Hoesly, Roger Arn, Ann Marie Ott, Jeff Buesser, Jeff Eichelkraut and Dwight Hoesly.

One other veteran of the Huningue siege was Heinrich Aebli, an 1845 immigrant from Ennenda, Canton Glarus who died in New Glarus the following year. He was possibly one of the first New Glarus burials in the original cemetery on the south lawn of the Swiss Church. However, the site of Aebli's grave is unknown and unmarked. That Green County has these graves of Glarner soldiers from the days of Napoleon is quite singular. Even in Canton Glarus it is doubtful if there are any extant graves of these soldiers of 200 years ago. In mountainous Glarus, where arable land is precious, their small cemeteries remain small by re-cycling graves every twenty to thirty years.

These local graves provide a tangible link to the end of Napoleonic era, Switzerland's last breach of its neutrality and the recognition of Switzerland by Europe as a fully independent state. What stories these old tombstones can tell!

Wilhelm Tell Usherettes – 13th/14th Century or 18th/19th Century Costumes?

One of the most colorful aspects of the Wilhelm Tell Festival is the group of dancers known as the Wilhelm Tell Usherettes. The Usherettes escort visitors to their seats (hence their name) and perform folk dances during the Tell play intermission. The Usherettes wear colorful costumes representing 22 cantons of Switzerland. The costumes are embellished with aprons, shawls, laces, ribbons and embroideries. A variety of fanciful hats complete their outfits. This group made their debut at the 1940 Tell festival and since that time has been described as wearing authentic copies of 13th or 14th century costumes. Usherettes pictured from the mid-1950s are Ruth Ann Roth (Appenzell), Lisbeth Lynn (Luchsinger) Hefty (Fribourg), and Christine (Boll) Norder (Schwyz).



The declaration that these 22 costumes are of 13th or 14th century design poses a quandary since at this time of early Swiss history there were only a handful of cantons. Only three cantons (Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden) date from the time of the Tell legend. Five more cantons (Zurich, Glarus, Lucerne, Zug and Bern) joined the Swiss confederation in the mid-1300s. Five more cantons (Solothurn, Fribourg, Appenzell, Basel and Schaffhausen) joined in the late 15th or early 16th centuries. Nine cantons (Vaud, Geneva, Valais, Aargau, Thurgau, Tessin, Graubunden, St. Gallen, and Neuchatel) formed in the 19th century. Switzerland's newest canton, Jura, was created in 1979 from a French portion of Canton Bern.

So why the declaration for over 70 years that the Usherette costume designs date to the 13th century since many of the cantons themselves did not form until the 19th century? It may be that the Usherette costumes were assumed to date from medieval times when the Wilhelm Tell legend took place in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. And this confusion may stem from one of two newspaper articles from 1940. Both of Madison's papers -- the *Wisconsin State Journal* and the *Capital Times* -- had feature stories and photographs on August 25, 1940 regarding the "new" Usherettes. The *Wisconsin State Journal* reported "in the 14th century there was little differentiation in dress from one canton to the next. The differences did not become prominent until after the 16th century. The striking use of color did not come until later." The *Capital Times* said the Usherette costumes were 14th century and "in vogue when history's greatest archer drew his sturdy crossbow to shoot the apple from his son's head." It appears the *Journal* got it right but it was the *Cap Times* version dating the Usherette costumes to the time of Tell which has stuck. Another specious report commented, "The Usherette costumes were created by Edwin Barlow and Julie Heirli [sic] in 1938 for the first Tell Play. Barlow was the originator of the Tell Drama in New Glarus and Heirli [sic] was a recognized authority of Swiss Costumes. These costumes are Barlow's rendition of 13th Century Canton trachten [sic] - 13th Century being the time of the Tell story."

The Wilhelm Tell pageant and Usherettes were the brainchild of Edwin Barlow. It has been said that Barlow worked with Julie Heierli (1859-1938) to design these dresses. She was regarded as the preeminent authority on Swiss *Trachten*. Heierli researched and collected Swiss costumes and accessories from throughout Switzerland. Based upon her accumulated knowledge, she published an authoritative five volume set regarding regional Swiss costumes and dress. The five volumes, *Die Volkstrachten der Schweiz*, were published over the period from 1922 through 1932. Julie Heierli's research and books on Swiss costumes were focused on the 18th and 19th centuries when cantonal costumes evolved into distinct forms. It was at that time in Swiss history that there was an emerging class with enough money to afford special Sunday and holiday costumes. They became increasingly elaborate in their design. Laces, embroideries, jewelry, buttons, hats and bright colored fabrics allowed for the regional expression. Medieval costumes (i.e. those from the 13th and 14th centuries) did not have the range of design elements found in the Usherette dresses and hats. The Heierli volumes can now be viewed online. They are part of the Hathi Trust digital library and a link to them is found here: [Heierli Volumes on Swiss Costumes](#)

While Barlow may have communicated with Heierli before her death in 1938, it is more likely that he and others worked with Heierli's books to design the Usherette costumes. In fact the August 25, 1940 *Wisconsin State Journal* stated that a "Swiss library in New York City lent five volumes of the plates to the New Glarus people to aid them in their work." The *Journal* commented that the plates found in the book were "drawn by Julie Heierli". However it appears the plates in Heierli's volumes were copies of paintings and folk art prints from such artists as Josef Reinhardt as well as historic photographs such as the one of Verena Elmer-Elmer found elsewhere in this issue. The *Capital Times* also reported that books were used to design the costumes. However their version said that the books were a "valuable collection owned by Barlow". It has also been mentioned that a collection of dolls owned by Barlow were a source of inspiration for the Usherette costumes. It would be interesting for someone to compare the Usherette costumes with these dolls to see if there is indeed a match.



One illustration from Heierli's Volume II is the 1784 painting of Rosina Blumer-Schiesser (1762-1849) of Glarus by the artist Brunner. Rosina and her husband Johann Jacob Blumer likely had some wealth – enough money to engage a portrait artist to capture the 22 year old Rosina in her 18th century finery. The Blumers resided in one of Glarus' grand homes – the *Haus in der Wiese* – which escaped the 1861 fire and is still a grand and historic residence today. Comparing Rosina's fashion to the more recent Usherette photo one can see how Rosina's costume influenced the Usherette costume (center dancer) representing Canton Glarus.



Another illustration from Heierli's Volume V shows an 1815 painting of a Solothurn costume whose influence can be seen in the 1940 photo of Helen McQuillan (Tessin) and Evelyn Urben (Solothurn).

Julie Heierli continues to be a source of information. In 2010 a national exhibit on Swiss costumes was held at the Swiss history museum of Schwyz, Canton Schwyz. The exhibit drew upon the works of Julie Heierli and items from the collection of the Swiss National Museum. All the costume and accessory items collected by Heierli in her ethnological studies were donated to the Swiss National Museum after her death in 1938. The curator of the recent Swiss exhibit, Pia Schubiger, examined photographs of the Tell Usherettes. In her expert eye she concluded the Usherette costumes are inspired by Heierli's research into 18th and 19th century fashions and not designs dating to the 13th or 14th centuries.



The original Usherettes of 1940 were a mix of Swiss Misses and Swiss Mrs. They were: Gladys Streiff (Schwyz), Miriam Theiler (Uri), Molly (Stauffer) Glaeden (Zug), Ruth Marty (Glarus), Helen McQuillan (Tessin), Evelyn Urben (Solothurn), Rosemarie Schmid (Basel), Charlotte Tollefson (Vaud), Viola Arn (Thurgau) Dorothy Schmid (Zurich), Charlene Hoesly (Schaffhausen), Dolly Haldiman (Bern), Beatrice Hoesly (Aargau), Gertrude (Eichelkraut) Burki (Appenzell), Sylvia Keppler (St. Gallen), Belva (Itten) Mueller (Lucerne), Alice Zemp (Unterwalden), Ann Streiff (Neuchatel), Alvina Hoesly (Valais), Ruby Glaeden (Fribourg), Irma Freitag (Grisons), and Leona Marty (Geneva). Still living of the original Usherettes is Sylvia (Keppler) Purcell of New Glarus.



Foods of our Ancestors: Zokla

If you google the word *Zokla* you will get links to Mahmoud Zokla, Mohamed Zokla, Ahmed Zokla and Khaled Zokla. And if you are persistent you will also find a link to a dumpling recipe with origins in Canton Glarus. The online recipe appears to be based upon one written down years ago by Margaret Mueller of New Glarus. Margaret née Itten was of Berner stock. When her *Zokla* recipe was printed in a local cookbook she indicated it was inherited and that it was of Glarner origin. Perhaps it was a recipe handed down in the family of Margaret's first husband John Melchior Duerst. *Zokla* are akin to Swiss dumplings known as *Knöpfli*. And *Knöpfli* are akin to *Spaetzle* which is a more ubiquitous alpine dumpling typically associated with Swabia in Germany. All are very similar.

The *Zokla* recipe is as follows: 4 eggs beaten, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, 3 cups flour, and a pinch of salt. Mix the beaten eggs, milk, water and flour into stiff batter. Drop half a teaspoon of the dough into gently boiling water. When the dumplings float to the top continue to simmer for a few minutes, then drain in colander or remove with a slotted spoon. Sauté the *Zokla* and onions in butter. And as a finishing touch sprinkle grated Glarner *Schabziger* (Sap Sago) over the dumplings. *En Guete!*

Zwingli Church

Congratulations to the Zwingli Church of Mt. Vernon on their 100th Anniversary. In 1912 a group of individuals gathered under the leadership of Rev. Gottfried D. Elliker of New Glarus. The new Mt. Vernon church was incorporated the following year. It is one of only a handful of churches in the United States named for Reformer Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531). Others Zwingli churches include Monticello, WI, Paoli, WI, Souderton, PA, East Berlin PA, and Berne, MN. The next issue of Family History News will feature direct descendants of Ulrich Zwingli living here in the New Glarus area.