NEW GLARUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

The Board welcomed Jackie Judd to the Board of Directors. Jackie fills the vacancy created by the resignation of Mary Dibble. Jackie was born and raised in Canton Aargau and trained as a chef which brought her to work in New Glarus, where she met her husband. After living in Switzerland for a time, Jackie and her husband returned here in 2012 where she has been active in the community, in particular having worked with local businesses to implement the popular Adventsfenster tradition enjoyed by many in the area. Jackie hopes to help the Historical Society with her knowledge of the German language, passion for history and preserving the past, as well as sharing the story of New Glarus.

Event coordination was the focus of the Board's efforts during the month of July. Duane Freitag, author of *A Common Treasure* and Jesse Brookstein, who wrote *The History of the Landjaeger* greeted visitors and sold and signed copies of their books at the museum for the 175th Anniversary celebration. Rebecca Forbes, Gail Beal and Larry Klassy created a float for the parade which featured the Swiss Dancers Maypole. In addition, members of the Pauline and Don Ott family, descendants of original settler Johannes Legler, distributed promotional material for the museum to parade attendees.

The Board has scheduled the annual Log Church service on Saturday, August 14th at 5 p.m. The service commemorating the arrival of the first settlers will be led by Pastor Petra Streiff with music provided by the New Glarus Jodlerklub.

The Board is seeking volunteers to write articles for the Historical Society newsletter for the remaining 2021 issues and beginning in April of 2022. Please send an email to admin@swisshistoricalvillage.org to convey your interest or to learn more about the opportunity.

Board members are pleased with the museum attendance for the month of June which included 640 adults and 70 children. This number is only 50 visitors less than the total attendance for June 2019.

New T-shirts have arrived at the museum gift shop. The "Swiss roots" image (pictured above) appears on the back of the shirt with "Swiss Historical Village" and our buildings logo on the left side of the front of the shirt. Shirts in S, M, L, and XL sizes are available for $20 with the XXL size priced at $22. Historical Society members receive a 10% discount on all gift shop purchases. Get yours today!

AUGUST 1 – SWISS NATIONAL DAY

It seems fitting to combine the 175th anniversary celebration of the founding of New Glarus on the weekend of Swiss National Day. Celebrations throughout Switzerland, and here in the U.S., mark the anniversary of the signing of the Federal Charter of Switzerland in 1291, when representatives of Cantons Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden came together and pledged "eternal allegiance to one another, promising mutual help and assistance."

Historical Society member, Sherry Anderegg has been collecting First of August pins for a number of years and shared this photo of her personal collection:

Also fitting, given many are watching the Olympic games in Tokyo, is that one pin in particular, has an Olympic connection. The copper colored, brass pin, issued in 1947 and pictured at the left, was designed by Swiss sculptor and Olympic competitor, Johannes "Hans" Frei. Frei was born in Basel, Switzerland in 1868. He served an early apprenticeship with a copper-plate engraver in Basel. He later pursued his artistic talent through studies in Vienna, Cologne, Geneva and Paris. I By 1895, Frei pursued his own business in designing and creating medals, jewelry, as well as notary seals for a number of venues. Frei's Olympic fame came from his submission and acceptance of three plaques in the "Sculpturing" category of the Olympic Arts Competition in 1924. The works included images named: "Footballer, Ice Skater and The Winner looking at the awarded laurel wreath." The Arts Competition was held as part of the Olympics in the years of 1912, 1924, 1928, 1932, 1936 and 1948. The Arts Competition was dropped because many artists were professionals, a status that the International Olympic Committee opposed. Frei may not have seen his work represented in the August 1 pin because he died of the complications of a stroke in 1947, the year of the pin's issuance. Thanks to Sherry Anderegg for sharing the photo of her wonderful collection!

ASIAN ARTIFACTS IN A SWISS MUSEUM?

Visitors to the Swiss Historical Village Museum's Collectibles building may be surprised to find Asian pottery displayed alongside medical equipment. This unique and colorful pitcher and set of mugs didn't make a journey to New Glarus from Old Glarus, but rather returned to New Glarus with an important early resident who spent time in California. Bob Elmer's Spring 2011 edition of his Family History Notes provided this information about Dr. Samuel Blumer, whose descendant donated the Asian art to the Historical Society many years ago: "Dr. Samuel Blumer (1819-1871) was New Glarus' first doctor. His father, Samuel Blumer Sr. was a doctor and surgeon from one of the Blumer family lines of Schwanden, Canton Glarus. Blumer Sr. practiced medicine in the village of Mühlehorn, Canton Glarus, where Samuel Blumer Jr. was born. Dr. Samuel Blumer Jr. arrived here in 1848 as a recent widower. Shortly after his arrival, Samuel married 15 year-old Katharina Legler. Dr. Blumer's home immediately west of the New Glarus Hotel is one of New Glarus' oldest. Dr. Blumer left for California from 1852 to 1855 and then returned to practice locally until 1868 when he relocated to Iowa where he passed away in 1871."

The following information was provided by the donor about the pottery: "Merchant seamen who sailed to China with supplies and goods for the Chinese brought back with them items made in China. People who owned something made in China treasured it very much. This stein and mugs were acquired by Dr. Sam Blumer during the time he operated a medical clinic in Sacramento area during the Gold Rush 1852-1856. He always treasured it. It was passed on from generation to generation until the present Sam Blumer, who never married, gave it to us and asked us to take special care of it in memory of Dr. Sam Blumer."

However, additional research completed by Bob Elmer found that the pottery was of Japanese origin, rather than Chinese as reported by the donor; a style called Sumida Gawa. Apparently this type of pottery was made for Western markets and likely made its way to California. Some sources say this style may date from early 1800s, while other sources place this style later than Blumer family oral history which notes Blumer's acquisition during his time in Sacramento in the 1850s. The pottery remains collectible today; a similar piece was identified in a recent internet search and is pictured at the left. So now, 165 years later we have this memento of the Doctor's travels to and from California to share with others who receive an interesting glimpse of family history.

BATTLING THE HEAT

It's been a hot and humid summer with numerous alerts and cautions for avoiding heat related illnesses. In 1934, a heat wave was reported in the New Glarus Post that resulted in four area deaths. The decedents included John Casper Duerst, 42 years old, Eddie Crooks, age 25 and Marks Schiesser, 61 years old, all of whom had been employed as farm hands. The Crooks and Schiesser deaths were specifically identified as related to working in the fields while harvesting oats. The Post reported that "temperatures over the past seven days had ranged from 95 to 107 along with high humidity." Karl Mueller was quoted as saying that, " his thermometer at the mill showed 107 at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, 105 on Tuesday and 106 on Wednesday. As a previous record he listed 105 on July 5, 1932." On July 24, Charles Heiden, 61 years old, the father of Ruth Hicks (the wife of New Glarus Doctor E.V Hicks) died of a heart attack related to the extreme heat. Charles was an engineer for the Northwestern Railroad, had halted the train in Verona complaining of the heat and not feeling well. He reportedly telephoned the Madison roundhouse to give his report, collapsed and then died several hours later at a Madison hospital.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that you can find previous editions of the Historical Society newsletter online? The Library has updated its collection and you can now find all of the issues published from 2016 to 2020. In addition, the Library provides links to other local history materials that you may enjoy and/or use in your own family history research. New to the website are links to obituaries published in early editions of the New Glarus Post. That collection will continue to grow over time. Here's the link to the local history website page: https://www.newglaruspubliclibrary.org/local-history

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The Bank of New Glarus
Powering Growth in Our Community

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