

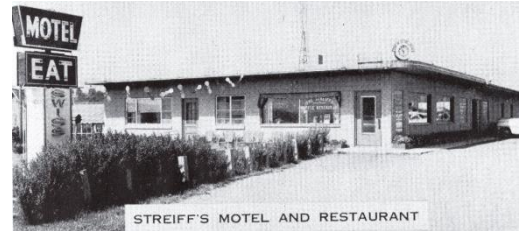
Family History Notes

Winter 2023

Lodgings Then and Now

The past newsletter issue contained a number of memories from our lifetimes which have changed due to technological advances, cultural changes and changing business models. On such business model which has changed drastically since the 1950s (again thinking of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II) has been lodging.

Using New Glarus as a starting point, local lodging 70 years ago was largely limited to the New Glarus Hotel and private rooms offered by locals. In 1953 Fred Streiff, a one-time blacksmith and later Chevrolet dealer, and his wife Barbara (Altmann) Disch opened the 10/11 room Swiss Motel and Waffle restaurant. Streiff's motel and restaurant (pictured) was located on New Glarus' south side on Highway 69 when the highway passed through the village. In 1967, Duane and Elaine (Klitzke) Wilde opened the 12 room Swiss Aire Motel on the relocated Highway 69 which offered more modern accommodations including air conditioning. In 1979 ground was broken on 47 room Chalet Landhaus which offered a Swiss-themed atmosphere including a bar and restaurant. The Landhaus expanded with more rooms and an indoor swimming pool. The latter two enterprises are still operating today, although it is sad to see that consumer comments on TripAdvisor indicate both establishments are in need of refurbishing



In more recent years Bed and Breakfast (B&B) establishments have entered the lodging world offering more unique and personalized experiences. In fact today, a person can stay in a B&B establishment which may offer a link to local or family history. The 1914 brick home built by John W. Duerst (pictured left) is now the Duerst Guest House operated by Duerst descendant Don



Elmer and his wife Jane. The photo at right attests to the time when this was the Duerst family home. It is a five generation group taken in the 1920s. The women in the photo are John W. Duerst's mother Barbara (Becker) Duerst (seated right), John W.'s sister Maria (Duerst) Aebly (seated left). Standing left is Barbara Duerst's granddaughter Anna Maria (Aebly) Schmid and standing right is great-granddaughter Letha (Schmid) Sandner. And the little girl, Marianne (Sandner) Gleisner, represents the fifth generation.

The one-time John and Dorothea (Speich) Legler home is now a New Glarus B&B. John Legler was an original 1845 immigrant. In the countryside is the Rose Hill B&B, once the home of Jacob and Amalia (Tschudy) Frick. The Frick home was moved from its original site near the Swiss Reformed Church and relocated to the countryside off of Zentner Road. And nearby Rose Hill is the Lucky Dog Farmstead B&B, a stone house once the farm home of Fridolin and Barbara (Wild) Streiff. Fridolin Streiff was a member of the Civil War Iron Brigade, serving from 1861 to 1865.

New Glarus B&B establishments which have come and gone include the Hoch Haus, located in the former John Jacob and Elsbeth (Hoesly) Ott home, the Helvetic Inn, in the former Dietrich and Barbara (Elmer) Stauffacher home and the B&B located in the Tudor-style home built by S. A. and Anna (Wohlwend) Schindler.



Several retail and commercial buildings in the downtown area now offer second floor apartments for short term stays. These offerings include apartments above the former Kehrlı tavern and cheese store building, the Werner Ziltner grocery building, Disch Hardware (east) building and the 1870s cheese factory and storage building on Railroad Street. The Kehrlı building was originally a general store built in the 1860s and operated by Fritz and Amalia (Blumer) Tschudy, the Ziltner grocery was originally the Citizen’s Bank building and the Disch Hardware building had an early life as the Andreas Schindler harness shop.



At least two Swiss chalets are available for lodging. The Chalet Ott, a family home built by Don and Pauline (Gebauer) Ott, has now been re-christened “Ott to Yodel Chalet”. The Ott kitchen features pine paneled rooms and a copper Swiss cheese kettle re-purposed as the hood over the stove (pictured right). Don Ott is a direct descendant of the aforementioned John Leglers. In the countryside is another chalet (pictured above) includes the requisite chalet balconies and flowerboxes, six bedrooms, two kitchens, a green-tiled *Kachelofen*, a swimming pool and sauna and a current price tag of nearly \$900 a night.



In the Blanchardville, the Eliza House has recently opened. The red brick home (pictured left) was built by James and Eliza (Munson) Blanchard. James was the son of Blanchardville founder Alvin Blanchard and Eliza was the daughter of Norwegian immigrants. For many decades the home was the Saether Funeral Home, first operated by my maternal grandparents, H. T. and Pearl (Elmer) Saether. This was also their residence and a home I often visited as a child. Their great-grandson, Paul Saether, has closed the former funeral home, turning it into a B&B. And Paul transformed



the former Saether Furniture Store into Blanchard Hall, a new multi-purpose community venue available for weddings, reunions, community meetings and funerals. The circa 1952 black and white photo at left was taken on the front steps of the Saether home. Pictured is my father Arthur Elmer holding my sister Barbara. And to my father’s left is my Aunt Colette (Saether) Curran with her two oldest children Janet and Bill.



And on the outskirts of Blanchardville is a unique lodging opportunity located at the Circle M Market Farm in a small 1950s recreational trailer referred to as a “canned ham”. Before Covid, the vintage trailer drew hundreds of guests a year. The owners refer to their lodging as “glamping” – a portmanteau formed from the words glamorous and camping.

And there are at least four “new” lodging options in Canton Glarus which have family associations for many. These historic homes were built 300-400 years ago most with documentable ancestral linkages.

In the village of Nidfurn, Canton Glarus is the massive six story chalet known as the *Landvogthaus* which is billed as a hotel within a museum and believed to have been built around the year 1600. The 400+ year old *Landvogthaus* was the home of Peter Blumer (1587-1669) and his wife Sibilla Pfaendler. Blumer served as *Landvogt* (governor) in Canton Aargau, hence the name of the house. And Peter and Sibilla Blumer were the ancestors of numerous New Glarus and area residents. The rooms of the manor house are impeccably decorated with elegant antique furnishings throughout. Pictured right is the breakfast room. The rear of the house has a view south to Canton Glarus’ highest peak, the Tödi. It seems the *Landvogthaus* is or has been for sale with an asking price of around \$2MM Swiss Francs.



In Bilten, Canton Glarus is the *Herrenhaus Milt* also known as the *Elsenerhaus* (pictured left). It was built by members of a family known as both the surnames Milt and Elsener (*Milt genannt Elsener; Elsener genannt Milt*). This manor house was believed to have been built by Heinrich Elsener and his wife Regula Elmer in the early 1600s. The home’s most elegant room is on an upper floor and which boasts inlaid wooden floors, wooden cabinets and an intricate wooden ceiling. Today a single room is available for overnight guests and is the least expensive of the four

Canton Glarus B&Bs mentioned in this article.

In Elm, Canton Glarus there are two lodging establishments of a historic nature. The *Grosshaus* is one of Elm’s oldest homes and is considered a national treasure. The *Grosshaus* even has its own Wikipedia page. And one of the apartments in the chalet is available for short term rental. The home’s wood paneled rooms,



slate oven and slate

floors, up-to-date kitchen and bath, provides a mixture of authentic alpine character yet with modern conveniences. The home’s original builder has not been firmly identified but it is believed the home dates from the mid-1500s.



Just steps away and behind Elm’s church is a chalet which dates to about 1690. The original home owner was Beat Rhyner. Beat and his wife Verena née Bähler are the ancestors of many New Glarus and area residents. This 330+ year old chalet is also one of the “new” lodging options for Elm offering three bedrooms.

Landjaeger

Very popular in New Glarus and surrounding areas is the smoked and dried beef snack stick called Landjaeger (*Landjäger*). Landjaeger have been made locally by several meat markets. This sausage is commonly found throughout Central Europe – Switzerland, Germany, Austria and France. In France the sausage are called *Gendarmes* (armed police). Rows and rows of hanging pairs of Landjaeger have been likened to rows of policemen or soldiers.



The word Landjaeger has a literal meaning of “country hunter”, and may also have the connotation of “country police” or even “game warden”. But the *Schweizer Idiotikon* has an interesting take on the origin of the word Landjaeger. This Swiss dictionary says that the sausage name evolved from the words “*lang tige(n)*” meaning “slowly smoked”. And if you pronounce *lang tige* you can easily hear its similarity to Landjaeger.

According to the Swiss House Shop, Landjaeger sausages are made of roughly equal portions of beef and pork with lard, sugar, red wine, and spices. They are each approximately 6 to 8 inches in length, made into links of two. Prior to smoking and drying, they are pressed into a mold, which gives them their characteristic rectangular cross-section.

Hey Slim Jim, with your mechanically separated chicken and textured soy flour, eat your heart out!

Goslar’s Historical Treasures

Goslar is a German town in the lower Saxony (*Niedersachsen*) region. It is a town which remains steeped in history. In fact the village of Goslar has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. In 2022 a celebration was kicked off celebrating its founding 1100 years ago. Goslar became the seat of Heinrich III, King of Germany and later the Holy Roman Emperor.



His palace, known as the *Kaiserpfalz*, was once the largest building north of the Alps. It has been restored and is an important German historical site.

The motto chosen for Goslar’s celebration is, “*Goslar, Wo Kaiser Ihr Herz Verlieren*” or “Goslar, where the Kaiser lost his heart.” You may liken this sentiment to Tony Bennett’s, “I Left My Heart in San Francisco.” But while Bennett’s sentiment is figurative, Goslar’s motto is quite literal. The heart (and entrails for some reason) of Holy Roman Emperor Heinrich III are found in the St. Ulrich’s Chapel (leftmost in photo) in the *Kaiserpfalz*.

Heinrich’s body (less his heart and entrails) was buried in the immense Speyer cathedral whose construction was begun in 1030 and spanned three generations of builders -- Holy Roman Emperors Konrad II, Heinrich III and Heinrich IV. The Speyer Cathedral is the final resting place these three cathedral builders as well as other notable rulers such as Rudolf I of Hapsburg, King of the Germans. And like the town of Goslar, the Speyer Cathedral is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

And lastly Holy Roman Emperor Heinrich III is a direct ancestor of many newsletter readers. Heinrich lived 1000 years ago so is an ancestor many, many generations back. But it has been documented and numerous ancestral paths exist from our generation to Heinrich III.

Fish, Seafood and Fishing

Thinking about our Swiss ancestors, fishing may not have been a primary staple of their dinner tables, but fish were consumed. The rivers and lakes of Canton Glarus provided a source of fish, although as a dietary protein source it likely ranked far below meat, dairy and eggs. And a fish or fishes can be found on the family crests of the Fischli family (naturally!), the Störi family and the Rhyner family of Elm. A mermaid is found on the Freuler family crest.

Fishing to provide food was documented in the first days of New Glarus settlement. Historian John Luchsinger wrote, *“When the colonists arrived, there was scarcely any food on hand, as their arrival had not been so soon expected and the necessary provision had not been made. In this emergency, the streams were largely drawn upon for food. As there were not many hooks and lines, the work was divided--- some caught fish and others, bait, namely grasshoppers. The fish which they caught were eaten without seasoning, their salt having given out.”*

Two gentlemen in the village of Mitlödi, Canton Glarus were fishermen by occupation. Brothers Jakob and Georg Luchsinger (#25 and #23) were recorded as *“Maurer”* and *“Fischer”* in the Canton Glarus records – masons and fishermen. How and where they fished not known however lake trout (*Seeforellen*) are found in the Linth River, the chief river of Canton Glarus and which flows through Mitlödi. The four sons of Jakob Luchsinger – Gabriel, Jacob, Marcus and Othmar – all immigrated to the United States settling in the area of Basalt, CO (near Aspen). And according to local history, the Luchsinger brothers caught fish in the Frying Pan River and carried their catch in gunny sacks, walking 20 miles to sell the fish in Aspen’s posh Hotel Jerome. (The Jerome is still operating in Aspen and remains a fashionable social hub.) The brothers used their income to purchase groceries in Aspen and walked home to Basalt. In the early 1880s, Gabriel Luchsinger and his wife Julia built the Luchsinger Halfway House, a lodging establishment half way between Aspen and Glenwood Springs\

The Luchsinger Halfway House still stands in Basalt, CO. And adjacent to the late 1800s lodging establishment is the 1910 home (pictured) built by Gabriel and Julia (Schneider) Luchsinger. And that home is still occupied by family members. Tyler Sims, a recent high school graduate is the 6th generation to live in the Luchsinger ancestral home. Tyler noted that Luchsinger has been a common name in Basalt over the years although the spelling differed with some branches using the Luchsinger spelling and others using Lucksinger. He commented to the *Aspen Times* newspaper, “I am very proud to say that I am a part of this family and plan to keep this property in our family in the future. My family and the Basalt community have taught me a lot in the last 18 years and it has made me the person I am today.” It is not known if Tyler has an interest in fishing. But he does have an interest in golfing. Tyler recently earned a 4-year caddy/golfing scholarship at the University of Colorado at Boulder.



Some Fishermen Today

Three men with Glarner and/or New Glarus roots have developed a deep passion for recreational fishing. Mentioned in the Fall 2014 newsletter was Brian Grossenbacher, (pictured on following page) grandson of New Glarus residents Paul and Verena (Elmer) Grossenbacher. Brian and his wife Jenny are skilled fly-fishing guides on the rivers of Montana. They have authored a series of guidebooks for fishing over a dozen Montana rivers. Brian’s interests have expanded to nature photography and his photos have become sought-after illustrations for magazines such as *Field and Stream*.



Emmett Babler (pictured right), a native of Minnesota and the grandson of Matt, Canton Glarus immigrant Christof Bähler and Canton Zurich immigrant Frieda Bachofner, is retired executive of Honeywell Aerospace, a retired clergy member of the Episcopal Church, accomplished in the arts and a passionate angler.

Emmett has written a book, “A History of Baitcasting in America”. As described on Amazon.com (where the paperback and Kindle editions of his book are available), this book “*is the first comprehensive history ever written about this truly original American angling method. It tells the story of a major component of sport fishing, beginning in the days of King James I, when British methods of still-fishing and fly-fishing migrated to the American colonies. The story travels through the frontier days in the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky,*



where a new kind of fishing reel, handmade by gunsmiths, watchmakers and silversmiths, launched a revolution in sport angling. There, along the shoreline of Kentucky’s streams, baitcasting was born.”



New Glarus High School graduate John Bethke (pictured left), son of Ralph and Anna (Frucci) Bethke, is a fishing enthusiast in the streams of Wisconsin’s Driftless Region near Westby. John created a popular fly known as the Pink Squirrel which is a recognized and praised lure when fly fishing for trout.

John and his siblings Beverly, Ralph Jr., Martin, Charlie and Russ are all New Glarus High School graduates (from 1959 to 1973) and perhaps the only New Glarus residents of their time or before who had Italian-born grandparents – immigrants

Dominick and Victoria (Paonessa) Frucci, both natives of Calabria.

Oswald Altman Homes

Apparently there was a time in New Glarus history when 9th Avenue was referred to as South Hill Street as evidenced by the photo below. Around the beginning of the 20th century New Glarus builder Oswald



Altman constructed four similar Queen Anne style homes including one for his own family, his in-laws and his mother. In fact the entire block of eight homes -- these four homes on 9th Avenue and four homes on the 10th Avenue side. According to a 1918 map, the owners of the four 9th Avenue homes were builder Oswald and Katie (Figi) Altman, her parents Oswald and Anna Katharina (Zweifel) Figi, Nick and Mary Anna (Baumgartner) Marty and Oswald’s

mother Mrs. Jost Altmann (born Susanna Kubly). On the 10th Avenue side were the homes of Fridolin and Anna Barbara (Adank) Zweifel, John Ulrich and Anna (Geiger) Rhyner, Mrs. Pankrazius Elmer (born Sybilla Legler), and William and Sara (Hoesly) Elmer. This entire block of homes built by Oswald Altman represents only eight of the dozens of Oswald Altman homes documented in New Glarus and surrounding countryside.

Recent Passings: Bert (Jenny) Digman and Jack Schmuckli

Bert Digman of Monroe passed away in December, 2022 at the age of 96. She was a long-time volunteer contributor to various Monroe organizations and activities such as Cheese Days, Turner Hall, the Swiss Singers and her church. Bert was born Bertha Jenny. Her father, Ben Jenny, was of 100% Glarner ancestry and her mother Frieda Schenkel of Canton Bern stock. Bert's paternal grandparents, Peter and Mary (Elmer) Jenny had a somewhat unique distinction – Peter being born in New Glarus and Mary being a resident of the New Elm settlement near Oshkosh. And Bert's great-grandfather Peter Jenny was the New Glarus school teacher who taught school in the 1849 log school/church building. Peter Jenny's wife was Amelia Heitz of the Heitz family who lived in the log cabin which is now located at the Swiss Historical Village Museum.

The passing of Jakob (Jack) Schmuckli occurred in November, 2022 at the age of 82. Schmuckli was among the first non-Japanese executives chosen by Sony founder and head Akio Morita at a time when Sony was looking to expand globally. Jack rose to become the Chair and CEO of Sony European Operations in Cologne, Germany. Jack's 24 year tenure at Sony included the time when the Berlin Wall fell and freedom came to those residents of Eastern Europe. Schmuckli saw to it that Sony seized the opportunity to appeal to these 400 million new customers. He retired from Sony in 1998. Jack and wife Vreni returned to live on Lake Zurich's "gold coast" in a starkly modern villa which they had built situated directly on the lake.



Jack and Vreni both have Canton Glarus roots. Jack's maternal grandfather was Joachim Knobel of Schwändi, a first cousin of Fred Knobel, Sr. of Monticello, WI. Knobel was a partner of J. C. Steinmann and in 1889 they built the brick mercantile building on Monticello's Main Street.

Curating an Artistic Life

Claudia Schmuckli is the daughter of Jack and Vreni Schmuckli. Her passions lie in the art world where she has made a name for herself in New York City, Houston and San Francisco. Claudia began her curatorial training at the Guggenheim Museum followed by the Modern Museum of Art (MoMA)



both in New York City. She went on to become a Director and Chief Curator of the Blaffer Art Museum in Houston. At present, Claudia is the Curator-in-Charge of contemporary art at the Fine Arts Museums in San Francisco. She explains, "I'm deeply engaged with what's happening in the world and within art. I observe, listen and search for inspiration in the work of artists. I see how it reflects, critiques, examines and anticipates the conditions of existence." Commenting on her Swiss heritage, Claudia stated, "My parents are from canton Glarus. My father is from Mitlödi and my mother from Schwanden. I speak an anachronistic form of Swiss German, with an inflection from the 1960s. It's the language that I learned at home from my parents."

Tracing the Origins of the Ringling Brothers Circus

Various local history stories have been published in area newspapers telling of the early acrobatic feats of Al Ringling of Ringling Brothers Circus fame. Apparently Al Ringling worked in the Green/Rock county area and entertained locals in his free time. And it has been written that the Ringling Brothers Circus had its origins in places like Dayton, Avon and Orfordville. One such article from 1943 mentioned that Al, his brothers, some dogs and a brown bear performed in Dayton (probably late 1870s or early 1880s) in what the newspaper considered Ringling's "first show". Al strung a rope from the general store to the hotel across the street and performed a tight rope walk for the spectators. The Dayton store was operated in the 1920s to 1940s by Herman and Mae (Chilson) Buchholtz, the maternal grandparents of New Glarus native Karen (Frick) Pridham. And Karen confirms hearing about the Ringling story from her grandmother Mae.

A similar story from 1936 from *The Janesville Gazette* claimed “Ringling Circus Had Its Beginning in Town of Avon”. It also stated that Al Ringling had purchased a share in a puppet show “Babes in the Woods” from Fred White a resident of Avon. Shows were performed in schools and town halls in that vicinity. And in Orfordville, Al Ringling worked for blacksmith O. H. Sater. And here too like in Dayton, Ringling is said to have walked a tight rope strung between the blacksmith shop and the chimney of a nearby house.

As young boys, the Ringling brothers were known to have offered acrobatic performances in their hometowns of McGregor, IA and Baraboo, WI. The world renowned Ringling Circus likely had its roots in these boyhood performances and not their acrobatic stunts in Green or Rock Counties. .

When the Amish arrived in New Glarus

It is about 60 years since families belonging to the Old Order Amish began purchasing farms in the New Glarus area. Their presence was a novelty looked on by most locals with curiosity. Behind the village hall a hitching post was installed so that the Amish had a place to park while shopping in New Glarus. And there on main street New Glarus the locals were able to more closely observe the women in their long, plain dresses and the bearded men in their broad-brimmed black hats. On Sundays the Amish families would hold services at alternate homes (they do not construct churches), the locals would drive into the countryside to locate the “host” Amish farm which was surrounded by numerous buggies.



Farmers who were neighbors to the Amish were perhaps the ones who got to know the Amish the best. “They are fine hard working people,” commented Larry Falk who farmed adjacent to Jonas Yoder. Paul Klassy, a farm neighbor of Fred Gingerich, commented that the Amish “are about the finest people I’ve ever known. They are real friendly neighbors and really know the farming business.” But on the other end of the spectrum, a New Glarus businessman openly stated, “Those people don’t fit with us. They won’t sing or yodel with us at our festivals. They’re different. It’s like Negroes coming into your sections of a big city.” Yikes!!



Wisconsin State Journal writer Richard Vesey commented in a 1964 article that “some communities have had problems with the Amish when their views conflicted with school policy. There is no indication of conflict in New Glarus and none is expected.” Yet a minor conflict occurred when the Amish boys could not fit their wide-brimmed hats into their school lockers. Soon some parents objected to physical education classes which required wearing gym shorts and communal showering. And then only a few years later the situation escalated when the Amish parents, due to their religious beliefs, refused to enroll their children in school beyond the eighth grade. (Wisconsin law required attendance to age 16.) The New Glarus School Board sued Amish parents and the case advanced to the U. S. Supreme Court. In the case of *Wisconsin vs. Yoder*, a unanimous decision by the Justices upheld the Amish view.

The Old Order Amish have their roots in the Swiss Anabaptist movement of Reformation times. The three founders of the Anabaptist movement were initially Ulrich Zwingli supporters. However, they split from Zwingli because of church doctrine regarding infant baptism. The Anabaptists, like the Amish of today, believe in adult baptism. One of the three Anabaptist founders was Conrad Grebel, a direct ancestor of several New Glarus families – see Family History Notes, Summer 2008.