NEW GLARUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

The Board responded to a number of requests for information related to local history during the past month including family history requests, identification of the locations of early New Glarus' businesses and connecting visitors with Switzerland to local relatives. We worked with Jarryd Lowder, an American photo-journalist living in Glarus, Switzerland and Beth Zurbuchen at the Swiss Center of North America to retrieve historical photos of main street New Glarus which were then included in a recent edition of the Glarner Woche. You can read the article here: https://docswixstatic.com/ugd/05586e_f64ae1d1b467425b5b1e9ba6.pdf

We appreciate the research and support provided by genealogy and local history experts, Bob Elmer and Kim Tschudy in responding to the requests for information. In addition, the Board worked with the New Glarus Police Department staff to update security contact information for the buildings and grounds of the Swiss Historical Village. Planning for the 2018 Harvest Fest and the 175th anniversary of the founding of New Glarus continues. Mary Dibble resigned her position as Vice-President following the August meeting, however intends to remain a member of the Board of Directors.

Recent Donations

New benches were assembled by the Buildings and Grounds Committee members and placed on the grounds as the result of donations from the families of John Marty and Judy Reuter. John's memorial bench was placed in front of the farm implement building, which is fitting for a "farm boy," as noted by his wife, Arlene. The family inscribed the bench with "Sprechen Sie Schweizerdeutsch?" which was a regular question posed by John to every tour group he led at the Village. Judy's favorite building was the Collectibles shop and you'll find the bench in her memory located there.

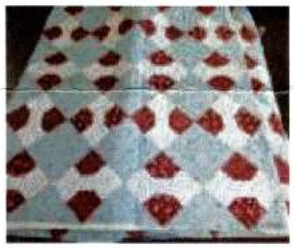
In addition, we received a doll dressed in a copy of Marianne Lederman's wedding dress, made from material from the Swiss Miss and already on display in the Collectibles building. Marianne's dress has the additional distinction of being pictured in the *Reminisce* magazine several years ago. Marianne is a descendant of original colonist, Oswald Babler. We thank the family of Dennis Streiff donating scrapbooks capturing many events that document "Staying Swiss" in New Glarus over a number of years, as well as some photographs and family history documents for the archives.

A NEW EXHIBIT – QUILTS FROM THE COLLECTION

We are working to align our collection and preservation practices with standardized and generally accepted best practices recommended by the Wisconsin Historical Society. One conservation practice we initiated this season is limiting the timeframes for textile display. Textiles are highly sensitive to light and temperature exposure. Antique clothing had been displayed in the Collectibles building for a number of years, so in keeping with best practice recommendations, the clothing was removed from the building and is being stored in a humidity control environment in the basement of the museum entrance building. The suit and dress are "resting" in boxes, rather than stored on hangers to reduce the stress on seams and fabric.

In place of the clothing we have installed a quilt display. The quilts were donated to the Historical Society in the mid-1970s by a woman from Pennsylvania whose family lived between Monticello and New Glarus. As you know, the primary occupation of the immigrants from Canton Glarus, Switzerland, who founded New Glarus was textile work. However, despite these skills no documentation available indicates that the men or women were quiltmakers at the time of their arrival in Wisconsin, but rather likely adopted the American craft once they arrived. The display placed in the Collectibles Building features five quilts, some of which are pictured and described below. The exhibit also includes basic information about the art and craft of quilt making and the quilt patterns identified through research, included an outreach effort with an online quilting community of more than 10,000 members. The outreach helped us accurately identify an unusual and uncommon pattern, that we now know as "Mrs. Cleveland's Choice." We hope you'll stop by the museum between now and October 15 to see and learn about "Mrs. Cleveland's Choice" as well as the other quilts in the new exhibit. Remember, member admission is always free!

Pattern: Bow Tie



Bow Tie is a considered a simple, beginner's quilt pattern. In this example, the quiltmaker alternated the 5 ½ inch Bow Tie blocks with squares of a blue gingham check fabric and rotated pattern blocks a half turn in each row to create more movement in the quilt. Some Historians speculate that the arrows depicted in these blocks, set in a particular direction and hung outdoors, may have guided slaves using the Underground Railroad to escape the south. **Construction:** Machine pieced and hand quilted in a half fan pattern **Size**: 70 by 79 inches

Pattern: Drunkard's Path

This pattern is a two part patch with a curved seam and is considered an advanced quilting pattern that challenges a quiltmaker. The patches measure 2 ¾ inches by 3 inches. This quilt is most often made with just two colors and some consider it a variation of a pattern named *Robbing Peter to Pay Paul*. During the era of prohibition, the block pattern was renamed *Pumpkin Vine* so that makers would not be associated with the path of inebriation. **Construction:** Machine pieced and quilted in half fan pattern with straight stitching along the striped borders **Size:** 72 by 84 inches

Pattern: Streak of Sunshine

This quilt pattern uses simple 4 inch blocks in a variety of colors to create a pleasing pattern. Some quiltmakers plan the placement of fabrics to create a zigzag effect and those quilts are named Streak of Lightning. A quilt of this type takes a lot of planning and patience to ensure the blocks remain arranged according to the pattern. Sometimes these quilts are created using scraps and leftovers from other quilts. **Construction**: Machine pieced and quilted in a half pattern **Size**: 82 by 83 inches

CONTINUING CONNECTIONS

The Swiss Center of North America recently hosted and coordinated a visit of leaders and dignitaries from Glarus, Switzerland, including holding a meeting for planning for the 175th anniversary of the founding of New Glarus. Among the documents in the archives of the New Glarus Historical Society is a copy of the speech given in Glarus, Switzerland to its President and Council members in 1960, by New Glarus Mayor, Gilbert Ott. Gilbert, along with the other members of the New Glarus Yodel Club, traveled to Switzerland where they performed to appreciative crowds. While times may have changed, many of Mayor Ott's sentiments remain true today. Here is the text of the speech:

"Honorable President Stauffacher, Honorable City Council Members, Honorable guests and Citizens of Glarus, Switzerland. It is my special honor and privilege as the Mayor of the Village of New Glarus of the United States of America, to bring the greetings of the Glarners of the New World to you Glarners of our Fatherland.

The people of New Glarus still have, and will always have, a strong and warm friendship for you people of Old Glarus; not only because of the numerous family relationships that exist between us, but because of our common bonds of customs, habits, and our democratic way of life. Although we are citizens; and I honestly add "Well-respected citizens" of a great and prosperous nation, nevertheless we still hold dear all the principles and ideals which our forefathers brought from this Community many years ago. The people of New Glarus, U.S.A., are proud of their Swiss heritage.

It is now about 115 years ago that the band of about 193 brave emigrants gathered on the banks of your Linth Canal here in Glarus, to leave for the New World. Today, about 150 of we Swiss from New Glarus Community in U.S.A., return to visit you and express our kindly feelings of friendship and respect.

As the Mayor of New Glarus I can report to you that the hardy band of original Swiss pioneers you sent to American have made good and that their spirit of freedom, of honesty, of hard-work, friendliness and religious fervor, still exists today in their descendants. As a result, New Glarus today is a clean, progressive, well-respected and pleasant Village in which to live, just as is your own wonderful city here.

The good citizens of New Glarus (and that means all of them as we quickly eliminate any bad ones that come into our Village) thank you and your forefathers for giving them a start in the New World. We always cherish the warm friendships of your people; we will hold fast to your and our ideals of self-government for the people and honesty and hard-work by the people; and we will always see that our church spire, like yours keeps its prominent place in our community and in our lives.

We, New Glarners believe, as you Old Glarners have shown by your history, that the good and worthwhile people in the world are the freedom-loving, hard-working, and honest-dealing and church-going people, living in neat and active communities.

If any of you will come to visit New Glarus in America, I feel sure that you will find the same warm-hearted welcome and the same good people that we have found here today. Thank you."

DID YOU KNOW THIS QUILTER?

Did you know that Swiss immigrant and long-time New Glarus resident Ernie Thierstein was a quilter? Ernie is depicted in this New Glarus Post photograph at the age of 74, in May 1964. The leaf applique quilt was noted as one of his most ambitious projects after 15 years in retirement and is only one of the many quilts he made for friends and family. If you have an Ernie Thierstein quilt, please consider loaning the quilt to the Historical Society for a future exhibit using the "Contact Us" information on this page.

We thank the Bank of New Glarus for their support in publishing the New Glarus Historical Society newsletter.

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