

Gruetli-Laager

Original Pioneer and early Settlers

Coming to America

During the 1840s, an organization, known as the "Tennessee Colonisation Gesellschaft," was formed to encourage Swiss settlements on the Cumberland Plateau. Four settlements resulted from the effort, but it was not until 1869, when Gruetli began, that a permanent Swiss colony was established in Grundy County. Captain Eugen Plumacher, the commissioner of emigration to the United States, and Peter Staub, a Swiss emigrant living in Knoxville, purchased fifteen thousand acres of land south of Beersheba Springs in Grundy County. Advertisements extolled the climate and inexpensive arable land, and poor economic and social conditions in Europe produced many German-speaking Swiss willing to move to the United States to start a new life. Nearly one hundred Swiss families, including farmers, artisans, merchants, and professionals, had arrived in Gruetli by the late 1870s.

The deceptive promotional broadsides failed to depict Grundy County as the isolated and heavily forested region that it was. When confronted with the reality of their new home, some newcomers left, but those who remained drew up a constitution and elected officers. Among the first officers was farmer Anton Stoker, who served as treasurer. Christian Marugg, the owner of a farm implement company, returned to Switzerland and recruited others to move to Grundy County. By 1880 the Swiss population in Grundy County had reached 227, more than any other county in the state.

The Gruetli community reestablished or maintained many practices common to the Swiss culture. Land was set aside for a school and church, where both school lessons and church services were conducted in German until the early part of the twentieth century. A communal pasture and a community store were established in the 1870s.

Although isolated from much of the state, Gruetli's location on the stagecoach road from McMinnville to Chattanooga drew it into the commercial world of travel. Around 1875, Christian Marugg built an inn for travelers that included finely crafted interior woodwork similar to that found in the Stoker farmhouse.

The principal occupation of Gruetli's settlers was agriculture, primarily grain production, dairy farming, and cheese making. The Swiss farmers organized an agricultural association, or farmers' union. The Gruetli (or Swiss) Agricultural Society acted as a cooperative in the purchase of seeds and provided agricultural education for the members. The society met regularly, often in the home of Anton Stoker, until 1917. The intensive farming methods practiced by the Swiss proved valuable during a period of economic depression in the 1890s, when Gruetli farmers fared better than their Grundy County neighbors.

In addition to grain and dairy farming, Gruetli developed several other interests. Fruit trees and grapes were cultivated, and several saw mills were operated by the Swiss. In the 1910s the community of Laager developed as a result of mining operations in nearby Palmer. Situated on a branch railroad line east of Gruetli, it was first known as Henley's Switch and changed to Laager in 1920. In 1980 the community incorporated with Gruetli to become Gruetli-Laager.

(Source The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture)



Early Settlers of Gruetli-Laager from Glarus

Burkard Laager	27.04.1851 - 13.01.1907	Burkard Laager arrived on March 27, 1873 in New York on the ship Hammonia
Regula Laager	03.12.1859 -	Regula Laager emigrated with her parents in 1869 to America and married 1878 Burkard Laager
Heinrich Leuzinger	23.05.1836 - 22.02.1906	Called in USA Henry Leitsinger
Margaretha Kubli	15.11.1836 - 07.12.1913	Margaretha Kubli emigrated in 1865 to America and married about 1866 Heinrich Leuzinger
Kaspar Leuzinger	16.04.1841 - 18.11.1898	Kaspar Leuzinger arrived on May 23, 1873 in New York together with his two daughters
Verena Weber	21.01.1845 - 02.04.1871	Verena Weber died in Netstal (Switzerland)
Hilarius Luchsinger	28.10.1834 - 23.10.1893	Hilarius Luchsinger arrived on March 27, 1873 in New York on the ship Hammonia together with his
Barbara Trümpy	04.11.1835 - 07.03.1915	wife, son and daughter
Johann Balthasar Luchsinger	01.08.1857 - 12.01.1944	Johann Balthasar Luchsinger arrived on March 27, 1873 in New York on the ship Hammonia
Verena Leuzinger	10.12.1863 - 31.01.1941	Verena Leuzinger arrived on March 27, 1873 in New York on the ship Hammonia together with her Parents (Kaspar Leuzinger and Verena Weber); she married 1885 Johann Balthasar Luchsinger in Gruetli- Laager
Jakob Ruch	02.09.1837 - 27.07.1917	Jakob Ruch emigrated in 1866 presumably together with his first wife Elisabeth Walcher to America. The
Lisette Linker	24.06.1842 - 16.03.1920	couple got divorced and he married in 1868 Lisette Linker in Gruetli-Laager. She emigrated in 1863 from Germany to America.
Jakob Ruch	15.04.1835 - 07.10.1895	Jakob Ruch arrived on March 27, 1873 in New York on the ship Hammonia together with his wife, 2 sons
Afra Schönenberger	10.11.1838 - 26.05.1915	and 2 daughters; a third daughter was born in Gruetli-Laager
Peter Schiesser	13.02.1846 - 26.08.1901	Peter Schiesser arrived on June 15, 1869 in New York on the ship Cimbria together with his wife and
Barbara Knobel	12.03.1850 - 19.01.1926	baby son. 3 sons and 3 daughters were born in New York. The family lived in New York and moved later to Gruetli-Laager.

Peter Schild	28.11.1854 - 29.09.1937	Peter Schild emigrated in 1869 from Bern to America together with his parents.
Rosina Leuzinger	23.12.1864 - 30.01.1935	Rosina Leuzinger arrived on March 27, 1873 together with her parents in New York on the ship Hammonia. She married in 1889 in Gruetli-Laager Peter Schild.
Ignatz Schlageter	25.09.1841 - 18.07.1920	Ignatz Schlageter arrived on May 8, 1871 together with his wife Rosina in New York on the ship Silesia
Rosina Laager	14.12.1838 - 05.07.1883	Rosina Laager married Ignatz Schlageter in Switzerland presumably in 1870/71 shortly before they emigrated to America. The couple had 5 children (4 sons and 1 daughter). Ignatz remarried after the death of Rosina Elisabeth Schild and had another 9 children with her.
Fridolin Wichser	16.02.1844 - 13.01.1929	Fridolin Wichser emigrated a bit earlier than the rest of the family in 1879 to Amerika.
Barbara Wild	19.03.1846 - 09.12.1930	Barbara Wichser née Wild arrived on October 8, 1879 in New York on the ship Canada together with Her sons Tobias and Fridolin and daughter Anna.
Kaspar Zopfi	15.01.1824 - 28.08.1908	Kaspar Zopfi arrived on October 19, 1869 in New York on the ship City of Dublin together with his family
Katharina Zimmermann	02.07.1827 - 29.02.1892	Katharina Zimmermann was the second wife of Kaspar Zopfi

Knoxville

Early Settlers of Knoxville from Glarus

Peter Staub	22.02.1827 - 19.05.1904	Peter Staub emigrated with his family in 1854 to America
Rosina Blum	12.01.1832 - 28.12.1916	

Peter Staub, a prominent figure in late nineteenth-century Knoxville business, culture, and politics, was born in Switzerland on February 22, 1827. Orphaned at eight years old, Staub immigrated to the United States when he was twenty-seven. He finally settled in Knoxville in 1856, where he became a leading figure in the city's postwar development. The first of Staub's many Knoxville business enterprises was a tailor shop. In October 1872 the city's first opera house, Staub's Theater, opened on the corner of Gay Street and Cumberland Avenue. Under his management, the theater became the centerpiece of Knoxville's cultural development, bringing prominent actors and theatrical companies to East Tennessee.

Staub also played a crucial role in Knoxville city government from 1874 until his death in 1904. He was twice elected mayor, in 1874 and 1881. Under Staub's leadership, Knoxville founded a city fire department and established the city's public school district. President Rutherford B. Hayes appointed Staub to represent the United States and Tennessee as a commissioner to the Paris exposition. In 1885 President Grover Cleveland named him U.S. consul to Switzerland.

He married Rosina Blum in 1848, and they had nine children, including Fritz, who followed his father in the management of Staub's Theater. On May 8, 1904, a runaway horse accident claimed Staub's life.

Jakob Staub	13.03.1803 - 16.09.1863	I don't know when Jakob Staub and his family emigrated to America. Their children Judith and Jacob were both born in Bilten (Switzerland)
Anna Margaretha Aebli	28.02.1808 - 1865	