

# Family History Notes

Winter 2014

## 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 fourth of six parts.*

### Part 4: Independence

The complete opening of the St. Gotthard pass around 1220 and the resulting increase in trade with Italy and the Mediterranean region boosted the importance of the forest cantons of central Switzerland. While that area did have a special deal with the ruling Habsburg emperors, imperial control was still resented. In 1291, after the death of Rudolf von Habsburg, King of the Germans, a movement toward independence emerged. Cantons Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden signed a mutual support agreement (the *Bundesbrief* of 1291), fearing that Rudolf's successor might take away some of their special rights.

A lengthy period of imperial intrigue and economic sanctions followed, which included the plunder of the pilgrimage abbey at Einsiedeln. While Canton Glarus remained more under the thumb of the Hapsburgs, it did have a non-aggression pact with the forest cantons. Therefore, when the empire sent troops into central Switzerland in 1315, our Glarner ancestors were not involved in the historic Battle of Morgarten, where the imperial forces were decisively routed. That defeat initially led to a lessening of the power of the imperial *Vogt* [sheriff] in various cantons and an expansion of the *Eidgenössenschaft* [confederation or everlasting league] to include Lucerne and Zurich. Imperial forces were unsuccessful in trying to thwart Zurich and eventually made a treaty with that canton.

Between 1350 and 1352, a defense wall of stones was built across the entrance to the main valley of Canton Glarus. The *Letzi* wall was designed to delay and inhibit, but not stop, an enemy. There were two gates that could be used as customs stations. Many other *Letzinen* were built in other parts of Switzerland, some with moats, palisades, and hedges. In 1351, soldiers from Zurich and the forest cantons occupied Canton Glarus for a while, but soon the empire re-asserted its control. Holding the hereditary high authority over the increasingly rebellious Glarner, the Habsburgs decided in 1352 to unite Glarus with the districts of Weesen and Gaster [both to the north and now part of Canton St. Gallen]. The village of Weesen, along the *Walensee*, was an imperial stronghold from which Glarus and the east-west trade route could be controlled. The reorganization, along with imperial troops being sent back into Canton Glarus, was greatly resented by our ancestors. That resulted in the people of Glarus making an alliance [now known as the "inferior federation"] with the *Eidgenössenschaft*.



This monument in Näfels, erected in 1888, commemorates the historic battle that took place here along the *Letzi* wall.

The next major battle with the empire was in 1386 at Sempach [near Lucerne], after Canton Bern began to ally itself with the confederation. Again the imperial forces were defeated. Caught up in the spirit of the times, the Glarner were active in their own canton and breached the Oberwindegg castle near Niederurnen in July. The castle had historically been one of the homes of the empire's Glarus *Landvogt*.

The next year a *Landesgemeinde* was held and Canton Glarus set up its own government. The 1387 gathering is the first recorded *Landesgemeinde*, although it most likely existed long before. Soon after, soldiers from Glarus and the confederation occupied the village of Weesen and sought to extract tribute. Habsburg sympathizers left a city gate open on the night of Feb. 21-22, 1388, and imperial troops returned and killed almost the entire army of occupation. Sixty men died, about half from Canton Glarus. Equally humiliating was the loss of an important Glarus military banner. News of the *Mordnacht* [murder night] at Weesen spread through the canton with lightning speed and raised intense fears among the people.

Then, on April 9, 1388, the imperial army attacked the land of Glarus with 600 horsemen and 5,000 to 6,000 foot soldiers. They overwhelmed those defending the *Letzi* wall and pillaged the village of Näfels. The Glarner defenders retreated to a mountainside, more gathered from elsewhere in the canton, and a small group of allies arrived from Canton Uri. When the imperial troops renewed their attack, the defenders sent down a hail of stones that disoriented the imperial horses, which were already on rather uneven ground. Taking advantage of the chaos, the Glarner attacked the imperial troops, apparently misunderstanding an order and believing the troops from Uri were large in number, began to retreat. As their horse troops crowded onto the bridge over the Maag River, at the outlet of the *Walensee*, the bridge collapsed. The resulting chaos ended with a Glarner victory and true independence. More than 1,700 of the emperor's troops died in the carnage. Glarus lost 55 soldiers, who were buried in a cemetery at Mollis. The village of Weesen was burned by the retreating, resentful imperial troops. Glarus placed restrictions on reconstruction of the village and it never regained its prominence – the final effect of that ban is disappearing in 2014 with construction of some apartment buildings near the *Walensee*.



What is believed to be the original banner of St. Fridolin, used to rally the Glarner in the battle at Näfels, is in the Freulerpalast museum in Canton Glarus.

Our ancestors long remembered the battle at Näfels and honored their relatives who won the canton's independence. Patriotic songs [*Näfelserleid*] and poems hailed the achievement. Even today, the event is commemorated on the first Thursday of April with the *Näfelser-Fahrt* [procession to Näfels)]. Long a Catholic ceremony, it became a secular event in 1936. The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle was marked in 1888, with a large national gathering at Näfels. The *Mordnacht* and burning of Weesen were also the subject of patriotic songs, which justified the destruction of Weesen as divinely inspired retribution.

As a final step to independence, the canton bought out the remaining rights of the Säckingen cloister in 1395. Control of Alpine pastures was included and some were apportioned for community use. As a token of appreciation for its benevolent rule, Canton Glarus continued to pay a modest yearly tithe to the cloister until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Like other cantons, Glarus remained part of the Swiss confederation not so much because of shared identity but because it helped assure their independence.

The total population of the canton is estimated to have been only about 4,300 in this era. While the sale of yarn, thread, and woven products had become more widespread, it was not the major source of income. It was mercenary soldiers that began to bring wealth into the canton. With European countries constantly feuding, the prowess of the Swiss soldiers in their battles for independence had attracted attention elsewhere and created a demand for mercenary troops, especially for France and the Papal States. Our family histories include many men who were attracted by the possibility of adventure and earning a pension, given the limited economic options in Canton Glarus. The Swiss became known for their heads-down attack in huge columns, each soldier using a long pike, refusing to take prisoners, and having a consistent record of victories. Use of gunpowder had already ended the military might of knights. The mercenary agreements were a lucrative financial deal for the cantons, including Glarus. But Switzerland also suffered greatly in these arrangements, with as many as 750,000 men being killed, disabled, or missing over several centuries. The Swiss Guards at the Vatican are the last remnant of this way of life.

**Next: Religious Tensions**

## Stauffacher Family Connections in Green County

The Stauffachers of Matt, Canton Glarus are believed to have originated in the area of Alagna Valsesia found in Italy's Piedmont. A people known as the Walsers lived here in remote alpine valleys in the upper reaches of Switzerland's Valais and the northernmost part of Italy. To this day Alagna Valsesia is known for its Walser heritage. A preserved 1628 Walser home serves as a Walser museum.

The Stauffachers were considered among the Walser people. They settled in the village of Matt around the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the Stauffacher name has since been prominently associated with that community. A man by the name of Uli Studer is believed to be the original Stauffacher in Matt. The surname evolved in the next generation to Murer, based upon the occupation of *Maurer* or stone mason. And in the third generation Jacob Murer becomes Jacob Stauffacher and is listed as Stauffacher #1 in the Matt family records. The accompanying three charts of Stauffacher Family Connections all begin with this Jakob Stauffacher #1 who was born around 1571.



There was a branch of the Stauffachers who were *Landammänner* of Canton Schwyz in the early days of the Swiss Confederation around the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. A Werner Stauffacher was said to have been the leader of the Swiss forces at the 1315 Battle of Morgarten. Werner Stauffacher, an actual historical figure, became a character in the Wilhelm Tell drama. Schiller's Tell drama mentions Werner Stauffacher and wife Gertrude. Schiller sets the stage "Zu Steinen in Schwyz. Eine Linde vor des Stauffachers Hause an der Landstrasse nächst der Brücke" -- which translates as "Steinen in [Canton] Schwyz. A linden tree in front of the Stauffacher house on the main road near a bridge." The linden tree is associated with the Stauffacher family and can be found on the family crest (above). A black eagle is perched in the linden.

The Stauffacher name is found widely throughout Green County. There were seven families among the original colonists of 1845 where husband and/or wife bore the Stauffacher name. They were Heinrich, Johann Peter, Rudolf, Anton and Jacob Stauffacher along with Dorothea (Stauffacher) Babler and Ursula (Stauffacher) Babler. Additionally, there was Euphemia (Stauffacher) Stauffacher, the common law and later legal wife of Rudolf Stauffacher and Anna née Stauffacher, wife of Anton. These families were among those drawing lots on August 21, 1845. The only family of these to remain in New Glarus was the Oswald and Ursula (Stauffacher) Babler family. The Jacob and Anton Stauffacher families remained in Green County as did the Fridolin and Dorothea (Stauffacher) Babler family. Heinrich, Johann Peter and Rudolf Stauffacher and families moved to Galena and beyond.

Two Stauffacher families of Matt headed by Niklaus and his son Niklaus Jr. indicated their intent to immigrate to America with the original group which included Niklaus Sr.'s brother Rudolf and sister Ursula Babler. Neither Nik Sr. nor Jr. followed through with that plan. Rather both families immigrated to Brazil in or around 1855.



Many other Stauffachers immigrated in subsequent years including families headed by Abraham, Esaias, Hilarius, Dietrich and brothers Johannes and Dietrich Stauffacher. Immigrants Esaias and Margareth (Hämmerli) Stauffacher are pictured at left. Many other early Green County families with strong Stauffacher connections also settled in the area including the families of Dietrich (Dick) Marti, Dietrich Freitag, Johannes Marty, Vincenz Kubli, Johannes Babler, Mathias Marty, Leonard Norder, Leonard Geiger, Rudolf Zentner, Abraham Kubli, Abraham Speich, Jacob Marty, Dietrich Marty and Oswald Baumgartner. All of these families can be found on the accompanying charts.

## Schwabengänger

Times were lean in Europe in the early years of the nineteenth century. In many areas of the Alps some families were so destitute that family members walked to Swabia (southwestern Germany) to find seasonal farm jobs. These migrant workers of that day were known as *Schwabengänger* (Swabia goers). Workers left Switzerland (especially Cantons Graubunden, St. Gallen and Glarus), Liechtenstein, Austria (Tyrol and Vorarlberg) and walked to Swabia. Also among the migrant workers were women and children. The children were referred to as *Schwabenkinder*. Upon arrival in Swabian cities such as Ravensburg, Wangen and Friedrichshafen those seeking employment were bid upon at public markets. Their working conditions were often harsh.

Canton Glarus documents recorded many people – mostly adult men around 1814 – who were among the *Schwabengänger*. And at least six Stauffacher men found on the accompanying charts were listed as *Schwabengänger*. These men were Heinrich (#143), Rudolf (#122), Niklaus (#92), Johann Peter (#94), Jacob (#98) and Jacob (#117). This latter Jacob Stauffacher was a migrant worker with his wife Anna Maria née Almendinger. Niklaus Stauffacher (#92 on attached Chart 1) is the ancestor of many New Glarus area people including the descendants of Oswald Babler and John Stauffacher-Norder. Descendants of Jacob Stauffacher (#98 on Chart 3) include the families of Dietrich and Margaretha Marty of New Glarus and Hilarius and Agatha Stauffacher of Monroe.

Johannes and Elsbeth (Schneider) Zentner, a husband and wife from Elm, were both *Schwabengänger*. Mathias Schneider, also of Elm and the ancestor of the late Fred Schneider of New Glarus also was a 22 year old migrant worker. One of the saddest stories was that of Adam Luchsinger of Engi, who as a 9 year old lad, who was sent far from home to work to help support his parents and 5 young siblings. This Adam Luchsinger is an ancestor of Al Hefty of New Glarus.

## Johann Melchior Hässi

Swiss historian Patrick Wild of Egg bei Zurich was kind enough to share some additional information regarding Johann Melchior Hässi of Näfels, Canton Glarus (see Family History Notes, Summer, 2013). Hässi's oil portrait (at right) is found in Edwin Barlow's Chalet of the Golden Fleece, placed prominently above the living room fireplace.



In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, members of the Hässi family held top government and military positions. Johann Melchior Hässi, the subject of this painting, became a Lieutenant in the Swiss Guard in Paris. His military pursuits took him to such places as the Siege of La Rochelle (1628), the Mosel and Rhineland (1635-36), the Siege of Hesdin (1639), and Arras (after 1639). In 1651 Johann Melchior Hässi was promoted to *Gardeoberst*, the highest Swiss Guard position. He served in this role until his death.

The role of *Gardeoberst* was a significant military position. At one point in history, the *Gardeoberst* earned an annual salary of 22,000 *livres* (French pounds). As a comparison, the Swiss fusilier, the lowest ranking of the mercenary troops in France, received 180 *livres* annually. Hässi's uncle, Fridolin Hässi, had served as *Gardeoberst* in the early 1600s. Fridolin Hässi's son-in-law, Kaspar Freuler, was named to the position of *Gardeoberst* and held the position for 16 years. It was Kaspar Freuler who built the imposing *Freulerpalast* in Näfels which serves today as the Canton Glarus Historical Museum

And Johann Melchior Hässi was from a family who frequently served in the position of as *Landammann* in Canton Glarus – the highest governmental position of the canton. Hässi's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all Glarner *Landammänner*. His father Heinrich served in the position from 1624 to 1626. Grandfather Melchior served from 1596 to 1598. Great-grandfather Aegidius (Gill) Tschudi (the noted Swiss historian) served from 1558 to 1560. Gill Tschudi himself had both grandfathers and two great-grandfathers who served in this role. Johann Melchior Hässi's uncle Fridolin Hässi and great-uncle Gabriel Hässi also served as *Landammann*, as did Jost Pfändler who was married to cousin Anna Maria Hässi. And Hässi's father-in-law, Daniel Bussi, held that same position in 1629.



As mentioned, the Swiss historian Aegidius (Gill) Tschudi (1505-1572) was the great-grandfather of Johann Melchior Hässi. Tschudi's *Chronicon Helveticum* (ca. 1570) served as a model for Friedrich Schiller's play "Wilhelm Tell" (1804). So it is a roundabout coincidence that this descendant of Gill Tschudi is found so prominently placed in Barlow's home, since Barlow was the driving force behind Schiller's Wilhelm Tell being dramatized in New Glarus.

### **History Detective Question**

What is the connection between the Tyrolean artist Karl von Blaas and New Glarus? The answer to this challenge lies in an Innsbruck art museum, an Italian mountain hut, and a New Glarus pub. Can you solve this riddle?

### **Unintended Consequences of the 2007 Swiss Invasion**

The story of the 1815 Swiss participation in the siege of the French fortress at Hüningen has been told on these pages before. This was the last time that Swiss troops were officially outside of the Swiss borders. Among those troops from Canton Glarus were Johann Jacob Duerst and Mathias Durst who lie interred in New Glarus and Monroe now nearly 200 years since their military days.

There is a small addendum to this story, for in 2007 there were 170 Swiss troops who "invaded" the sovereign principality of Liechtenstein. Swiss troops had inadvertently wandered inside Liechtenstein's borders by a mile or two. The Swiss troops soon realized a mistake had occurred and the Swiss government apologized to Liechtenstein without haste.

Across the pubs of Switzerland this Liechtenstein "invasion" received much discussion. Particularly regaled was the alleged reaction by Switzerland's neighbor, France. According to those pub accounts, when the French heard of this Swiss incursion into Liechtenstein they became alarmed. The French increased their national military alert status from "run" to "hide". And shortly thereafter the French surrendered. Talk about unintended consequences!

### **Earliest Swiss**

Past newsletters have reported on the earliest Swiss immigrants in our area. Madeline Rindisbacher was a Swiss immigrant who married Robert Oliver in Lafayette County in 1835. Robert and Madeline farmed in the Town of Exeter as early as 1843 making her the quite possibly the first Swiss-born person to reside in Green County. Another newsletter mentioned Judge Jacob Andrick, the grandson of a Swiss immigrant named Anderegg, who lived in Green County in the 1830s. About the same time a man by the name of John Bringold was recorded as living in Green County. Bringold may also be of Swiss ancestry. Adam Wurster, a Glarner who immigrated to America in 1833, purchased farm land in the Town of Greenfield, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin in 1840.

Now another early Swiss, in fact another Glarner, was noted as working in the Lead Region in 1834. The reference to a man named "Hosli" was found in the book "Peck-A-Ton-Oka: River of Peace" by Erwin Wetzel-Richli. Hosli was in the employ of the Gratiot family in their lead smelting operation. The book mentioned that Hosli was a joiner (cabinet maker) by profession and that his wife was raised in Zurich by her grandparents whose name was Grebel. Hosli was praised by Bugnon (or Bugnion) Gratiot for being highly energetic. Hosli indicated that lead smelting was hard work and he aspired to a more independent situation someday.

Is it possible from this scant data to ascertain the identity of Hosli? It is likely this Hosli is one of two brothers – Johann Ulrich Hoessli (b. 1814) or Jacob Rudolf Hoessli (b. 1812). They were the sons of Heinrich Hoessli of Glarus and his Zurich-born wife Elisabeth Grebel. Heinrich Hoessli was a Glarus milliner and interior decorator known as "*Modenhössli*" or "Fashion Hoessli". Heinrich resided in Glarus while Elisabeth raised the two boys in Zurich.

The Glarus family records confirm that Johann Ulrich Hoessli left Switzerland in 1828 – first to Munich and then to America in 1832. Sometime prior to 1843 Johann Ulrich emerged as John Hessly a dry goods shopkeeper in Galveston, Texas (then the Republic of Texas). In 1843 Heinrich Rosenberger (later Henry Rosenberg) of Bilten, Canton Glarus, was hired by Hessly to work in his store. Rosenberg later bought out Hessly and Rosenberg went on to become a wealthy philanthropist of Galveston. John Hessly was traveling to Europe when he perished in a ship wreck near Halifax in 1861. The other Hoessli son was Jacob Rudolf who immigrated to America with his mother in 1834. Jacob later married and farmed in Ostico, New York until his death in 1871.

The father Heinrich Hoessli was a colorful Glarner in his day who became a rather controversial character. Hoessli authored two volumes in the 1830s entitled *Eros die Männerliebe der Griechen* (Eros, The Male Love of the Greeks) in which homosexuality was defended. Hoessli's work is considered by some to be the world's first publication of gay history. Now a century and a half after his writings were published Heinrich Hoessli has earned some notoriety and recognition for his works.

### **Rattlesnakes**

Being a pioneer in Green County meant facing an assortment of hardships. And it was a long list of challenges which faced those early residents – basic challenges such as food, shelter, heat, and health issues. Another of the dangers in the early days of Wisconsin development was the presence of poisonous snakes. Wisconsin has two such venomous species – the Timber Rattler and the Massasauga. The Timber Rattler is most often found in rocky outcrops while the Massasauga is found in prairie and swampy environments. The European immigrants had known a poisonous viper in their homelands. Switzerland (and Central Europe) is home to the common viper or common adder which can inflict bites but which are typically non-fatal.

Elizabeth Moore Wallace wrote in her remembrances, entitled “This Side of the Gully”, about the pioneer life her family experienced on their land located along the Old Lead Road in the Town of Exeter. Her family farmed was located in the vicinity of the intersection of today's Exeter Center Road and Tunnel Road. She recalled, “*It was over by Melcher [sic] Stuessy's cabin that Uncle James killed the big rattlesnake. Father once saw a small rattler on our hill. He was wearing a pair of high topped boots. He heard the rattle, and thought it came from strange birds up in the tree above his head. Presently he spied the snake at his feet. We had seen no snakes in Ireland, thanks to St. Patrick or some other good cause.*”

As she was hanging out wet laundry in a clump of red oaks Elizabeth noted, “*I was shaking out the first towel when I heard a rustling in the leaves at my feet. On looking down I beheld a writhing mass of snakes. I took to my heels, and when I returned with mother a few minutes later, all of the snakes had disappeared. Although the snakes were the terror of my life, the ones found in the section of the country were for the most part harmless.*”

The book “Peck-A-Ton-Oka: River of Peace” by Erwin Wetzel-Richli provides some reports by the Swiss-immigrant Rodolf family of the Mineral Point area and their dealings with the dreaded rattlesnakes. The Rodolfs reminisced “*the hay was so tall that the work could have been dangerous owing to the rattlesnakes. Experience had taught the farmers to be particularly careful in tall grass. Theodore [Rodolf] knew that and was most careful. Uncle Henri [Rodolf] had two dangerous encounters with rattlesnakes while mowing hay. In the middle of his work heard a threatening rattle and a loud hissing and discovered a rattlesnake in its typical threatening stance just a few steps from his feet. It was just about to strike, but Henri reacted even more quickly and cut the animal in two with his scythe. The same fate befell a second specimen just one day later and almost on the same spot. Henry cut the rattles off the dead animal to keep as a souvenir. Especially large rattlesnakes lived in the woods; there were some with a length of eight or nine feet. Gottlieb [Rodolf] killed a magnificent specimen of this size with thirty-eight rattles. The snakes rattle their tails as a warning before they strike, but in this area, because of the loud chirping of the crickets, it was difficult to hear the warning very early, and by the time one did hear it, it could well be too late.*”

*Things were worse for another farm worker, whom Fritz [Rodolf] had found dead on the prairie some time ago. They could only speculate about the precise course of events; on the dead man's body lay a snake that was also lifeless. The snake that had probably bitten the worker first, whereupon the man in a burst of strength, used the last of his energy to throttle the snake before he succumbed to its poison."*

For additional reading on this subject there is an excellent online report entitled "Rattlesnakes in Early Wisconsin" by A. W. Schorger. Schorger reports the largest rattlers were 4 to 5 feet in length with perhaps 20 to 22 rattles. So it appears the Rodolf recollections were somewhat exaggerated.

### **Finding Family History in Unexpected Places**

A recent month-long trip took in the diverse cities of London, Paris, Barcelona and New Orleans -- each city steeped in history. It came as a surprise that amid the well-known icons such as Buckingham Palace, the Eiffel Tower and Gaudi's Sagrada Familia that a few bits and pieces of a more personal sense of history emerged through the layers of the past.

In London, the National Portrait Gallery is located just behind the National Gallery on Trafalgar Square. In its collection (although not presently on display) is a portrait of the Burkat Shudi family. Shudi,



originally Burkhardt Tschudi of Schwanden, Canton Glarus, was a master harpsichord maker in London. In the portrait at left, Shudi/Tschudi is shown at his harpsichord with his wife, Katharina née Wild, and their children Burkhardt Jr. and Barbara. The Shudi firm passed to son-in-law John Broadwood. The John Broadwood and Sons piano company still operates today. In fact, Broadwood has the distinction of holding the Royal Warrant longer than any other firm. They have made instruments for every King

and Queen from George II to Queen Elizabeth II.

In Paris, a stroll through the thoroughly fascinating Père Lachaise Cemetery brings one to the final resting places of such notable figures as Edith Piaf, Oscar Wilde and Jim Morrison. Yet unpredictably popping out of the tens of thousands of monuments tightly spaced in the cemetery's 109 acres were the monuments of Henri Stussy (1860-1934) and Jean Conrad Hottinguer (1764-1841).

After some research it was determined that Henri Stussy of Paris was the son of Glarus-born Kaspar Stüssi. Stüssi *père et fils* served as Paris lawyers. Jean Conrad Hottinguer (originally Johann Conrad Hottinger) was a Canton Zurich-born citizen who became the founding head of a line of Parisian bankers. The House of Hottinguer is a powerful banking family yet today. The Hottinger name is not unknown in New Glarus history. Living here in the early days of the community were Canton Zurich-born brother and sisters Heinrich Hottinger, Barbara Hottinger (Mrs. J. J. Tschudy) and Anna Hottinger (Mrs. Henry Hoehn).

In Barcelona a medieval family connection was found in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. On the wall of the cathedral are the sepulchres (pictured right) of the founders of the Cathedral -- Ramon Berenguer I, Count of Barcelona and his wife Almodis of Marche. These two historical figures were born about 1000 years ago. Using the Hohensax Gateway, Almodis and Ramon are direct ancestors (albeit about 30 generations back) of many newsletter readers (and likely tens of millions more throughout the world).



The story of Almodis and Ramon is one of those medieval tales of family intrigue which to continue to fascinate today. Almodis was abducted by Ramon around the year 1053. They married despite the fact that Almodis had a living husband and a living ex-husband. Ramon and Almodis were summarily excommunicated from the Church by Pope Victor II. Shortly after their marriage Almodis gave birth to twin sons named Ramon Berenguer II and Berenguer Ramon II. In 1071 Almodis was murdered by her step-son because he feared her influence was too great and that she too strongly advocated for her own twin sons. The step-son was found guilty and was subsequently disinherited and banished from Barcelona. In 1076, Ramon Berenguer I died and Barcelona was ruled jointly by his twin sons. But disharmony reigned. The twins eventually divided their lands and ruled separately. In 1082 Ramon Berenguer II was killed while hunting – the crime being attributed to his twin brother who became known as Berenguer Ramon the Fratricide.

In New Orleans in a French Quarter grocery store were packages of Elmer's Chee Weez, a snack similar to Cheetos. The Elmer family who operates the snack food company has Canton Glarus roots from the village of Bilten. Their immigrant ancestor, Jacob Elmer, settled in Biloxi, MS in the 1840s. Jacob's son, Augustus Elmer, ran the Elmer Candy Company, which still operates today although no longer by members of this Elmer family. Elmer's chocolates are particularly evident for Valentine's Day and Easter. Elmer's Fine Foods, the manufacturer of the salty snacks, is now in the fifth generation of the New Orleans Elmer family producing food products.

Throughout New Orleans are numerous medical facilities bearing the name Ochsner. The Ochsner hospitals and clinics are the largest such medical facilities in the state. Dr. Alton Ochsner was the co-founder and namesake for the clinics. Dr. Ochsner was an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin when he was recruited to the chair of surgery at Tulane University in New Orleans. Dr. Alton Ochsner was mentored in his medical training by Dr. Albert J. Ochsner. Dr. Albert Ochsner was born in Baraboo, Wisconsin. He was the son of Swiss immigrants, Heinrich and Judith (Hottinger) Ochsner, both natives of Canton Zurich. The Ochsner Park and Zoo in Baraboo were gifts from Dr. Albert Ochsner to the people of Sauk County.

### **Swiss Ancestry: Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Laura (Welch) Bush**

There was an article in the June 2013 Swiss American Historical Society journal "Review" entitled "Herbert Hoover and Belgian Relief: The Philanthropy of a Swiss American President". Hoover had Swiss blood and his surname Hoover was derived from the Swiss-German surname Huber. Going back five or six generations in the Herbert Hoover family tree one finds Gregor Huber and his father Johann Heinrich Huber of Oberkulm (now within Canton Aargau) Switzerland. While Hoover was a U. S. President with Swiss ancestry, it may be a bit of a stretch to pronounce him Swiss American.

Herbert Hoover's Swiss link is as follows: Herbert Hoover → Jesse Hoover → Eli Hoover → John M. Hoover → Andreas Huber/Andrew Hoover → Gregor Huber → Johann Heinrich Huber of Oberkulm.

Our two most recent presidents and two former (and living) First Ladies are also said to possess Swiss blood, although again it is a stretch to label them as Swiss Americans.

When Barak Obama was elected president in 2008, genealogists were busily tracing his family roots. And one of his ancestors caught the eye of those interested in Swiss ancestry. Obama's seventh great-grandfather on his mother's side, Hans Gutknecht (1692-1762), was born in the little village of Ried bei Kerzers, Canton Bern and baptized in neighboring Murten. Christian Gutknecht, the son of Hans, immigrated to the U. S. where the family adopted the surname Goodnight.

Obama's Swiss link is as follows: Barack Obama → Stanley Ann Dunham → Stanley Dunham → Ralph Waldo Emerson Dunham → Jacob William Dunham → Jacob Dunham → Catherine Goodnight → Samuel Goodnight → Christian Gutknecht/Goodnight → Hans Gutknecht of Canton Bern.



Laura (Welch) Bush is a direct descendant of Christoph von Graffenried (later known as DeGraffenried; 1661-1743), the founder of New Bern, NC. Christoph was born to an aristocratic Swiss family in their castle in Worb, Canton Bern. And von Graffenried's ancestry has also been charted back many generations. A very distant ancestor of von Graffenried's was Rudolf Kilchmatt (genannt Aebli) originally of Glarus but later a man of some position in Zurich. Dietrich Kilchmatt, a brother of this Rudolf Kilchmatt, fell at the Battle of Näfels in 1388.



Laura Bush's Swiss link is as follows: Laura Welch → Harold Welch → Mark Welch → Nancy Jane Aldridge → Mary Chadwell → Jane Johnson → Mary Baker DeGraffenried → Baker DeGraffenried → Tscharrer DeGraffenried → Christoph von Graffenried (pictured left).

Barbara (Pierce) Bush also has Swiss blood according to information found on internet sites. And if that information is correct this means her son President George W. Bush can claim Swiss ancestry. Barbara Bush's grandmother was Lulu Flickinger and Lulu's grandparents were Stephen and Margaret Ann (Figley) Flickinger. Both Stephen and Margaret were born in Tuscarawas County, OH. Tuscarawas County was made up of many people of Swiss and German ancestry. The Iseli, Zimmerman, Dick families who were early Berner settlers of Green County had immigrated to the Tuscarawas County area and resided there for many years before coming to Wisconsin. Incidentally, Herbert Hoover's father, Eli, was also a native of Tuscarawas County.

The Flickinger name was originally Flückiger from Canton Bern. And the Figley name was derived from Vögeli, also Swiss. Bush's Flickinger ancestor, Michael Flickinger, was traced back to Germany, but recent DNA testing has shown a match between the Michael Flickinger line with other Flickinger/Flückiger branches with known Swiss roots. Specifically, Robin Flickinger Gaynor has been studying the DNA results of Flickinger/Flückiger descendants and has found that of 42 of 43 DNA markers matched when comparing the Michael Flickinger line (Bush's ancestor) with the 1753 immigrant Peter Flickinger. Peter was believed to have been born in Huttwil or Rohrbach in Canton Bern.

The website of genealogist Robert Wade Figley has linked Bush's ancestor Margaret Ann Figley back to Jacob Vögeli who was born in 1732 in Zurich. Figley's website is called "Dear Cousin George . . .".

George W. Bush's Swiss links are as follows: George W. Bush → Barbara Pierce → Pauline Robinson → Lulu Flickinger → Jacob Marion Flickinger → Stephen Flickinger → John Flickinger → Michael Flickinger b. Germany with genetic testing showing a DNA match to Swiss Flückiger family.

George W. Bush → Barbara Pierce → Pauline Robinson → Lulu Flickinger → Jacob Marion Flickinger → Margaret Ann Figley → Jacob Figley → Adam Figley → Jacob Vögeli/Figley → Jacob Vögeli born in 1732 in Zurich and who married Eve Marie Swingli or Zwingli.

While the family history information found on the internet may be generally reliable, much of it has not been thoroughly vetted. It appears that Obama's Swiss links have been verified, but it is not entirely clear if the Bush links have been.

### Cheese Trivia

Can any of you cheeseheads out there name the variety of cheese which is made backwards?



## New Mollis

The names New Glarus, New Bilten, New Elm and New Schwanden have been documented. And now New Mollis can be added to the list of locations named after Canton Glarus villages. Duane Freitag found an obscure reference to an early Wisconsin Post Office named New Mollis. This location was near Appleton in Outagamie County and appeared to be in operation only in the years around 1870.

The Postmaster, Jacob Schindler, was a native of Mollis, Canton Glarus and he apparently selected the name. Jacob and brothers Henry, Joachim, Fridolin, and Edward Schindler all immigrated to Wisconsin but later relocated to Iowa and California. Swiss records reveal that brother Joachim died in 1871 while traveling in a wagon train.

## The Newlywed's New French Cook

The following five photos were taken from stereoscopic viewing cards dating from 1900. These five begin a story which we be concluded with the next five photos in the upcoming newsletter. These stereo cards were a popular feature of Victorian parlors. Typically the subjects were travel-related. Wisconsin Dells photographer H. H. Bennett produced such cards which were sold widely and which promoted the beauty of the Dells to prospective tourists. The Newlywed's New French Cook series can be found in the collection of the New Glarus Historical Society.

In case you cannot read the captions, here they are in larger print: 1) Mr. and Mrs. Newlywed's new French cook; 2) Why, you little beauty! How long have you been our cook?; 3) You bashful little creature; 4) Oh! You naughty man; 5) Footsteps – my wife. Mum's the word.

What's next? Watch for the exciting conclusion of this scandalous tale in the spring newsletter.



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*"If you would not be forgotten, as soon as you are dead and rotten, either write things worthy of reading, or do things worthy of writing." . . . Benjamin Franklin, 1738 and shared by newsletter reader Fred Underhill.*