

Family History Notes

Spring 2023

Legler Benbough Foundation

As of 2021 San Diego's Legler Benbough Foundation is no longer in operation. This philanthropic foundation has run out of money. It was not a victim of scandal, overspending or mismanagement, but rather it was a planned strategy to spend down all of its money through a steady stream of donations. The foundation was formed in 1985 by George Legler Benbough (known as Legler Benbough) and it gave away \$66 million dollars over its 36 years. The Legler Benbough Foundation had a focused and balanced mission. It was entirely devoted to three San Diego initiatives. The first focus was to support San Diego's Balboa Park which includes 17 museums, gardens and the world famous San Diego Zoo.



The second was to invest in disadvantaged neighborhoods where community-driven solutions promoted health, education and welfare. And the third focus was to cultivate local talent and to foster entrepreneurial relationships in science and technology.

In the years before the foundation was founded, Benbough had already donated millions to a variety of organizations. For example in 1968, Benbough donated the historic Estudillo House (built circa 1827-1829) to the California Park System. The house is one of the oldest examples of Spanish-Mexican homes in the state. Among the San Diego museums supported during Legler Benbough's lifetime were San Diego's Museum of Art, Art Institute, Natural History Museum as well as the Public Library, the Legler Benbough Teen IDEA Labs, and the Legler Benbough Theater. Benbough collected Spanish Renaissance furniture and a variety of decorative art and artworks. Highlights of his collection which he donated to the University of San Diego can be viewed [here](#). It was written, "Legler Benbough's lifelong passion for the arts and culture may have been born during a childhood stroll through the Panama-California Exhibition, but nurtured over a lifetime by his family's deep involvement in civic affairs."

George Legler Benbough (1909-1998) was born to San Diego mortuary and mausoleum owners Grace (Legler) and Percy Benbough. Legler was the great-grandson and namesake of original 1845 New Glarus settler George Legler and his wife and Anna née Dürst. Legler Benbough's mother, Grace, was a native of Valley Falls, KS, the daughter of miller and prominent local businessman Henry Legler and his wife Rosetta née Lehmann. Both Henry and Rosetta were Swiss immigrants – Henry (originally Heinrich) Legler born in Diesbach, Canton Glarus and Rosetta a native of Langnau, Canton Bern.

Besides family mortuary and mausoleum businesses, Percy Benbough was also involved in politics, first as a councilman and later as San Diego Mayor elected in 1935 and re-elected in 1939. In 1941, Grace Benbough had the distinction of christening the light cruiser U.S.S. San Diego – the second most decorated WWII ship with 18 battle stars. Legler Benbough served in WWII achieving the rank of U.S. Navy Lieutenant.

Legler Benbough's grandfather Henry Legler died in a tragic accident in 1904. He was thrown from his buggy breaking his neck. He was paralyzed from the neck down rendering him unable to eat. He died within days. Henry's sister, Magdalena (Legler) Hefty of San Diego traveled to Valley Falls, KS to attend her brother's funeral in 1904. Perhaps it was Aunt Magdalena who suggested that her niece Grace move to San Diego -- which Grace did in 1905 and married Percy Benbough that same year. And that marriage was to produce another Glarner in America with an enviable legacy of generosity.

Lawyer Anna O. Blum of Monroe

Like Legler Benbough mentioned above, Anna Ottilia Blum was a great-grandchild of original settlers George and Anna (Dürst) Legler. Miss Blum was born in Monroe, WI in 1908. She was the daughter of Monroe lawyer Samuel Blum and his wife Ottilia née Marty. Samuel was born and raised on the Blum homestead farm in the Town of Washington and Ottilia Marty was born in Valley Falls, KS. (Ottilia Marty was the niece of Henry Legler, the Valley Falls miller mentioned on page one.) Anna Blum received her BA from the University of Wisconsin in 1929 and her law degree, also from the University of Wisconsin in 1943. She was admitted to the Bar the same year and practiced law with her father Samuel and her brother Bruce in the firm Blum and Blum of Monroe. Besides practicing law, Anna was involved in numerous local, county, state and national organizations culminating with her presidency of the National Association of Women Lawyers in 1961-62.



On the state level Anna was a member of the Wisconsin Bar Association where she was a representative to the Board of Governors from 1947 to 1954. She served as president of the Green County Bar Association in 1955 and again in 1971. Outside of her legal associations, Anna was involved in the Green County Historical Society (president 1951-1954), the American Legion Auxiliary and the Order of Eastern Star. The photo above from the September 21, 1966 Monroe Evening Times shows Anna Blum presenting Monroe Mayor Walter Ekum with a Wisconsin State flag on the occasion of Government Day in Wisconsin.

Following the death of her father and brother, Anna was joined in 1972 by James Beer (longtime Green County Circuit Judge) in the firm Beer and Blum. Anna continued practicing law until shortly before her death in Monroe in 1985. This item was written, appropriately, in March which is National Women's History month. It is fitting to write about an area woman who succeeded in a traditionally male dominated occupation.

Early Millers among Cousins

Henry Legler (the maternal grandfather of Legler Benbough) moved from New Glarus to Valley Falls, KS (originally Grasshopper Falls) where he became a miller. He was considered a leading businessman of Valley Falls. Henry's brother Samuel and sister and brother-in-law Magdalena and Marcus Hefty also moved from New Glarus to Valley Falls. Niece Anna Legler (Mrs. Joachim Marty) and Cousin Anna Durst (Mrs. Albrecht Engler) moved from New Glarus to Valley Falls after the Civil War. Both Joachim Marty (struck by lightning) and Albrecht Engler (drowned in a mill race) died in Valley Falls and both widows and children returned to reside in New Glarus.



And Henry Legler had cousins who were mill operators in early New Glarus as well as in Oregon and Iowa. Henry's first cousins, brothers Heinrich and Samuel Hoesly, had purchased the New Glarus mill from David Klassy. The Hoesly brothers left New Glarus became millers in Milwaukie, OR. The Hoesly Brothers had sold the New Glarus mill to Mathias Schmid and his partner Rudolf Kundert. Mathias Schmid was married to Magdalena Durst, a cousin of Henry Legler and the Hoesly Brothers. Mathias Schmid sold his share of the mill to Fred Kundert (son of Rudolf) and moved to Beresford, SD where he farmed.

Another cousin, Gottfried (Godfrey) Durst, was a miller in Iowa. He had lived in Valley Falls, KS with Henry Legler before purchasing land near Danbury, IA where he re-routed a river in order to build a dam and mill. The Durst grist mill ground about 250 bushels of grain per day yielding 50 barrels of flour. Durst built an elevator adjacent to his mill which held 40K bushels of grain and a warehouse with a capacity of ten carloads of flours. The Durst flour was shipped throughout the United States, Mexico and even China.

Godfrey Durst's son Mark had an unexpected occurrence at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Durst and his wife purchased a sugar and cream set at China's exhibit. Their names and hometown were to be printed on the set. The Chinese lady who was assisting them asked if they were the Dursts of the Durst mill. It seems the Chinese lady's children had learned the English alphabet from a Durst flour sack which she had purchased while still living in China.

Descendants of George and Anna (Durst) Legler

It appears there are no longer any descendants of original settlers George and Anna Legler living in New Glarus or the area. Sisters, Barbara Reardon Lester and Margaret Mills Haglund, were the last descendants of the Leglers who lived in New Glarus. Both were New Glarus High School graduates – Barbara in 1948 and Margaret in 1963. Margaret and her husband Roger are pictured at right. The Haglunds met at their alma mater, Concordia University in Moorhead, MN, where they have endowed a scholarship fund to support future mathematics teachers.



The Schläppi Name

In recent months I happened to come across the Swiss surname Schläppi several times. Since the surname kept popping up, I decided to research the name a bit further. The name has roots in seven Berner Oberland villages including Gadmen, Lenk in Simmental, Erlenbach and Zweisimmen. Many by that name immigrated to America over the years and have spelled their surname a variety of ways such as Schlappi, Schlaeppi, Schleppey and Schlappe.

This family surname can be found in Green and Lafayette Counties although it was never particularly common. Immigrant Albert Schlappi and son John were prominent farmers south of Browntown. In 1976, John Schlappi, wife Lorraine and their son Jim received the Outstanding Area Farmer Award at the Wisconsin State Fair. The Schlappis milked a herd of 60 Brown Swiss cows on their "Brown Swiss Alpine Echo Farm". The Schlappi family exemplified exceptional farming and conservation practices and maintained strong ties with the FFA and 4-H organizations. Jim Schlappi still farms south of Browntown.

At least two New Glarus residents of years past had Schläppi connections. Katharina (von Weissenfluh) Kaech of New Glarus was the daughter of Magdalena von Weissenfluh née Schläppi who lived in Gadmen, Canton Bern. Katharina Kaech's Uncle Kaspar Schläppi/Schlappi was a resident of the German and Swiss settlement of Ottenheim, KY. And there are Schlappis still living in Ottenheim.

Another New Glarus resident and local physician, Dr. Edward D. McQuillin, was an Ohio native. And Dr. McQuillin's Grandmother McQuillin was born Anna Maria Schläppi a native of Lenk im Simmental. Anna Maria immigrated with her father Christian Schläppi/Schlappi to Delta, OH in 1834. Incidentally, Dr. McQuillin had a sister Grace who married Oliver Mojonnier, a second generation Swiss and native of Highland, IL. Mojonnier was a partner with his brothers in the Mojonnier Brothers dairy equipment company of Chicago. The Mojonnier Brothers had received their start in the dairy world by working for Highland's Helvetia Condensing/Pet Milk Company in their youth.

A surprise discovery was that the country music singer/songwriter Billy Montana was born William Schlappi. And William's son Randy (known professionally as Randy Montana) is also a country music performer based in Nashville. Billy is married to Montgomery Lee Petty, daughter of race car legend Kyle Petty. William Schlappi/Billy Montana is a native of New York State and is the great-grandson of immigrant Karl (Charles) Schläppi/Schlappi, a native of Lenk im Simmental, Canton Bern. Karl was a cheese maker for Bordon Dairy in upstate New York.

And returning to Wisconsin I learned of a Dr. Michael Schläppi of Marquette University. Dr. Schläppi



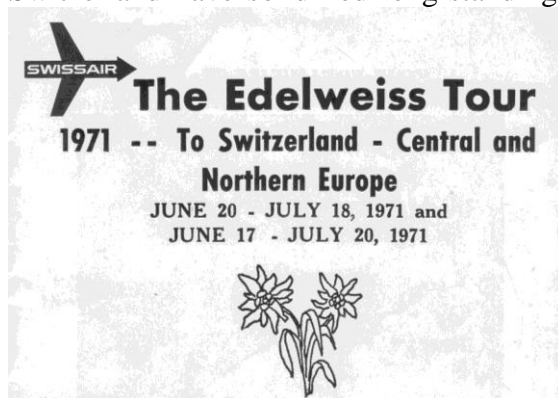
received his PhD in Plant Molecular Biology from the University of Basel in 1990. In the past several years, Dr. Schläppi, a biologist, has successfully developed and harvested Wisconsin's first crops of cold tolerant rice. The bucolic Wisconsin farm scene pictured left is located near Mequon and the grain pictured is not wheat or oats but rice. Schläppi has partnered with Wisconsin's Hmong people (immigrants from Laos and Viet Nam) to help plant the rice in the paddies. And the Hmong are getting their children involved to pass along their knowledge and age-old traditions associated with rice. This Wisconsin-grown rice, known as Red Stone Rice, may be available for sale online for Wisconsin residents.

And Dr. Schläppi is working with Native Americans to re-establish wild rice in Milwaukee County's Menomonee Valley. Early history indicates that wild rice flourished in the low and marshy valley. In fact the name "Menomonee" is derived from the Ojibwe word "*manoomin*" meaning wild rice. In 2022 Marquette University changed their official seal to depict three stalks of wild rice in the Menomonee Valley. The wild rice provides a sense of history and recognition of the help which Father Jacques Marquette received from the Native Americans. Dr. Schlappi's work toward the reintroduction of rice to Milwaukee's historic river valley is timely given Marquette's introduction of wild rice to its seal.



Visiting the Homeland

Many of us have had the pleasure of visiting Switzerland. Switzerland draws visitors from around the world because of its natural beauty, culture and history. And of course our "New Glarner" visits to Switzerland have solidified long-standing familial and emotional ties. After World War II, visits to Switzerland by New Glarus people became more frequent with increased air travel, increased disposable income, more leisure time and a renewed interest in family history.



In many cases these were visits to family members but as the years passed more and more of the trips were more leisure/touristic in nature. Paul Grossenbacher of the Edelweiss Stars singing group and his daughter Elmira (Ellie) Root took numerous groups from the New Glarus area to Switzerland on chartered Swissair jets and typically began in Canton Glarus. And Monroe's Turner Hall has

also sponsored numerous escorted tours to Switzerland in recent years.

But a number of our Canton Glarus-born ancestors visited their homeland in the nineteenth century. One of the first was early New Glarus settler Joshua Wild who returned to Canton Glarus in 1860. At that time Wild had been in America for 15 years and in New Glarus around 10 years. When he embarked on his journey home in 1860, Wild was 46 years old. Remaining at home was his wife Barbara, a 14 year old daughter, a 6 year old daughter, a 3 year old son and a daughter less than one. Joshua's step-father Jacob Ott and half-brothers, Anton and Jacob and their wives likely provided whatever support Barbara Wild may have needed while her husband was 4500 miles away.

Wild's trip to Glarus commenced on May 31, 1860. He traveled to Madison and then by rail to Milwaukee, by ship across Lake Michigan, and across the State of Michigan to Detroit by rail. Wild was able to take in Niagara Falls which he said, "could be heard from miles away" and that "this sight [of Niagara Falls] alone was worth the trip." Passing through Syracuse, NY, Wild visited "friends who had treated me very kindly." (The Wild family had resided in Syracuse from 1845 to 1850.) The transatlantic trip took 14 days, arriving in Liverpool. From there the trip went by way of both London and Paris where Wild had the opportunity to visit landmarks such as St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and the gardens and menagerie of Paris (probably *le zoo du Jardin des Plantes*, said to be the second oldest zoo in the world). Wild commented that he would have liked more time to explore these cities "but our love for our homeland pushed us onward."

Upon reaching Canton Glarus "tears came to my eyes". And again upon greeting relatives in Schwanden, "I fell into their arms and both cried."

Joshua Wild noted that he was being considered a wealthy man by the Glarner and "men talked to me that had formerly disregarded me. I found out that money spoke louder than character." Wild visited the home of his sister-in-law and her husband, Anna Katharina (Speich) and Joachim Klassy. The Klassys had suggested their older son Johannes (John) return to New Glarus with Joshua. But Wild urged "all come or none". And so the Klassy family sold their possessions and journeyed to America. They all arrived home on September 26, 1860 – a trip for Wild of 17 weeks.

Below is the 1860 ship manifest listing the immigrants Joachim Klassy (Klaesi), his wife Anna Katharina, and sons John and Joshua. And below that is the name of Joseph [sic] Wild returning to America.

82	Klaesi Joachim	30	male	Swiss
83	Klaesi Katharina	44	female	"
84	Klaesi John	12	male	"
88	Klaesi Joshua	1	male	"
59	Wild Joseph	47	male	U.S.A.

Upon reaching home, Joshua Wild noted that "before I left I had signed a paper signifying that if I did not return my wife would be sold beneficiary to my estate. When I got home I destroyed the paper."

In 1868, Wernet Elmer, 55, and his brother-in-law (and cousin) Niklaus Elmer, 59, traveled to their home village of Elm, Canton Glarus. Also traveling with them was Jacob Ruegg, 40, a native of Pfäffikon, Canton Zurich and the son-in-law of Niklaus Elmer. Wernet was the only member of his family to immigrate to America and had six siblings yet living in Elm. Niklaus had a brother and sister who remained. They returned home of the immigrant ship Bellona which carried a number of Glarner immigrants headed for New Glarus.

On June 8, 1899, the following five men, all immigrants from Canton Glarus, assembled in New Glarus and left for a three month stay in Switzerland:

- Mathias Schmid, 69 year old farmer of Beresford, SD. Schmid was an original 1845 colonist of New Glarus who arrived with his parents and siblings at the age of 15. He was a local miller before moving with his family to Beresford.
- Henry Hoesly, 66 year old farmer of the Town of Primrose north of New Glarus. Hoesly was a native of Haslen and had one brother yet living in 1899. Henry Hoesly died in 1901, less than two years after he returned from Switzerland.
- John Klassy, 54 year old farmer of New Glarus. John Klassy immigrated in 1860 with his parents and brother at the urging of Joshua Wild who visited Canton Glarus that same year (see above).
- Abraham Stauffacher, 56 year old farmer of the Town of Jordan northwest of Monroe. He and his family were 1867 immigrants. Abraham was the youngest of his siblings, all of whom had died by the time of his visit in 1899. However, there were several nieces and nephews living.
- George Figi, 72 year old bachelor of Monroe. He had farmed in the Renwick, IA area but returned to retire in Monroe.

Anon Kellesvig

Located halfway between New Glarus and Blanchardville on Highway 39 is a neat farm home originally the home of Norwegian immigrants Anon Kellesvig (originally Kjellesvig or Kjellesvik) and his wife Turina (known as Turi) Halvorsdatter Rensvigen. Anon was born in the village of Etne on Norway's west coast (known today as Vestland) and immigrated with his mother in 1857. Turi was a native of the Telemark region in Norway and had immigrated with her family in 1861.



Anon Kellesvig (pictured here) served in the Civil War in Wisconsin's 15th Infantry, Company E, known as "Odin's Rifles". This company was also referred to as the "Norwegian Regiment" or "Scandinavian Regiment" organized in Madison by Hans Christian Heg and comprised mostly of Norwegians with some Swedes and Danes. (It was Heg's statue on Madison's Capitol Square which was torn down, decapitated and thrown in Lake Monona in the summer riots of 2020. Heg, an abolitionist, was mortally wounded at the Battle of Chickamauga.)



Anon enlisted as a Private in November, 1861. His war records indicate an illness while in Mississippi in August of 1862, Later that year he was wounded and taken prisoner at the Battle of Stones River near Murfreesboro, TN. After being paroled he was sent to an Annapolis, MD hospital then to Benton Barracks in St. Louis, MO. Kellesvig returned to service in mid-1863 and participated in the Battle of Chickamauga where he was wounded in his ankle. He was treated for his wounds in nearby Chattanooga, TN. And in December of 1864 he was accidentally wounded in his right hand at Atlanta.

Anon returned to York and married Turi in 1868. They farmed, raised a family of eight children and are buried just down the road in the Old York Cemetery. A number of their descendants have lived in the area and attended New Glarus schools.

- Anon and Turi's son Theodore Rasmus (Tommy) Kellesvig remained on the home farm with this wife Emma Vamstad. Their daughter Alice married Tilman Paulson and they operated the farm until moving to Blanchardville in 1968. The Kellesvig farm stayed in the family until 1977 – 115 years. Their children, Doug and Rita, attended the Bem School. Doug was a New Glarus High graduate and Rita graduated from Blanchardville High.
- Carl Kellesvig, another son of Anon and Turi, married Gena Johnson and their sons included Vernon and Theron whose families lived in New Glarus. Vernon's daughter Debra and Theron's daughters Mary Kay and Barbara all were graduates of New Glarus High.
- Another son of Anon and Turi was Halvor Kellesvig who married Alma Dahlby. Their granddaughter is Betty (Lewis) Erickson, a New Glarus High graduate, as were her children Paul, David and Susan.
- A daughter of Anon and Turi, Annie Marie, married Kittle T. Kittleson. Their granddaughter, Agnes née Helgesen, was a New Glarus resident married to Joseph Slotten and Ivan Rhyner. And thus Agnes' daughters Nancy (Mrs. Al Hefty) and Beth (Mrs. Dale Hustad) and their respective children were Kellesvig descendant and New Glarus residents.

In recent years an elaborately rosemaled trunk was donated to Mt. Horeb's Driftless Historium by the family of Kellesvig descendant Rita (Paulson) Orshall who grew up on the Kellesvig homestead farm. According to Town of York historian Arlo Paust, the trunk was painted in the Telemark style and it is believed to have been Turi Kellesvig's trunk. Paust noted, *"The trunk is uniquely large and its rosemaling has been miraculously well-preserved. The society [Driftless Historium] is thankful the family did not care to modernize the artistry of this historical artifact. The trunk and its unique "old world" qualities may have been preserved because of the physical connection the [Kellesvig] family had to their homestead for such an extended period of time."* And he added, *"By the time the family, and the trunk, moved out . . . rosemaling had seen a resurgence in popularity. . . Rita Orshall became a rosemaler herself. Perhaps she was inspired by her own great-grandmother's trunk."*

Immigrant Kundert Families in New Glarus

Numerous 19th century immigrants by the name of Kundert came to the New Glarus area to put down roots. Four different Kundert branches that came to New Glarus will be highlighted below. Despite these four branches of Kunderts who settled in New Glarus in the nineteenth century, only two New Glarus individuals carry the Kundert name today.

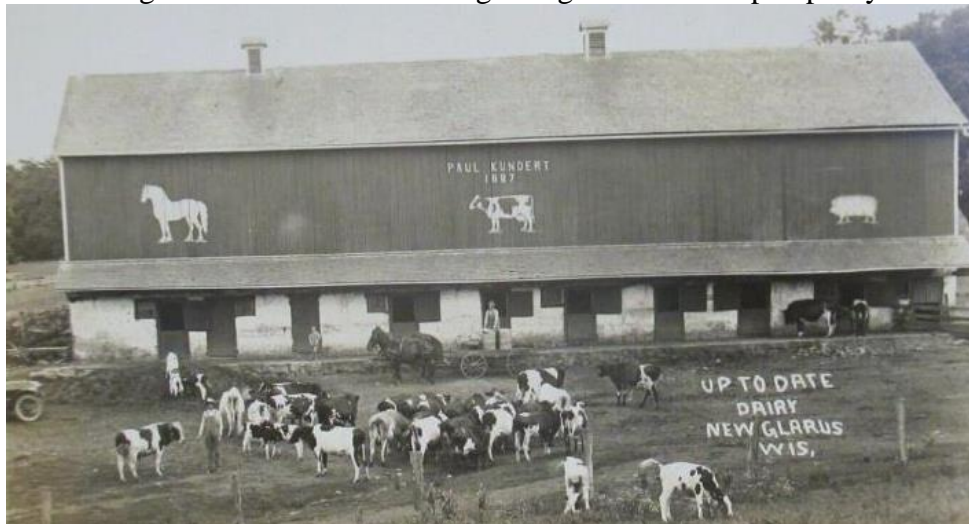
1) Paulus and Barbara (Zopfi) Kundert of Rüti and their children were among the original colonists of 1845. Their son Rudolf was killed in the Civil War and daughter Salome (Mrs. Sebastian Sebold; known as Sarah) later lived in St. Louis. When Paulus died (after 1864) he was the last remaining member of his family in New Glarus. Daughter Salome died in St. Louis in 1931, one of the last surviving of the original settlers of 1845.

Paulus Kundert's nephew, Rudolf Kundert and his wife Elsbeth née Schuler of Rüti arrived in New Glarus around 1849. Three of their four children lived to adulthood -- Elsbeth (Mrs. John Klassy), Barbara (Mrs. Thomas Hefty) and Fridolin (married to Maria Wild). Rudolf was a partner in the New Glarus mill with Mathias Schmid. When Rudolf Kundert died in 1871, his son Fridolin (Fred) took his share and then bought out partner Matt Schmid who left for South Dakota. Fridolin Kundert and his brother-in-law Thomas Hefty were two of the five founders of the Bank of New Glarus in 1893. Fridolin died at the age of 49 in 1903 and his mother Elsbeth died just 3 months later.

Kathryn (Kundert) Zweifel (1891-1990) of New Glarus was the last surviving child of the Fred Kunderts and Mary Lou (Klassy) Hustad (1928-2019) of New Glarus was their last surviving grandchild. A number of Rudolf and Elsbeth Kundert descendants still reside in New Glarus (including Bill and Dale Hustad, Barbara Thacker, Bonnie (Elmer) Roberts, Eloise (Klassy) Kuenzi, Dan and Paul Klassy, Toni (Blum) Seitz and Gale (Blum) Duval). But none of these New Glarus descendants have the Kundert surname. (A tragic story follows on page 9 regarding members of this Kundert family.)

2) Johann Thomas and Elsbeth (Voegeli) Kundert of Rütli were 1853 immigrants to New Glarus. They had six children: Rosina (Mrs. John Hess), Balthasar, Oswald, Johann Thomas, Paulus, Barbara (Mrs. Bernhard Zweifel) and John. Kundert daughter Barbara and her husband Bernhard Zweifel had numerous Zweifel descendants, many of whom have lived in New Glarus over the years. Son Oswald Kundert and family are remembered as the dwellers of the Kundert-Heitz log cabin relocated to the Swiss Historical Village Museum in New Glarus.

Son Paulus Kundert farmed west of New Glarus, accumulating nearly 500 acres of land. The barn pictured was built by Paulus Kundert and, according to the notation painted on the barn, it was built in 1887. Larger barns like this were beginning to reflect the prosperity of the local dairy farmers. Paulus'



oldest son, Bartholomeus Kundert, became a New Glarus merchant/partner with his brother-in-law Thomas C. Hefty. Brothers-in-law Kundert and Hefty were also founders of the Bank of New Glarus in 1893 with previously mentioned brothers-in-law Fred Kundert and Thomas Hefty. (A fifth founder was John Conrad Zimmerman.) Paulus

Kundert Jr. had no children and sold the family farm to J. U. Freitag in 1910. The barn which is pictured was replaced with a newer barn. Only a few descendants of the Johann Thomas and Elsbeth Kundert live in New Glarus and none have the surname Kundert.

3) Sara (Voegeli) Kundert was the wife of Abraham Kundert of Rütli and they had 17 children, 13 of whom lived to adulthood and all but one of them immigrated to America. Father Abraham died in 1838 and his widow Sara immigrated in 1853 to New Glarus with several of her children. Sara Kundert's children were widely dispersed. One son remained in Switzerland. Two children lived in New Glarus, one daughter lived near Blanchardville and another daughter near Monroe. One family lived in the New Elm settlement near Oshkosh. And other Kundert children were found in the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Oregon, California and South Dakota. Sara's many children were nearly as prolific as their parents, giving Sara more than 100 grandchildren. Following Swiss naming customs (naming first grandchildren after their grandparents), ten of Sara's granddaughters were given the name Sara to honor her. And 9 of her grandsons were named Abraham after their grandfather Abraham Kundert. Sara died in 1867 and was the first burial in the small Evangelical Association Cemetery. Before Sara died she lost two grandsons in the Civil War – Jacob Kundert at Antietam and Balthasar Voegeli who died in a Maryland hospital.

Of Sara (Voegeli) Kundert's thousands of descendants, none named Kundert reside in New Glarus today although a number of her descendants named Kundert live elsewhere in Green County.

4) David Kundert was a native of Diesbach, Canton Glarus and the son of Jacob and Elsbeth (Kundert) Kundert. He married Maria (Mary) Hefty of New Glarus in 1891. They farmed on the Hefty farm in the Town of Exeter. David and Mary had four children, the oldest being David, a New Glarus blacksmith and automobile mechanic. David (the son) married Anna Zimmermann, a native of Ennenda, Canton Glarus. Their four children were Reumond (Ray), Sylvan, Junior David and Marcella (Sally) Hammerly. Ray served in Europe in WWII and after the war had the opportunity to visit his grandmother in Canton Glarus. The photo at right, found in the Canton Glarus archives, shows Ray with Grandmother Anna (Becker) Zimmermann.



Because of this David Kundert branch, the Kundert surname can be found in New Glarus yet today. My classmate Jim Kundert and his brother David, sons of Sylvan and Ruth (Stuckey) Kundert, are both New Glarus residents.

Three Funerals and a Wedding

September 7, 1952 was to be a happy day for New Glarus native Velma (born Euphemia Velma Kundert) Hershberger of South Pasadena, CA. Velma's nephew John (Jack) Kundert of Monroe was marrying Marian Signer. Velma had arrived in advance of the wedding with her two small children. The days leading up to the wedding would afford Mrs. Hershberger an opportunity to reunite with family and friends.

On Tuesday, September 2, 1952 Velma's cousin Helen (Helgesen) Ramsey of Fort Atkinson had invited Velma, her two children and various Kundert family members to the Ramsey home for a picnic. Velma was driving the Kundert party to the Ramsey home. On Highway 26 south of Fort Atkinson they were struck head-on by another car. The accident was to take three lives and cause every passenger varying degrees of injury.



Killed in the car accident was Velma's Aunt Barbara (Kundert) Zwicky, 76, of New Glarus. Velma's father, John H. Kundert, also of New Glarus, was hospitalized with fractured legs – one leg broken in five places. Velma's Aunt Ellen (Kundert) Steussy of New Glarus (pictured left in 1950) suffered head and internal injuries. And Velma's Aunt Mary (Kundert) Helgesen of Janesville (Helen Ramsey's mother) suffered a broken ankle. Velma and her daughter Jody suffered lacerations and Velma's 4 year old son Eric had head injuries and was sent to Madison General Hospital.

John H. Kundert's condition worsened and he passed away four days later on September 6 at age 73. Ellen Steussy returned to her New Glarus home but remained bedridden due to her injuries until she died a year later at age 75 on September 24, 1953.

Jack Kundert and Marian Signer were married in Monroe on September 7, 1952. It was the day after his grandfather John H. Kundert had died. And those bittersweet circumstances are reminiscent of the following lines spoken by Stüssi and Wilhelm Tell from Schiller's play *Wilhelm Tell* (Act IV Scene III):

Stüssi: *Here 'tis a bridal [party], there a burial.*
Tell: *And oft the one treads close upon the other.*

The Kundert Name and Family Crest

The family name Kundert is derived from *Chuonradt* an old form of the name Konrad. According to the *Familiennamenbuch der Schweiz* the Kundert name in Switzerland is only associated with Canton Glarus, and in Canton Glarus it is associated with the Linthal villages running south from Glarus to Braunwald. The village is Rüti considered the ancestral seat. The family crest (*Familienwappen*) is a bit of a mystery. Featured on the Kundert crest is a *Katzenstriegel* – a cat curry comb. According to the Swiss *Idiotikon*, *Katzenstriegel* was also a type of medieval “tug of war” game. But it is not clear why a cat comb or a medieval game would be featured on the crest. In fact in his work, *On the History of Glarner Families Third Lecture, 1877*, Gottfried Heer wrote, “*The Kundert coat of arms has a so-called cat curry comb as a symbol. What does that mean? Since I, myself, don't know a solution for this, I wish to leave this nut to be cracked by others.*”



A Dam, a Bridge and a Tunnel:

The Muttsee Dam

At 8202 feet above sea level, the Muttsee Dam is the highest dam in Europe and is Switzerland’s widest dam. The Muttsee is located high in the Glarner Alps far above the village of Linthal. As a reservoir (*Stausee*), the water in the Muttsee, along with the water in the lower Limmernsee reservoir, is used to drive turbines to generate electricity for the Linth-Limmern power stations owned by Swiss power producer and energy trader Axpo Holding AG. In 2022, nearly 5000 solar panels were installed on the face of the dam (see photo). The south-facing dam captures the sunlight. The high elevation precludes fog and the snow reflects the sunlight. And in winter, the solar panels are actually more efficient at producing electricity than in warmer temperatures. According to Axpo, the unique high altitude Muttsee solar farm is expected to generate three times more power than a comparable plant located in the Swiss midlands.



The Historic Palm Tree Road Bridge

The historic stone arch bridge on Palm Tree Road near St. Cloud has recently been placed on the state register of historic places. You may think that this bridge is located in the state of Florida because of countless palm trees found in the vicinity of St. Cloud south of Orlando. But this unique stone bridge is actually found in Fond du Lac County, WI near a little village also named St. Cloud. The stone arch bridge spanning the Sheboygan River was built in 1901 by a local mason by the name of Alphonse Halter.

The bridge was constructed in the style of a Roman bridge – odd number of arches with the largest arch in the middle and slightly smaller arches emanating from the center. The Palm Tree Road Bridge is the longest such bridge in Wisconsin with nine arches. The bridge was used for vehicular traffic until 2012. Since then it is used only for biking and walking.



In a recent Wisconsin Historical Society newsletter item about the historic bridge, the WHS identifies Alphonse Halter as the bridge designer and builder. But they failed to mention that Halter was an 1882 Swiss immigrant coming from Rebstein, Canton St. Gallen. The WHS also failed to mention the origin of the Palm Tree Road name so that curiosity must remain a mystery for now.

The Stewart Railroad Tunnel

A few miles east of New Glarus in the Town of Exeter is the 1887 tunnel built for the then Chicago, Madison and Northern Railroad. The 1200 foot tunnel has been used in recent years for bicyclists and hikers on the Badger State Trail, a recreational trail built on the former rail bed. However in 2019 it was

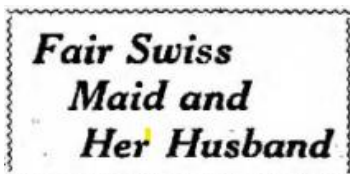


closed for safety reasons and has not been open since. The DNR has recently announced that it is seeking \$6.6M for the tunnel repairs. Does anyone have \$7M to spare?

The tunnel goes under a ~25 mile ridge which meanders southeast from the Blue Mounds area to the Green County's one time (1820-40s) lead mining area known as Exeter Diggings. This ridge may have been the route taken in July, 1832 during the Black Hawk War by future president Zachary Taylor and others on their trek from Fort Atkinson to Fort Blue Mounds.

A Fair Swiss Maid

In 1913 New Glarus baker Albert Wolf was married to Rosa



The accompanying picture of Rosa Marki, the girl who traveled alone from Switzerland to meet her promised lover in Janesville on Thursday and Albert Wolfe to whom she was married immediately on her arrival here, was taken especially for the Gazette after the marriage had been performed by Justice of the Peace



MR. AND MRS. ALBERT WOLFE.

Charles H. Lange.
Mr. and Mrs. Wolfe left Thursday afternoon for New Glarus, Green county, where the young man has a flourishing bakery business. His wife will rapidly become acquainted with American ways as she will aid her husband in the capacity of saleswoman.

Albert Wolf was married to Rosa Märki (Maerki). Both were immigrants – Albert from Kloten, Canton Zurich and Rosa from Mandach, Canton Aargau. Their marriage received attention in the newspapers (a clipping at left from the *Janesville [WI] Gazette* newspaper and a clipping at right from the *Tampa [FL] Weekly Tribune* newspaper.) It seems the newspapers were intrigued by a single woman crossing the Atlantic to meet and marry her fiancée.

Rosa left Europe on the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie* from Bremen on January 21, 1913 and arrived in New York one week later. And two days after that Rosa arrived in Janesville where Albert was waiting at the station. They went to the local Justice of the Peace and were married and photographed that day in Janesville. The photo was taken by the *Gazette* staff. The Wolfs made their home in New Glarus and in November of 1913, Rosa gave birth to their son Otto.

CROSSES OCEAN FROM SWITZERLAND TO MARRY

After Two Years in America, Lover Is Doing Well Enough to Send for the Girl

JANESVILLE, Wis., April 9.—Traveling alone all the way from her home in Thurgau, Switzerland, to meet her lover who awaited her in Wisconsin, where he had come to make his fortune two years ago, and to prepare a home for her, Rose Marki, tired from her long journey but happy with the anticipation of meeting her fiancé, arrived in Janesville recently.

She was not disappointed, for Albert Wolfe, to whom she was betrothed before he left his native land, now a prosperous business man at **New Glarus, Wis.**, was at the St. Paul depot to meet her. He was the first to see her, and hurrying travelers on the platform turned away with kindly smiles at the lovers' greeting.

Everything was in readiness for the wedding, which was solemnized at the office of Justice of the Peace Charles H. Lange, in the Hayes building. The ceremony was read by Mr. Lange in English and then in German, as the bride does not understand a word of English.

Albert Wolf was a baker in a building on the northeast corner of First Street and Sixth Avenue (where Chalet Cheese store is today). And in 1916 a new bakery building was built and Wolf's bakery building remains the New Glarus Bakery yet today. In April of 1917 Albert visited his wife who was taking treatments in an Oshkosh sanatorium accompanied by his sister Ida (Mrs. Jacob Huber) and a neighbor Berta (Mrs. Joseph Puempel). But sadly Rosa, 24, died in August of the same year – only four and a half short years of married life. And 1918 brought the Spanish Flu epidemic in which Albert Wolf, 31, also died. Their son Otto had been cared for during his mother's illness by Berta and Joseph Puempel who then adopted the little boy.