NEW GLARUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

We extend our appreciation to those members who took the time to email or return a postcard indicating their agreement to the renewal of existing Board member terms and to confirm Rebecca Forbes and John Eglsaer as new Board members. The Board will take steps to elect officers for 2021 in the near future.

In anticipation of opening the museum for the 2021 season, the Board held a work day in April and has additional dates scheduled in May to prepare the buildings and grounds for visitors. The Board intends to open the museum on Saturday, May 29. The museum will be open every day of the week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., except for Mondays, unless the Monday is a holiday. The Board may need to revisit museum operations in the event they are unable to recruit a sufficient number of cashiers and guides for near daily operation.

As of this writing two tour groups have made reservations to visit the museum and New Glarus School District teacher Amy Legler intends to hold her popular summer school session in the one room schoolhouse in June.

MUSEUM PRAIRIE PLOT

Welcome Green County Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) Linda Uttech and Mary Hillstrom to the Historical Society and Swiss Historical Village groundskeeping team. The museum prairie plot is one of the UW-Extension MGV program's approved projects for 2021 and was funded with a UW-Extension MGV grant in 2016. New Glarus High School students prepared the plot for planting and grant money was used to purchase native forbs and grasses representing species long present in Green County. The picture at left depicts the garden at peak growth in the month of July. MGVs will work to maintain the path through the center of the plot, remove non-prairie species such as lily of the valley and peonies that were originally planted along the Farm Implement building, as well as weeds that compete with the desirable plants. In addition, a space between the building and the plot will be maintained to preserve the siding on the building from an over-abundance of moisture. Thanks to the Green County MGVs for donating their time and talent to maintain this plot which gives our visitors a glimpse of the land traveled by the Glarners on the trip to their new home. "We rode over a prairie whereon for leagues in every direction no dwelling could be seen". . . .from the diary of Niklaus Dürst

MY EXPERIMENT WITH GLARUS BLOCK PRINTING, *BY CHIP WILLIAMS*

Chip, who lives in Minnesota, is connected to the New Glarus community by his ancestors, Johannes Luchsinger and Barbara Wild, who immigrated from Glarus, Switzerland in 1845. His grandmother, Louise Luchsinger married William Lester Dobbs, and together they ran the Grandview Dairy on the west side of Monroe for many years.

A number of years ago, on a visit to the Canton of Glarus, my wife and I visited a wonderful museum in Nafels called Museum des Landes Glarus (Museum of the State of Glarus). Among the various interesting displays (including a few items from New Glarus) was a large room dedicated to textile printing done in the canton during the 19th century. This printing technique used carved wooden blocks that were dipped in various colored inks. The block was then carefully placed onto fabric to imprint the design. By repeating this process, whole bolts of cloth were colored with simple or very intricate patterns.

As we were traveling in the area, we happened on an antique store. Wanting a few souvenirs for family members, we meandered through the store. Suddenly, my eye was caught by a number of the same carved wooden printing blocks we had seen in the museum. Thinking this would make a nice memory of our trip, I purchased one along with several other gift items. The block sat on a display shelf in our Minnesota house for many years.

Now it was 2020 and the Covidemic was upon us. One day last fall, I found myself thinking about Christmas gifts. Since I had lots of spare time, I was contemplating some handmade items to give as presents. I was discussing this with my wife when my eyes lit upon the printing block. Would it be possible, I wondered, to actually make a print with it? How would I do this? Would I just give a copy of the print as gifts? Over the succeeding days, I ran through a number of ideas for gifts, but my mind kept drifting back to the printing block. If, and it was a big if, I could actually make a print, I had two gift ideas- using it on printed note cards and coffee mugs.

Having no knowledge of how to do block printing, I consulted with a friend who is an art teacher. She explained the basic process, and gave me the names of a couple of companies that sold artist supplies. I also watched a dozen or so online videos of artists making block prints. Each one furthered my knowledge and excitement to try this myself. I proceeded to make a list and order the supplies I thought I might need. After setting up my workbench, I was ready for my first attempt. I decided to just make a black ink print of the whole block. The first step involved rolling ink onto the block itself. I was quite nervous about putting ink on this possibly 200-year-old block. Would it just fall apart? Luckily, it did not.

I carefully laid a piece of printing paper on the block and, using a soft rubber roller as I had seen in the videos, carefully rolled the paper into the ink. Peeling back the paper, I was rather disappointed with the first print. One of the online artists I had watched mentioned that, if a block was really dry, it might take several attempts before getting a good-looking print. Sure enough, several tries later, I peeled back a beautifully detailed representation of the block. Wow! I now had to clean the extra ink off my antique block, again hoping it wouldn't just fall apart. I used some warm water and a very soft bristled brush. It all worked like a charm. Lucky.

I let my success sink in for a day or two while I decided how to move ahead. I now knew that I could make single color prints. This was OK, but I wanted to make more colorful prints for my Christmas gifts. At the museum in Glarus, I had seen prints with several colors in intricate patterns. Most likely, they had used several small blocks, each with just part of the pattern on them. I assumed they would lay down one color, let it dry, and add another part of the pattern in a different color with another block. I only had one block. What to do? I came up with a plan to use thin sheets of plastic on my one block. For each sheet, I carefully cut out just the areas I wanted to be a certain color.

There was also the issue of properly aligning the paper on the block for each color. Since the paper had to be placed upside down over wet ink, I needed some way to get the paper back into the exact location for each color. I was puzzling over this

problem when I noticed that the block itself had four little prongs sticking up above the block carving. Aha. These tiny prongs must be what my Glarus ancestors used to line up the block to repeat the pattern in a straight line on the cloth. I could use these to make sure I got my paper in the same location for each color. Laying the first plastic sheet on my block, I rolled blue ink onto the openings I had cut out. I made half a dozen prints with that color so I would have several good ones. After they dried for a day, I repeated the process with a different cutout sheet and added yellow ink to other parts of the block. It all seemed to be working. On succeeding days, I repeated the process to add the red and green colors to my prints.

After all the prints had dried, I picked out the best one and scanned it into my computer. After that, it was just a matter of finding companies that would make custom coffee mugs and note cards for my gifts. At Christmas, everyone enjoyed their Swiss print items. I deemed the whole project a success. I had made a tangible connection with my Swiss heritage. I may never make another block print but I had enjoyed my efforts and was happy with the outcome. The block is now back on the display shelf where it has always resided, but now it has a partner with it- a colored print of my inking efforts.

NOTABLE WEATHER HISTORY – THE TORNADO OF 1929

This article was reprinted from the Summer 2009 edition of Family History Notes, written and published by Bob Elmer.

History books tell of a devastating area tornado occurring on May 23, 1878 which killed more than a dozen people and destroyed many buildings on its path from Mineral Point on to Daleyville and finally Primrose. Many people will recall the Palm Sunday tornado of April 11, 1965 which swept through the northwest corner of Monroe. Seventy-eight tornadoes were spawned on that day- the second biggest outbreak on record in the United States. And many cannot forget the ferocious F5 tornado of June 8, 1984 which slammed nearby Barneveld at 1 a.m. killing nine and virtually wiping out the village. One of the Barneveld victims was Ralph Hammerly, Jr., whose ancestors, Fridolin and Barbara (Hefti) Legler, were among the first settlers of New Glarus.

Ninety years ago, a tornado struck close to New Glarus on the early Saturday evening of 6 April, 1929. The funnel cloud was said to have formed near Cuba City in Grant County and then crossed Lafayette County in an east northeasterly direction. It passed near Lamont and entered Green County between Argyle and Blanchardville, The tornado continue by crossing the Town of York where the farms of Peter Disch and Jacob Stauffacher were hit and damaged. On the Stuaffacher farm, occupied by daughter and son-in-law Lucinda and Lawrence Arnes, the home and barn were leveled. The twister continue on its path inflicting damage on the Ernest Pauli farm (Highway 39 and Zentner Road) then down into the area of Pioneer Valley where the farms of Henry Zweifel, Anton Jaeger and Anton Ott experienced damage. Henry Zweifel and two sons were in the barn milking when the tornado hit. The barn collapsed on the Zweifels and all were injured. In addition, they lost more than a dozen head of cattle.

The tornado continued over the ridge west of Highway 69 and passed between the farms of Henry Ott and Julius Elmer. At the Elmer farm, 2 ½ year old Kathryn Elmer was sitting in a swing when her father Julius saw the tornado approaching. Farmhand Frank Ehinger grabbed Kathryn and the family sought shelter in the basement. The winds blew out the windows of the Elmer home and a shed was moved off its foundation. The village of Belleville was in the tornado's projected path but fortunately the storm weakened and Belleville was spared damage.

Miriam (Theiler) Abplanalp recalled visiting the Arnes/Stauffacher farm shortly after the tornado struck. She remembered that the Arnes family moved into a machine shed which was unharmed, and the children combed the area for household items scattered by the tornado. Miriam found the family's table cloth, pillow cases and a cooking pot.

A brief article in a Madison newspaper one year after the twister noted the damage occurred on 50 farms, 5 people were injured, 100 head of cattle were killed and losses were estimated at over $200,00 (over $2 million in 2009).

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the first direct-dial telephone call from Switzerland to the United States was made to New Glarus, Wisconsin? The call was pre-arranged and was received by Village President David Hodgson at his home. The call came from Dr. Otto Wenger, a member of the Swiss Parliament and President of the Swiss American Society in Bern, on Friday, April 30, 1971 at 12:30 p.m. A newspaper article describing the historical event reported that the call "came through overseas operations in New York, also passed through the United Telephone Co., Monroe toll center on its way to New Glarus." Former Historical Society President and volunteer Paul Grossenbacher was also present at the time of the call and received an invitation from Dr. Wenger to bring the German cast of the Wilhelm Tell play to perform at Interlaken in 1972. A recording of the call was made at the time it took place and that recording now holds a place in the Historical Society archives.

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

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