

The Planting of New Bilten

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Almost forgotten now, the Green County farming region of New Bilten was once a pivotal part of the Swiss immigrant community and deeply intertwined in the founding of the county's cheese-making industry. The region is centered in a valley northwest of Monticello once known as the *Biltental* (Bilten valley), where more than a dozen families from the Canton Glarus village of the same name settled as a group in July of 1847.

In Switzerland today, Bilten is a strong industrial and commercial community, strategically situated along a main rail line and expressway leading eastward from Zurich. But 160 years ago it was a small farming village suffering the same economic downturn as much of Europe. And it was then that some of its residents felt the lure of new opportunities in the United States and joined in a group emigration to Wisconsin.

In its formative years Bilten was near a swampy area between two lakes – the *Zurichsee* and the *Walensee* – and was not a particularly healthy place. When the renowned Linth Canal project was completed in 1816, most of the swampland disappeared and more farmland and living space was available. Things were looking up. Bilten was one of the first communities in Canton Glarus to open a free school before it was required in the 1830s. The school was headed by the Protestant church pastor and was apparently one of the best in the area with a curriculum expanded beyond the usual reading, writing, singing and religious instruction to include mathematics, history and geography.¹

¹ Raymond J. Spahn, ed., *New Worlds to Seek*. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Ill., 2000. Pp. 3-54. A translation of part of the Swiss-German language autobiography of Johann Heinrich Lienhard, a Bilten native who was with John A. Sutter when gold was discovered in California. Introductory pages are about life in Bilten at this time and the traditional Alpine customs. Lienhard, known among his relatives in Switzerland as "California Heiri," is listed in the Canton Glarus genealogical records at the *Landesarchiv* as Lienhard von Bilten Nr. 46. See also Josef Schwitter and Urs Heer's *Glärnerland – A Short Portrait*. Fridolin Druck und Median. Schwanden, Glarus, Switzerland. Pp. 59-60. One of Bilten's most famous sons was Heinrich Rosenberger, who left in 1843 and became a wealthy businessman in Galveston, Tex. At his death, Rosenberg (he had shortened his name) endowed many organizations in Galveston and his hometown of Bilten.

Then in the 1840s many things changed. Little Bilten suffered as did much of Canton Glarus, where an international recession crippled the textile industry and led to much unemployment. By 1845 the canton had organized an Emigration Society and sent 193 of its citizens to colonize “New” Glarus in Green County, Wisconsin. However, there were no Biltner among that original group.²

Although the colonists at New Glarus were for the most part struggling to establish their new home during 1846, the settlement held out much hope for the future. Viewed through that lens of hope, the project seemed to be off to a successful start and so



The Reformed parish church that the emigrants attended is still in use in Bilten.

the Protestant parish of Bilten decided to send a group of its people to settle in the same area the next year.³ Their story is only briefly mentioned in earlier histories of Green County’s Swiss colony. For example, Helen M. Bingham, in her 1877 *History of Green County, Wisconsin* mentions Swiss settling in the Town of Washington, but doesn’t specify the Bilten group. Likewise, the chapter on the town in C.W. Butterfield’s 1884 *History of Green County, Wisconsin* has biographies of some of the New Bilten settlers but no specific mention of the group immigration. Even John Luchsinger, in his seminal history of the Swiss colony that was printed in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* in

1879, devotes only one paragraph to the Bilten group. Later histories were similarly brief. While the opportunity of gathering information from the participants is long gone, data about them has become more accessible in this computer age. That information – some in Switzerland and some in this country – includes detail on the land purchases, the families and their impact on life in Green County. That additional information led to this expanded account of the colony on the 160th anniversary of its founding.⁴

² The settlement of New Glarus is outlined in a number of county and local histories. A recent account of the selection of the site for New Glarus, done by the authors of this work, includes documentation that 135 settlers arrived at New Glarus in August of 1845 (including 131 of the 193 emigrants who left Canton Glarus together). See “Searching for a New Home,” *Swiss American Historical Society Review*, June 2005.

³ A report in the *Glerner Zeitung* (Glarus, Switzerland) on Aug. 2, 1847, shows that Bilten had the highest percentage of emigrants at that point (12-13%) among canton communities, with 88 people out of a population of 689 leaving. Some went to Russia. Today there remains a curious site on an alley near the railroad station in Bilten – a spot marked “Amerika” where once the village had set aside land for any emigrants who met misfortune and returned to their hometown.

⁴ The various histories include Helen M. Bingham, *History of Green County, Wisconsin*, Burdick & Armitage, Milwaukee, Wis., 1877, Pp. 211-214; C.W. Butterfield, *History of Green County, Wisconsin*, Union Publishing Company, Springfield, Ill., 1884, Pp. 1127-1143; John Luchsinger, *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1879, Vol. 8, Pp. 411-439; Adelrich Steinach, *Swiss Colonists in 19th Century-America*, 1889 (reprinted in 1995 by Picton Press); Miriam B. Theiler, *New Glarus’ First 100 Years*, Campus Publishing Co., Madison, Wis., 1946, which only mentions on Page 24



The *Biltental*, or Bilten valley, as seen today from Hefty Rd.

The land that was to become their new home was in Town 3 North Range 7 East of the Territory of Wisconsin. The township eventually became Green County's Town of Washington and, like much of the region, was first settled by Americans moving further west. The first cabin was built by Josiah Pierce in the summer of 1837. He was originally from Massachusetts and lived in New York before coming west to Wisconsin in the spring of that year to work on the new territorial capitol that was being built in Madison. His cabin was in Section 13, a little southwest of today's Village of Monticello, and he moved there permanently in November. Federal land records show that he purchased 80 acres of land immediately south of there in Section 24 during the late 1830s. Other pioneers followed, including some who were pursuing lead mining. Those settling near the area that became New Bilten included Judah Hall, who purchased land in Section 13 in the 1830s but likely was gone by the time the Biltners arrived; Asel Smith, who came from Michigan in 1842 and lived in Section 7 for several years before returning to Michigan, and Hiram W. Bain, who came from Ohio in 1844 and farmed land in Section 1.⁵

that "In 1847, a branch colony was founded in the adjoining town of Washington and called Bilten . . . further [land] purchases blended the two settlements;" and Millard Tschudy, *New Glarus, Wisconsin Mirror of Switzerland*, Monroe Evening Times, Monroe Wis., 1995, P. 17. Likewise, a 1977 history of Monticello only notes that the area around Hefty Creek – one of the area's finest trout streams – was called the *Biltental*, although the creek is actually a little to the west and north of the original settlement (*Monticello Past and Present*, Monticello Historical Committee, Monticello Messenger, 1977, P. 35).

⁵ Bingham, in her early history of Green County, says the second settler in the township was Noah Phelps, also from New York, who arrived in 1838. He had previously helped with the initial surveying of the county. Others came in the years 1842-43. There is no evidence in the federal land records that Smith purchased land in Section 7. Some histories refer to Bain as "George Washington Bain" and some spell his last name Bane. Apparently he "squatted" on the land for several years because he actually didn't purchase anything until Oct. 25, 1848, when he obtained 40 acres. He bought another 40 acres on March 8, 1850. Entries for two 40-acre purchases in 1848 are marked cancelled on the Mineral Point Land Office records.

In the summer of 1845, two Glarner – Fridolin Streiff and Judge Niklaus Dürst – passed through the area while looking for land to buy for the Glarus Emigration Society for the first group of settlers. The two men had previously traveled through parts of Illinois, Missouri and Iowa and were now staying for a couple of days in the nearby mining village of Exeter. On June 27 they met someone in Josiah Pierce's family (Josiah had died in 1843) and looked around the township -- perhaps with the help of the Pierce's oldest son, Albert. However, Streiff and Dürst chose land in the next township north, which they purchased on July 17.⁶

After the original New Glarus settlers arrived in Green County in August of 1845, Judge Dürst returned to Switzerland. Streiff continued to look for other property to purchase since the two advance men had been urged to buy more land than they actually did. In his first letter home, dated Nov. 30, 1845, Streiff mentions going with two other men to look for land to the south and southeast of the New Glarus settlement. It is unclear exactly what property they were looking at, although it may have been near what is now Monticello and to the east of there. They also probably scouted out the land in between, including what was to become New Bilten. "The land is often considered for purchase and our aim is asked about since it is five or six miles from us," Streiff wrote. "There is a middle stretch of country that would soon be purchased if people come by the thousands, as immigration to Wisconsin is very large." He said that for about 10 miles to the south and southeast there were no settlers, but if land was purchased too far away and the middle ground went to others it might damage the strength of the original settlement.⁷

The winter of 1845-46 – the first for the Swiss settlers at New Glarus – was fortunately mild. The following summer the colonists were successful in getting their first crops planted and harvested. Enough cows were purchased to provide at least one per family and some people could begin to occasionally make their beloved cheese – usually for their own consumption. The colony's size had dwindled to about 85 people, according to the first Territorial Census that was taken that summer. They were living in 13 cabins, generally two families to a cabin and all centered in what is now the downtown area of New Glarus.

In the fall of that year Streiff was joined by Johann Jacob Tschudy-Hottinger, who became the lead agent for the Emigration Society. Shortly after his arrival the colony leaders received word that a second group was coming from Canton Glarus – although it is possible that Tschudy knew of the plans before he left Switzerland. After a very cold and difficult winter passed, the agents chose to purchase property in what Streiff had earlier described as the "middle ground" south of New Glarus. Government

He also had land in the Town of New Glarus. The Town of Washington land was sold to Fridolin Streiff. Bain moved on to California and froze to death there in the winter of 1852-53.

⁶ Elisabeth R. Dürst of Oberwill, Switzerland. *Nachtrag zum 1. Teil, Briefe des Appellations-Richters Niklaus Dürst* [Supplement to Part 1 of Letters of Appeals Judge Niklaus Dürst], P. 14. The self-published pamphlet includes the complete diary kept by Joshua Frey during Streiff and Dürst's search for land, transcribed in German. The entry for June 27 mentions Pierce and looking at "South Sugar Creek."

⁷ Susanne Peter-Kubli. *Die Welt ist hier weit* [The World Is Wide Here]. Special printing of the Yearbook of the Historical Society of Canton Glarus. Glarus, Switzerland. Tschudi, 1995, Pp. 23-27.

West of North West			40 00	1 25	50 00	Niklaus Dürst
North East gr			160 00	1 25	200 00	Fridolin Streiff
West of North West gr			74 73	1 25	93 41 25	Olga Colman
West of South West gr			40 00	1 25	50 00	Elias Langner
West of South West			10 00	1 25	12 50	Fridolin Streiff
East of North West gr	D	23	7 00			Fridolin Streiff
West of North West gr						Fridolin Streiff
West of South West gr			280 00	1 25	350 00	Fridolin Streiff
West of North East gr			715 52	1 25	894 40	Swa Richardson
West of North East gr			40 00	1 25	50 00	Elijah Rely
West of North East gr			20 00	1 25	25 00	Fridolin Streiff
West of South East gr			37 27	1 25	46 58 75	George Kaufmann
West of North West			40 00	1 25	50 00	Fridolin Streiff
West of South East						

Niklaus Dürst and Fridolin Streiff, as Emigration Society agents, are listed as purchasers for some of the New Bilten land in this entry in federal land records from Mineral Point.

land was still being sold for \$1.25 an acre and Emigration Society funds were used to make the 600-acre purchase – whether additional money was sent from Switzerland or left-over funds from the first purchase were used is not known.⁸ The purchase was made on July 6, 1847, at the Federal Land Office in Mineral Point. Interestingly, Dürst and Streiff were again listed as the purchasers on behalf of the Emigration Society, even though Dürst had been back in Switzerland for nearly two years. The farmland was in 15 40-acre tracts in Sections 2, 3, 10 and 12, often including both hillside and bottomland. On the same day that the New Bilten land was purchased, another 80 acres of woodland was obtained by Streiff for use of both colonies. That land is now the eastern part of the New Glarus Woods state park.⁹

⁸ Some histories say money was sent from Switzerland. However, when Joshua Frey, an American of Swiss descent who acted as guide and interpreter for Streiff and Dürst, returned to his home in Pennsylvania he took with him \$1,200 that was unused and was to give it to banker Wilhelm H. Blumer of Allentown, Pa., until it was needed later. Blumer, of Glarus heritage, had earlier recommended the Upper Midwest as a place for the Swiss colony, but was of mixed help in getting the New Glarus settlers to their new home. Tschudy later described the winter of 1846-'47 as a hard one where "From January till the spring of 1847, men and beasts suffered much from exposure in the rough, unfinished huts and stables, and with scarcity of fodder for the cattle." But spring found them "ready to go to work with a will, and new courage, to break land, plant and improve according to their best ability." (*Wisconsin Historical Collections*, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1879, Vol. 8, P. 443).

⁹ The New Bilten land, all in Town 3 North Range 7 East of the Territory of Wisconsin, included the S½ of the NW¼, the SW¼, and the SE¼ of the SE¼ of Section 2; the SE¼ of the NE¼, E½ of the SE¼, and the NW¼ of the SE¼ of Section 3; the NE¼ of the NW¼ and the NW¼ of the NE¼ of Section 10; and the W½ of the NW¼ of Section 12. The Mineral Point Land Office records, copies of which are archived at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison, document the sales in Volume 2, beginning at folio 244. The receipt and certificate numbers are 1755-1758. The land patents were issued in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 1, 1849 and can be viewed online at the Bureau of Land Management's web site (www.glorerecords.blm.gov/Visitors/stateresearch.asp), file numbers WI2020_386 through WI2020_389. The woodland was the W½ of SE¼ of Sec. 26, Town 4 North Range 7 East. The first 80 acres, a little west of today's state park, had been purchased in August of 1845.

The Emigration

Meanwhile in Switzerland, the group prepared to leave Bilten. The size of the emigrant group appears to be 16 families – totaling about 70 people. The families – detailed later – included those of Johann Jacob Becker, Johann Peter Becker, Johann Caspar Becker, Emanuel Blum, Oswald Blum, Johann Melchior Blum, Johann Rudolph Blum, Jacob Blum, Johannes Blum, Fridolin Blum, Johann Peter Blum, M. Blum, Johann Caspar Blum, Johann Peter Elmer, Johannes Oswald, and Caspar Salmen.¹⁰

As with the first New Glarus settlers, many of the families were related. Ten were from various branches of the Blum family, including brothers Oswald and Johann Caspar Blum.¹¹ The three Beckers were brothers and Dorothea Blum was their sister. Johann Peter Elmer and Anna Becker (Johann Caspar's wife) were also brother and sister and the nephew and niece of the aforementioned Blums. And if the male line wasn't historically from Bilten, the spouse usually was. While it is possible that some basic costs such as transportation were paid for by the home municipality (the *heimat*), as was the case with the original New Glarus colony, an old newspaper account in Glarus implies that no travel funds were supplied by Bilten.¹² All except M. Blum arrived in Green County and were assigned colony land. There were quite a few others from Canton Glarus that ended up on the same ship and they may have joined with the group although they were not officially part of it.¹³



Anna and Johann Caspar Becker, who came with the 1847 Bilten migration, recalled their ship being becalmed.

The group left Bilten on March 27, taking a flat boat down the Linth Canal to Lake Zurich (the *Zurichsee*), a steamer to Basel, wagons to Paris, and then a boat down the Seine River to the French port city of LeHavre. From there they left Europe on April 24 on the bark *Columbia*,

¹⁰ The few histories that mention the New Bilten emigration say there were 12 families, but the ship and land records indicate otherwise.

¹¹ These various Blum lines all stem from Peter Blum and Angela Gruenenfelder of Bilten. Peter was born approximately in the year 1540.

¹² *Glarner Zeitung*, Aug. 2, 1847.

¹³ Other Glarner families included those of Wernet Elmer, Thomas Kundert, David Legler, Matheus Marty, Melchior Schindler, and Jacob Sigrist. Single men with the group included Wolfgang Freitag, Abraham Kundert, Fridolin Luchsinger, Jacob Marty and others. See listing at end for detailed information.

which carried 195 passengers under Capt. Burmann. The packet ship was quite new, having been built for the Bremen firm of D.H. Watjen & Co. and launched on Oct. 17, 1846. After enduring 48 days at sea the Bilten group arrived in New York City on Thursday, June 10, 1847. The voyage was rather long, given that the typical ship sailing westward against the prevailing winds took 4-6 weeks to cross the Atlantic, depending on the weather and the gulf stream. Anna and Johann Caspar Becker recalled in later years that the *Columbia* was becalmed for quite a while, putting pressure on the food and water supplies.¹⁴ The ship's passenger manifest lists all the men as farmers. The log also shows that there were a number of others from Canton Glarus traveling with them, including some single men. The manifest was rather carelessly completed, with only a notation that the first person on the list was from Great Britain and no notation that many were from Switzerland.¹⁵ The *Columbia* continued to serve as a packet ship until 1853, sailing twice a year with emigrants to New York and returning to Europe with a cargo of tobacco or cotton. After that her cargo was chiefly tobacco. The *Columbia* sank in August of 1879 while bound from London to Quebec, carrying only ballast. She had collided with a whale; the crew was rescued by the steamer *P. Coland*.

From New York City the group took the usual route west, going up the Hudson River to Albany, taking the Erie Canal rather than the more expensive railroad to Buffalo, and then riding a Great Lakes steamer to Milwaukee.¹⁶ They may have been lucky to find passage on a lake steamer because all available ships were very crowded with people going to Chicago for a major convention about harbor and river improvements. Among those traveling there -- and also stopping in Milwaukee at this time -- was Horace Greeley, noted editor of *The New York Tribune*. Greeley later spoke at the convention, which was attended by 5,000 people -- an incredibly large number considering the population of Chicago was about 17,000 at the time. In Milwaukee, the Swiss immigrants may also have been a bit startled if they were still there early on the morning of July 5, when a "loud-mouthed cannon" was shot off at 3 a.m. Since the Fourth of July fell on the Sabbath, the city's Independence Day celebration was held on Monday and a military group encamped near downtown began the holiday rather early. In the days before and after the holiday, other large groups of immigrants were also arriving in Milwaukee -- especially from Norway and Germany.¹⁷

The group from Bilten hired lumber wagons to take them the final 100 or so miles to Green County, arriving about the same time that their land was finally purchased from the federal government. Fridolin Salmen, one-year-old son of Caspar and Barbara

¹⁴ Their story is retold in *The Becker Family History* by descendant Helen Wappler Murn of Dodgeville (sixth page of introductory text), however the days of no wind appear to have grown a bit as the story was repeated over the years.

¹⁵ Detail on the ship is from an internet posting to the Emigration-Ships Mailing List by Michael Palmer on Dec. 12, 1997. The manifest is on microfilm record 357 for the Port of New York, dated June 10, 1847. *The New York Herald* of June 10, 1847, notes the arrival of the ship (see *Maritime Herald* on P. 4), but errs in calling the ship the *Caroline*, which repeats the name from the next entry for another bark that sailed from Bremen.

¹⁶ Of the two known accounts of the immigration, one says the group arrived in Milwaukee on Sunday, July 4. The other said they arrived in New Glarus on July 4.

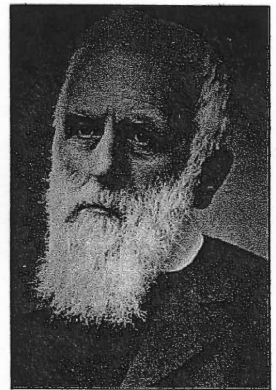
¹⁷ *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel and Gazette*, issues of July 1 -- July 7, 1847.

Salmen, died enroute. Johann Melchior Blum, who at age 65 was the oldest in the group, also died that first year – either after their arrival or possibly enroute from New York. The entire trip from Bilten to New Glarus lasted about 100 days.¹⁸

The families were assigned their land, which had been divided into 20-acre units in the same manner as with the New Glarus land purchase. Presumably the decision was made by drawing a lot number out of a bag, as was the case at New Glarus. Near the end of the year a second territorial census was made in preparation for possible statehood, and that listing reflects the fact that the Bilten group apparently had started building cabins on their land unlike the New Glarus settlement, where the cabins were all grouped into a village. The census is a bit humorous in that the enumerator, Daniel M. Tree, had a problem getting the names straight given that few of the Swiss spoke English. For example, among the New Bilten group we find Jacob Yoker (Jacob Becker), Gasper Bloom (Caspar Blum), Ubour Bloom (probably Rudolph Bloom), Casper Baker (Caspar Becker) and newcomer Friederich Swickly (Fridolin Zwicky).¹⁹

The First Years

While still working hard to get their farms established in 1848, all but one of the surviving heads of families went to Monroe and applied for American citizenship. Most went in two groups on March 7 and May 3 and appeared before William Rittenhouse, clerk of the district court, to file their Declaration of Intention. There might have been a little problem with translating when it came to providing information on when and where they entered the United States -- the March 7 group all said they arrived in May and the May 3 group said they arrived in August. Caspar Blum and Caspar Salmen, who applied separately during April of 1848, both said they arrived in June, which was the correct month. In most cases citizenship was granted on Mar. 3, 1856.²⁰



J.J. Tschudy

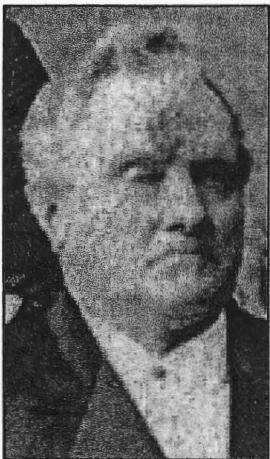
Despite a wet and cold summer, which brought fire blight to the wheat crops, the harvest in both of the settlements that year was ample. “Especially the colonists of the 1847 settlement have a pretty blessing in which to delight,” Tschudy wrote in his report for 1848. “The potatoes are frequently

¹⁸ One of the more precise descriptions of the migration is included in the biography of Fred Bloom on Page 460 of the *Illustrated Album of Biography of Southwestern Minnesota*, Occidental Publishing Co., Chicago, 1889. The *Columbia* manifest lists both Fridolin Salmen and Johann Melchior Blum, so their deaths would have been after this ship arrived at New York City.

¹⁹ Green County Territorial Census, Dec. 1, 1847, Greenville Precinct (today’s Towns of York, New Glarus, Adams, and Washington).

²⁰ Declarations of Intention, Green County, Wis. Vol. 2, Pp. 88-97. Records on file at Area History Center at Karmann Library, University of Wisconsin—Platteville. It is possible that those who are not recorded as being admitted as citizens in Green County completed their paperwork in another jurisdiction. The March 7 group included Jacob Becker, Caspar Becker, Emanuel Blum, Oswald Blum, Rudolph Blum, Peter Elmer, and Johannes Oswald. The May 3 group included Peter Becker, Jacob Blum, Fridolin Blum, and Peter Blum.

subjected to dry rot, but are available in great numbers. The corn is excellent and well filled out.” The farmers were still sharing use of the oxen, which limited what some would have liked to accomplish. “A yoke of oxen for each is indispensably and, yes, unconditionally necessary,” Tschudy added. “Because of this, while the colonists have enough in storage for the year, few could save extra for fees and have nothing to use for clothing, etc.” He also noted that property taxes for the year – the first tax levies on the New Bilten land – came to \$16.50 or 76 cents per colonist.²¹



Fridolin Streiff

It was either in 1848 or '49 that colony leader Streiff moved closer to the New Bilten settlement (to today's Freitag farm along Highway 69). Streiff initially lived in one of the New Glarus village cabins, where his wife and children joined him in 1846. In 1848 he sold his rights to a 20-acre plot of colony land and joined Tschudy in setting up a farm east of New Glarus in what is now the Town of Exeter. Streiff purchased a half share of the 160 acres on Feb. 5, 1848. The farming arrangement didn't work out so Streiff sold his share back to Tschudy on July 20, 1849, and purchased 80 acres of farmland in the Town of Washington from original Yankee settler Hiram Bain. Later on Streiff expanded that farm, making four additional purchases between 1850 and 1854 totaling 160 acres. Around 1862 he replaced Bain's original log cabin home with the Greek Revival style house that still stands on the farm.²²

Also settling in the same area around the time that Streiff moved near New Bilten were a number of newly-immigrated Glarner families -- three of whom carried the name Hefty. Buying farms next to Streiff's land were Johann Rudolf and Sophia Hefty and her parents, Marcus and Verena Hefty. Both families later farmed in the Town of New Glarus. Just south of Streiff's land was the farm of Fridolin and Rosina Zwicky. The Heftys and Zwickys had arrived in the U.S. in August of 1847. In addition, if one follows today's appropriately-named Hefty Rd. west from Highway 69 you will come to the large farm founded by Fridolin and Rosina Hefty in Section 4.²³ Fridolin claimed 160 acres there on Dec. 2, 1848. The family operation was taken over by son Thomas after

²¹ *Die Welt is hier weit*. Pp. 30-33. The book contains a number of letters from Tschudy after his arrival here in October of 1846. Barbara Hottinger joined him in July of 1847, around the time the Biltner arrived, and became his wife. At first they farmed in the Town of Exeter (near the old Ross School) and after he resigned as Emigration Society agent under fire in the early 1850s, he briefly operated a store in New Glarus and then Dayton before moving to Monroe in 1859. Tschudy was twice elected Green County register of deeds (in 1858 and 1860), worked as a clerk in the Wisconsin State Senate for several years and then was Green County clerk for many years. He died in 1899.

²² Streiff had rights to Plot 50, which he sold to Matheus Hösli. There were a number of such deals in the New Glarus and New Bilten colonies, but they were generally viewed as illegal by the Emigration Society. His initial land purchase from Tschudy, in the NW¼ of Section 17 in the Town of Exeter, was recorded Feb. 25, 1848, in Vol. 3 Page 6 of Deeds at the Green County Register of Deed's Office in Monroe and represents the first locally recorded land transaction of the Swiss in Green County. In the Town of Washington, Streiff received patents in 1851 for the SE¼ of the SW¼ of Section 1, in 1852 for the SW¼ of the SW¼ of Section 1, 1854 for the NE¼ of the SE¼ of Section 2, 1856 for the NW¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 1. Streiff later sold the farm to Dietrich Freitag and retired to Monroe, where he died in 1890.

²³ Fridolin Hefty's initial land purchase in Section 4 was W½ of NW¼, SE¼ of NW¼, and SW¼ of NE¼.

his marriage in 1871 and then by his son Fred K. Hefty.²⁴ Today it is the widely-known farm belonging to Dr. Fred Blum with an exquisite stone masonry barn dating to 1861. The barn, with its round corner tower and red brick-framed openings, reflects the Old World masonry skills of the early Swiss immigrants.

Settling immediately to the south of New Bilten were an older couple, Florian Arzethauser and Waldburga Schmid.²⁵ The Arzethauser surname is associated with Bilten, but uncommon in America. The Arzethausers appear in the census from 1850 through 1870. According to records in Canton Glarus, Waldburga died in 1876. Florian apparently returned to Switzerland as he is listed as having died in 1878 in an area of Bilten known as Elmen. The couple had a son Jacob who apparently remained single. According to a story related by Manuel C. Elmer in his book *Rudy's Hill*, Jacob (Elmer refers to him as Florian Autrehauser) lived alone in a cottage and was the subject of some harassment by neighbors driving by. According to the story, Arzethauser was jilted by a woman in Europe who became a music hall performer. Thus people, as they passed the Arzethauser home, would commence singing and that caused an angered Arzethauser to throw rocks at the passers-by until they were out of sight. Elmer admitted that this tale may have been part true, part fabrication.²⁶

A little southwest of the *Biltental* was a large farm being developed by Adam Blumer and Anna Margarethe Blum (along today's Highway C). The couple came to Green County in 1849 and purchased 120 acres on May 8 of that year, using a military land warrant.²⁷ In 1851 they sold a square half acre of their farm for \$3 for a schoolhouse. The original log school was replaced in 1870 with a frame building that became known as the Blumer School and later as the Marty School (the building still stands along Dividing Ridge Rd.). Adam died in 1855 and eventually the couple's son Adam Jr. took over the farm after his marriage in 1865. He expanded his operation to the point that he had 75 cows.²⁸ The elder couple's daughter Katharina married Jacob Hefty, who purchased the brewery in Monroe in 1868. Adam Jr. joined Hefty as co-owner of the brewery in 1885. Except for a brief period during Prohibition, the brewery was known as the Blumer Brewing Co. from 1906 until 1947 when it was named for Joseph Huber.

²⁴ Fred K. Hefty, who died in 1925, was a long time member of the Green County Board and represented the area in the state Assembly for one two-year term.

²⁵ Arzethauser von Bilten Nr. 25 – Genealogy records of Landesarchiv in Glarus, Switzerland. The family arrived in New York from LeHavre on June 27, 1848, on the ship *Cheshire*.

²⁶ Manuel Conrad Elmer, *Rudy's Hill*, Wilkensburg, Pa., Mercury Press, 1987, P. 5

²⁷ Military bounty land warrants, which could be purchased on the open market for less than their face value, were often used in place of cash to purchase government land. Most warrants used at this time were from service in the Mexican War. With a minimum of 14 days service or participation in a battle, a soldier could qualify for 160 acres of land as part of his pay. Land agents would seek out warrant holders and offer them cash, re-selling the warrants in territories that were being settled. Warrants were especially popular with land speculators, who often obtained them for pennies on the dollar.

²⁸ Adam Sr. was born in the Canton Glarus village of Nidfurn. Anna was from Bilten. Apparently they lived in Bilten because Adam was assigned a family number in the Bilten genealogy records in the Glarus Landesarchiv. They purchased the NE¼ of SW¼ and the W1/3 of SW¼ of Section 9. The school land was for District No. 6 and was at the SE corner of the NE¼ of SW¼ (Deeds Vol. 6, P. 229). Butterfield's *History of Green County, Wisconsin* (P. 1133) says the original log school was along the south line of Section 9, but the land in the center of the section was already transferred in 1851.

Huber, a German immigrant who had been with the brewery since 1923, had acquired part ownership. Blumer-branded products are still manufactured and marketed today.²⁹

Two other Glarner couples – Anton Baumgartner and Magdalena Marty and Johann Ulrich Elmer and Verena Marty -- were also in the New Bilten area but eventually settled farther south in the Town of Washington. Baumgartner, who had been a blacksmith in Switzerland, brought his family to America in 1848, traveling via New Orleans and Galena. They first lived in a log house on Section 9 that was owned by Jacob Marty, Magdalena's brother.³⁰ Jacob was 21 years old when he arrived in Green County in the summer of 1847 – apparently with the Bilten group, although not actually a part of it. On Nov. 8 he purchased 40 acres of land at what would now be the northwest corner of the intersection of Highways N and C. Money for the land was forwarded through the Emigration Society. Another brother, Mathias Marty, came from Switzerland with the Baumgartners and soon began investing in land. On April 12, 1849, he used a military land warrant to purchase the entire southwest corner of Section 7 in the Town of Mount Pleasant (the western edge of Monticello). Several weeks later he sold the mill pond portion to Alexander Foster Steadman, who was operating the mill. The Elmers arrived in Green County in July of 1849 and later moved in with the Baumgartners, who were farming on 120 acres of land in Section 28 that had been purchased by their brother Mathias on May 25.³¹

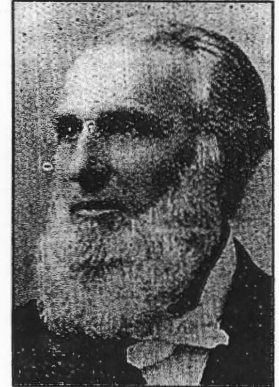
²⁹ The Huber Brewery was sold in 2006 to Ravinder Minhas of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and is now known as the Minhas Craft Brewery.

³⁰ The Marty children were from the family of Johannes and Magdalena Marti (Glarus Genealogy Marti von Engi Nr. 143). Another son, Johannes, came to Monroe with his family in 1864, having arrived at New York on May 4 aboard the ship *Edinburgh* from Liverpool and Queenstown, Ireland. Their widowed mother, Magdalena, had arrived in the 1850s and lived for a while with son Jacob in the Town of Mt. Pleasant, where she died Feb. 14, 1875. She is buried in Union Cemetery along Loveland Rd. in the Town of Washington.

³¹ Jacob Marty (Marti von Engi Nr. 903) appears to be the person listed on the ship manifest as arriving at New York City on June 10, 1847, with the New Bilten group, although his Declaration of Intention for citizenship (filed in Green County Sept. 15, 1847) says he entered the country on July 8 (that was likely about when he arrived in Green County). No Jacob Marty could be found on shipping records in that time period other than on June 10. In addition, descendants have a copy of a letter to Jacob from his brother-in-law, Adam Blumer of Engi, in which Adam notes that Jacob wrote a letter to him from Milwaukee on June 29. Blumer's letter also mentions that he had made arrangements to send 700 gulden (about 1,500 Swiss Franks or roughly \$300 at the time) through the agents in New Glarus and it should be there by the middle of October. Jacob's 40 acres of land (SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 9) would have cost \$50 and Jacob received a patent for it in 1849. Before Jacob left Switzerland he obtained on Mar. 22, 1847, an affidavit of his baptism and confirmation from the Protestant church at Matt. He also carried a certificate from F. M. Steinmann-Hefti saying that since May 9, 1846, Jacob had been employed by him as head miller to his complete satisfaction. Family tradition says that after arriving in New York City Jacob traveled to Wisconsin via Washington, D.C., Indianapolis and Chicago, but it seems more likely that he stayed with the New Bilten group on their journey via the Great Lakes since he was in Milwaukee at about the time they would have been there. Both the immigration records and the family record in the *Landesarchiv* in Glarus say Mathias came to the U.S. in 1848, rather than with his brother in 1847 as some family histories state. The Baumgartners and Mathias Marty said on their citizenship application that they entered at New Orleans on May 16, 1848. They are listed as being on the ship *Rockall* which arrived from LeHavre on March 17. The Baumgartners purchased the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 28 from Mathias and Amanda Marty in 1852 (Deeds Vol. 9, P. 517), having earlier purchased 60 acres there in 1849. The Elmers paid \$100 (Deeds Vol. 9, P. 368) for their land.

While new families were arriving, others were departing. Among those who moved away before 1850 were two of the original New Bilten immigrant families -- Emanuel Blum to Dubuque, Ia., and Johann Peter Elmer to Galena, Ill. (The Elmers returned to the Town of Washington a few years later.)

In 1849 preparations began in the Swiss colony for the arrival of a pastor from Switzerland. A log building was built in New Glarus for a schoolhouse and for initial church use until a permanent structure could be built on land reserved on a knoll in the center of the village. When the town government was organized the following year, the log structure was also used as the town hall. The Rev. Wilhelm Streissguth³² arrived in the summer of 1850 and set about organizing a Reformed Church congregation. All of the male adults in the colony, including those from New Bilten, met on Tuesday afternoon, June 25, to adopt rules prepared by the Evangelical Church Commission of Switzerland and sign a charter. One of the original Biltners, Johannes Oswald, was a member of the first church council or consistory, as was neighbor Johann Rudolph Hefty.



Rev. Streissguth

Several months later Streissguth wrote a long, philosophical report about his trip to New Glarus and his first impressions of the community. New Bilten was only mentioned in a postscript because he felt it was "as yet too unfamiliar to me and also somewhat inaccessible." The report was originally printed in a pamphlet in Switzerland in 1851 and a translation was published in 1935 in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*. Streissguth was struck by the natural beauty of northern Green County, noting that there was a "moderately thick, everywhere accessible woodland, interspersed with the most beautiful and surprising small green openings. The entire region is made up of such a profusion of variously sculptured hills and dales as I have nowhere else seen. It looks like a vast, green, gently rolling sea." Streissguth repeated what appears to have been the talk among some in the New Glarus colony, saying "it is said they [the New Biltners] are still deficient in industry and proper housekeeping and also attention to church matters is considerably neglected by them."

The pastor also tried to counter some views back in Switzerland that the colonists in Green County were living in poor log homes, wearing tattered clothes and not having

³² Streissguth, who was born in Germany, was age 23 and single when he arrived here. In 1852 he traveled to New York City, where he married Maria Eva Brumder. Two sons were born in New Glarus. As a community leader he helped with the final land transfers and actually represented the Emigration Society for a brief period until he discovered that that job was not compatible with his pastoral duties. In the fall of 1855 the family moved and he became affiliated with the Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, first serving a church at Newton in Manitowoc County and then Milwaukee. He later served churches in Fond du Lac, St. Paul (Minn.) and Kenosha before retiring to Milwaukee in 1886. He was president of the denomination for a while. After his first wife died, he traveled to Germany and married her sister, Magdalena. The women were sisters of George Brumder, who developed a large, nationally-renowned German-language publishing business in Milwaukee.

enough to eat. While it is true that they were still in log homes, he found the houses to be solid structures. "If one imagines that living in a log house must be somewhat hard and uncomfortable, he will doubtless find it so. Yet if one enters into the conditions as they really are, one can live quite comfortably and happily in them.... Certain well-to-do farmers have already constructed stately buildings."

As to the colonists' attire, he wrote that "on Sundays I find the people, without exception, properly though to be sure very simply, attired." However, he added that a suit of clothes "that would last a whole year in a factory goes to pieces here in a few weeks in the struggle with severe storms, downpours of rain, dew and fog, thorns and brush, particularly if a vigorous, active and industrious body is inside it earnestly try to support a numerous family and having from 20 to 30 acres of land to cultivate."

And in reply to comments that some colonists are without much food, he wrote "I of course do not know where such comments originate, but this I know and am daily witness of, that they are perfectly absurd. I am convinced that most people at home experience more days of hunger in a single month than here in a whole year... Flour, milk, potatoes, meat, butter, cheese, eggs, etc., are at hand in richest profusion... One has but to look at the people in order to be convinced that hunger and want are not frequent guests in their homes."³³

Once the church was organized Streissguth traveled to New Bilten every four weeks to hold services there, usually in someone's home. Four young people from New Bilten were part of the congregation's first confirmation class, which had 21 members ranging in age from 16 to 21. The four confirmands were Anna Blum, Rudolph Blum, Maria Oswald and Anna Barbara Becker.³⁴ While there already was a cemetery in New Glarus (now the south lawn of Swiss United Church of Christ), land records show that an area was also set aside in New Bilten for a cemetery. It is not known of a certainty if there ever were any burials there.³⁵

While the Swiss had occasionally held prayer meetings before Streissguth's arrival – generally under the leadership of Tschudy – they also were exposed to a more evangelical Protestantism from itinerant German Methodist preachers. That denomination's first converts in Green County were among four families in the Dutch Hollow area south of Monticello, including those of Anton and Jacob Stauffacher – two Glarner families who had been part of the original New Glarus colony but did not stay

³³ Documents New Glarus in 1850. *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, March 1935, Pp. 327-345. The report is dated Sept. 12, 1850.

³⁴ A replica of the first log schoolhouse/church/town hall is in the Swiss Historical Village at New Glarus. Among its furnishings are two benches from the original building, which once stood in the area between Robert's and the Zwingli House. See Walter J. Stuckey's *The First 100 Years of the Swiss Evangelical and Reformed Church*, New Glarus, Wisconsin. New Glarus, 1950.

³⁵ The cemetery land was in Plot 22 (the S½ of SW¼ of SW¼ of Section 2), which was later purchased by Johann Jacob Becker. An article in the *New Glarus Post* of Aug. 9, 1939, "Reminiscences of Early New Glarus," mentions that traces of an early cemetery remained in the area of the John C. Marty farm where church services had once been held (the cemetery land may actually have been on what would have been the Ulrich Gerber farm at that time).

there. Eventually some New Biltners joined that faith.³⁶ Of course, whether they were practicing the Reformed or Evangelical faith, everyone spoke German.

The Swiss and the “Yankees”

The slow but steady influx of the Swiss began to bump up against the “Yankee” settlers in the north central parts of Green County. Unclaimed land adjacent to New Bilten – especially in Sections 10, 11 and 12 – was being purchased by others in 1848 and 1849. Americans migrating westward had already purchased scattered farm sites along the west branch of the Little Sugar River. Alexander Foster Steadman had a mill there.³⁷ But it was two Glarner – brothers Mathias and Jacob Marty – who significantly changed the future of the area. Mathias already owned the land around the mill pond and property south of there. Then on March 9, 1850, the two men purchased 40 acres north of the mill and began a new community that was much more a mix of Yankee pioneers and Swiss immigrants than the New Glarus colony. Their work was enhanced by the fact that both spoke English, having apparently spent some time in London.³⁸ Cementing the Swiss-Yankee mix, they both married American girls – Jacob wed Electa Hills on Dec. 20, 1849, and Mathias married Amanda Pierce in about 1851. Electa was the daughter of Chloe Webster and Sylvester Hills, whom the brothers later enticed to build the first store in their village.³⁹ Amanda was the daughter of Ruth Ayers and Josiah Pierce – the first residents of the Town of Washington.

³⁶ In a letter dated Dec. 6, 1848, Tschudy mentions that while he had been able to get an English-language school underway in New Glarus he could not say the same about religious instruction, adding that “we do enjoy the sermons of itinerant missionaries.” The German-speaking Evangelical Association had been founded in Pennsylvania in 1800 and spread to Ohio, Illinois and Wisconsin, where the first congregation was organized in the Town of Greenfield in Milwaukee County in 1840. Early records for the region were compiled in 1982 in *Church Records of the German Methodist Episcopal Church*, Madison, Wis. 1850-1912, part of the local history collection of the Madison Public Library.

³⁷ It was Steadman (some original land documents spell his name Stedman), as postmaster, who in 1845 named the location Monticello or “little mountain” in reference to the bluffs that lined the valley. The mill was originally set up as a saw mill for Chester Witter by Robert Witter, who had claimed land there in 1843 and received a patent for it in 1845. Steadman later moved to Iowa. Orrin Bacon established a flour mill there in 1854, which was later run by J. Henry Staedtler and then his son Henry. As with many mills it eventually was a farm feed mill. The 38-acre mill pond became known as Lake Staedtler, but after it was no longer needed the area slowly reverted to a marsh. In the 1960s a bit of the pond was revived along the main Highway 69 entrance to the village as the current Lake Montesian. See *Monticello Past and Present*, Monticello Historical Committee. Monticello Messenger, 1977.

³⁸ Referenced in Manuel Conrad Elmer’s *The Elmer Family*, Pittsburgh, Penn., 1967. There is also the possibility that one or both may have clerked in a textile factory in Schwanden, exposing them to some use of the English language.

³⁹ Jacob and Electa were married at her father’s home by A. R. Sylvester, justice of the peace [see Green County Marriages, Book A, entry 434]. Sylvester Hills had moved to Green County from Onondago County, New York, in 1838, when Electa was eight years old. They settled first in what became the Town of Sylvester and later were in the Town of Albany before returning to Sylvester.

By the time of the census in October of 1850 the Marty brothers had already moved to the Town of Mt. Pleasant and were listed as being in the lumbering business. The single Mathias was living with younger brother Jacob and his new bride. Although the village land was originally purchased in both brother's names, it was primarily Jacob who developed Monticello. He and Electa filed the original plat on Aug. 6, 1851. The surveying had been done by Samuel Spangler, the Monroe man who also laid out the Village of New Glarus in April of that year. Mathias and Jacob built the village's first hotel in 1851, selling it in 1853. On Feb. 19, 1853, Jacob sold all but 16 lots to George Campbell, a merchant and speculator who had invested in a variety of pieces of land in the area. Most of the lots that Jacob kept were along Main St. and he sold them over the years to various businessmen.⁴⁰



Mathias Marty

Mathias purchased more land in the area, including property northeast of the village in 1851 and a large tract for what is now the south side of Monticello in 1855. He served as postmaster at Monticello for a while, was clerk of the Town of Mt. Pleasant and then was elected clerk of the Green County Board in 1860 and 1862. His name is on many deeds during this time as he bought and sold land and gave mortgage loans. Among his early land sales was some village area land to John Jacob Tschudy in 1852. Tschudy, had been lead agent for the Emigration Society at New Glarus for about six years, was also often investing in property. Even Mathias' wife Amanda purchased and sold land and gave some mortgages in her own name. Sometimes Mathias bought back village lots that had previously been sold. In the spring of 1857 he donated a half acre of land for the cemetery that is now to the west of Zwingli United Church of Christ.⁴¹

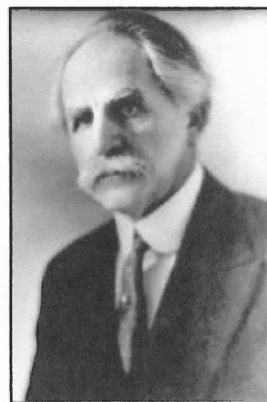
Near the end of the Civil War, the Marty brothers and their families moved on to Kansas. That was despite the fact that their mother had joined them in the 1850s and was

⁴⁰ The deed to Campbell (Vol. 7, P. 457) generally included all the land north of the river except 16 specified lots, plus some property south of the river. Campbell was from Pennsylvania and his wife, Susan, was from Indiana. By 1860 they were living in Monroe and later were in the Portage area where he was an agent for a leather factory. By 1880, the census shows him as a grocer at New Haven in Adams County. The hotel was on the site of today's Monticello House. The original structure burned in the late 1800s. Among Jacob's other lot sales were those to Peter Wilson, A.S. Holloway, Jacob Rowland, and G.A. Rowland.

⁴¹ Mathias' Monticello land purchases included obtaining rights to a military bounty land warrant given to Pvt. Henderson Critchfield of the Tennessee volunteers which Marty used to buy the entire SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 7 (Pages 313 and 314 of federal land records from Mineral Point, and Deeds Vol. 9, P. 288), which today is the village's west side. He sold the part flooded by the mill pond to Alexander Steadman for \$16.72 on May 4, 1849 (Vol. 3, P. 601). Mathias joined his brother Jacob on March 9, 1850, in buying the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 7 from Steadman for \$1,000 (Vol. 7, P. 283), which is much of today's village on the north side of the river. Mathias also purchased 20 acres to the northeast along today's Coates Rd. from Hugh McClintock (S $\frac{1}{2}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 7 on Aug. 7, 1851 [Vol. 6, P. 130]), and on Jan. 23, 1855, purchased the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 7 from Daniel Morley (Vol. 14, P. 133). The land that Tschudy purchased was in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ (Vol. 7, P. 284) and he sold it a year and a half later to Morley (Vol. 10, P. 60).

living with them, and two sisters and a brother and their families remained here. Mathias and Amanda went to Wyandotte County (now the north side of Kansas City, Kan.) and Jacob and Electa to nearby Johnson County (southwest of Kansas City) in April of 1865. Much of Mathias' land is now downtown Kansas City, Kan., and the family made substantial money as the area was developed. They became active in First Congregational Church of Kansas City, where he was a deacon, trustee, treasurer and board president. He resigned the presidency on Nov. 14, 1882, due to failing health, and started spending time in Texas. He was praised for his "good judgment, his careful accuracy, his strict integrity, his high sense of honor, his time and money without stint, all dedicated to the service of the church."⁴² Jacob purchased 200 acres of land in Shawnee township, where he farmed for 42 years. Then, with their health failing, Jacob and Electa moved to Texas with daughter Laura and her husband, Amber Poteet. By 1909 they were living in California, living first in Pasadena and then with the Poteets on their citrus farm at Anaheim.⁴³

Amazingly this brief era of Green County history shows up in a book written by the early 20th Century author Hamlin Garland, who was made famous by his *Main Travelled Roads* and *Son of the Middle Border*. His parents, Richard Garland and Belle (Isabel) McClintock, had moved westward with their parents to Green County at this time. Hamlin Garland wrote a partly fictionalized account of those days in his book *Trail-Makers of the Middle Border*. There was much concern in the area over sickness (smallpox) when the book's characters arrived in Green County, which was often true. Richard goes to work in the lumber camps of the North Woods, also a common occurrence in those days. When he eventually returns to Green County, a character in the book tells him: "A colony of Swiss arrived here in April, and the money which they offered for homes upset the judgment of many of our neighbours. The McLanes and a half dozen other families immediately sold out



Hamlin Garland

⁴² Mathias was born Apr. 20, 1824, and is likely buried in Mt. Washington Cemetery, near Independence, Mo. He appears to be the teacher from Engi who was asked to join Niklaus Dürst in seeking land for the New Glarus colony, because he could speak English. According to the Emigration Society's 1847 official report, Mathias didn't make up his mind in time and was replaced by Fridolin Streiff. Some information on his later life can be found in *A Brief History of the First Congregational Church, Kansas City, Mo., 1866-1909*. B.B Seelye. Kansas City, Mo. 1909. P. 20. The history says he went to Texas for health reasons; another source says California. A biography mentioning his son, Albert, indicates the family may have moved to Kansas in 1871. Additional data from descendant Patricia Marty Houghton of Spring Hill, Kan.

⁴³ Marty family records say Jacob's family went by boat down the Mississippi to St. Louis where, when they arrived, the bells were tolling the death of President Abraham Lincoln. They then went overland to Kansas City. Their Texas stay is documented in the 1900 census for Harris County, Dwelling 246 Family 284, where Jacob is listed as a retired farmer. After Jacob and Electa moved their son John continued to live on the Kansas farm until the early 1900s, acquiring additional land and donating land for a schoolhouse (the Antioch school). In October of 1923 he moved to Long Beach, Calif. The last of the family land was sold in 1950, some to the Overland Park American Legion post, which was going to develop a park called Marty Park. The park was never built, but a fire station constructed next to the legion building was dedicated to the family. Additional family information from descendant Robert Marty of Overland Park, Kan., with data compiled by Jean Lawson Bottger. Jacob, who was born July 4, 1826, died Feb. 27, 1912, in Anaheim, Calif. Electa died there on April 26, 1920.

and went away to a valley where land can be had at lower prices.” The real Garland family, who lived just west of Monticello on Washington Rd., did leave Green County for the deep valleys of Onalaska, north of La Crosse. The McClintocks (McLanes in the book) went to nearby West Salem. Belle’s father, Hugh McClintock, had previously settled his large family on land at the north edge of Monticello along Wettach Rd. An uncle, Addison Garland, who followed his younger brother Richard to Green County, remained at Monticello and ran a popular mercantile store with his father-in-law, W.E. Noble, until moving on to Santa Barbara, Calif., in the 1870s for health reasons.⁴⁴

It was also in those days that at times some neighbors were not friendly to the Swiss immigrants. There were a number of suspicious fires and the Swiss assumed they were started by their Yankee neighbors in an attempt to drive them out of the area. One day in the New Bilten area, when all four members of the Johannes Oswald family were working at other farms, they returned in the evening to find their cabin in ashes and all of their belongings destroyed. Although some neighbors were suspected of starting the fire, no one knew for sure what had happened. However, the mystery was explained when one of the neighboring families later moved away. Their home was searched and some buttons were found that were definitely from clothes that belonged to Johannes Oswald – presumably taken before the home was torched.⁴⁵

The unoccupied land in the area also drew the attention of some prominent land speculators. Arabut Ludlow and Asa Richardson, financiers at Monroe, bought up scattered acreage between 1848 and 1855. Ludlow, originally a peddler and ginseng dealer who settled in Monroe in 1846, became president of the First National Bank there. In later years he endowed the city’s original public library. Richardson, who came from New York in 1841, headed the Bank of Monroe and later the First National Bank. He briefly served as a probate judge and as coroner. Richardson eventually moved on to Lawrence, Kan., but his son J.V. Richardson remained here and was prominent in the early years of Brodhead.⁴⁶ Also frequently on the land patent lists at this time were

⁴⁴ Hamlin Garland, *Trail-Makers of the Middle Border*, The Macmillan Company, 1927. P. 187. The book, first published in 1926, was the third in a series of four that chronicle the lives of Garland’s pioneer forebears and his own youth. Although fictionalized, the basic theme of his family moving from Massachusetts to the Monticello area (Brownsville in the book) is true. The McClintocks moved here from Ohio by 1847 and owned the W½ of SW¼ Sec. 6 and E½ of NW¼ and SE¼ of NE¼ of Sec. 7, Town of Mt. Pleasant. McClintock had first claimed 228 acres in Section 6 of the Town of Washington, west of what was to become New Bilten, paying \$284.66 on May 21, 1846. He also owned woodlands adjacent to the Swiss colony woodlots in the Town of New Glarus and 11½ acres in Section 4 of the Town of Mt. Pleasant. Richard Garland’s parents (Richard and Harriet) owned the SW¼ of NE¼ of Sec. 12 of the Town of Washington, selling it in 1856 [Deeds Vol. 15, p. 261]). Hamlin Garland later described his uncle Addison as an “invalid,” who became interested in health foods such as graham flour and the need for citrus, which is what attracted him to California. Addison’s store (Garland and Noble) is also mentioned by Elizabeth Moore Wallace in her recollections of life in Irish Hollow – the area around the old Wallace School along Exeter Crossing Rd. in the Town of Exeter (“This Side of the Gully,” originally published in 1926 in *The Iowa Homestead*, Chapter 11).

⁴⁵ “Reminiscences of Early New Glarus.” *New Glarus Post*. Aug. 9, 1939. Page 1. Johannes or John is referred to as Hans Oswald.

⁴⁶ Ludlow received patents for land in Sections 8 and 9 and Richardson in Sections 2 and 4. Ludlow was also well known as a breeder of shorthorn cattle and Clydesdale horses. His home on the north edge of Monroe is now a bed and breakfast inn. The current Green County fairgrounds in Monroe is on land

Cyrus Woodman and Cadwallader C. Washburn, both natives of Maine who for a while were law and real estate partners at Mineral Point. Woodman and Washburn frequently bought out military bounty land warrants and used them to obtain property. Woodman in particular was the first owner of most of Section 5 to the west of New Bilten. The pair held land in much of the forested areas of the state and their land speculation was the basis of their considerable wealth. Washburn, who later served five terms in the US House of Representatives and one term as a Republican governor, pioneered the modern method of milling grain by using rollers rather than millstones at his large Minneapolis operation.⁴⁷

Around 1850 the first school district was organized in the New Bilten area, which brought the Yankees, Swiss, and other immigrants together. Emigration Society land on the south side of today's Hefty Rd. became the site for a log schoolhouse. Neighbors "turned out and drew the logs together, some furnishing one and others three and four logs," according to one of the county histories. The Bilten settlers requested that the land be deeded to Joint School District No. 4 and in 1852, when the Emigration Society agents began to disperse property, what appears to be the first deed was given to the school district. The school board members accepting the transfer were Elijah Roby, Joseph Trogner and Rodolf Keburz. The first teacher at the school was Edwin Noble.⁴⁸

When the federal census was taken in August of 1850, agricultural production statistics were also collected. Most settlers now had their team of oxen -- Johannes Oswald and several newcomers had two teams. No one was using horses yet other than newcomers Marcus Hefty and John Kaderly. While most farmers had several hogs, everyone had at least one cow -- the number ranged from one to four -- and typically for the times most produced a lot of butter.⁴⁹ The Oswalds had "improved" [i.e. cultivated] the largest amount of land (26 acres), with Caspar Becker improving 12 acres and Jacob Becker five. Colony leader Fridolin Streiff already had 60 acres under plow at his

obtained from Ludlow. Richardson and Ludlow were both investors in various banks in the early days of Monroe and together helped expose document forgeries by County Clerk Horace Poyen in the early 1850s.

⁴⁷ Both Woodman and Washburn had a number of holdings in Green County. They also owned the shot tower at Helena (near Spring Green) from 1847 to 1861. During the Civil War Washburn held the rank of major general of U.S. volunteers. Later he was a lifetime university regent and president of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. In 1876 Washburn donated money for an observatory at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, which still bears his name, and Woodman endowed the astronomical library there in honor of his friend. In 1959 the library was moved from the observatory to Sterling Hall, the new home of the astronomy department, where the collection was damaged in the anti-Vietnam War bombing in 1970. Woodman's investments enabled him to retire at age 41 and travel extensively in Europe. He eventually settled in Massachusetts.

⁴⁸ The deed (Vol. 6, P. 462) transfers 6 square rods for 5 cents. The site was at the NE corner of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 2. The building was used until the former Voegeli School on Highway 69 was built. See Butterfield's *History of Green County, Wisconsin*. P. 1133. Rodolf and Mary Keburz sold their farm to John Voegeli in 1853 (80 acres in Sec. 35 of the Town of New Glarus and 40 acres in Section 4 of the Town of Washington [Vol. 8, p. 518]).

⁴⁹ The drudgery of butter production was primarily the wife's job, and she had a usual churning day just as she had a day devoted to washing and baking. Before the days of cream separators, the skimming would be done in pans in the cellar and the churning done by hand. The resulting butter would be kneaded and [if sold outside the Swiss community] salted in wooden bowls with wooden paddles to get the texture and color just right.

adjacent farm and was the only settler there with sheep, although he only had three. Streiff also had the most machinery by far, valued at \$232. Recorded harvests of wheat, oats, corn, hay and potatoes varied widely. Apparently no one admitted that they made cheese. Surprisingly, there is no agricultural information for a number of the New Bilten settlers, perhaps because of the language problem.⁵⁰

Also around this time Swiss immigrants from another canton began moving into the Town of Washington. While parts of the “long valley,” which extends west from Monticello, were slowly being absorbed by the spreading New Bilten group, the other Swiss began settling a bit further west and to the south. They were mostly from Canton Bern and so that area became known as the *Bernertal* (Bern valley). The first of these families were already there by 1850, having first lived in Ohio. While they were all of Swiss origin, canton differences kept the Berners somewhat apart from the Glarner. Emery O’Dell, former publisher of the *Monroe Evening Times*, in his various writings about the history of Green County, noted that “During early building, the newcomers managed to hold together as a group insofar as possible, for the old ties of their fatherland

Acte d'acquisitions des Bilten par les Glarner au Canton de Schwanden, Suisse.
Commencement de la Colonisation Glarner au Canton de Schwanden, Suisse.
Commencement de la Colonisation Glarner au Canton de Schwanden, Suisse.

		Johann Blumer von Thun 1		Marcus Hefty von Bilten 7			
		Jörg Leubli von Waller 1		Fridolin Streiff von Schwand 5			
	Jakob Hefty von Bilten 1	Ernst Blumer von Schwand 10		Rudolf Hefty von Bilten 30			
	Johannes Blumer von Bilten 8	Anton Hefty von Bilten 9		Anton Hefty von Bilten 16			
		Ernst Hefty von Bilten 4		Rudolf Hefty von Bilten 14			
		Ernst Hefty von Bilten 12					

This map, archived in Switzerland, shows use of the New Bilten 20-acre plots.
– Map courtesy Gemeindecarchiv Schwanden

⁵⁰ United States Census Schedule 4 – Production of Agriculture, Town of Washington, Green County, Wis., Aug. 19, 1850. Among the Swiss, the most valuable farm was that of Marcus Hefty at \$1,280. The next largest were Rudolph Hefty \$960 and Fridolin Streiff, John Kaderly, Adam Blumer, and Anton Baumgartner, \$800 each. See comparison with other years on Page 27.

held firm. Settlers who came later had to spread out into new country, but identity as to canton and community of origin was fairly established by their countrymen here.”⁵¹

The early Berners included John Dick (a cooper) and his five children; John and Anna Kaderly and their five children; Jacob Weismiller; Emanuel and Margaret Weismiller and their three children; and John and Elizabeth Weismiller. They all were in Green County by the summer of 1850. David Benkert came to the U.S. from Canton Bern in 1851 and farmed near Monroe until moving to Section 22 in 1854. Jacob Zumbrunnen, who had worked in various trades in Switzerland (tailor, rope maker, and potter) before becoming a farmer, brought his family to Monroe in October of 1852. The next spring he purchased land in Section 28. Sons Jacob Jr. and Martin both became prominent farmers in the Town of Washington. Christian Iseli arrived a decade later – in 1861 – and farmed in Section 30.⁵²

The impact of those families is noted in stories about the first school in the Town of Washington (known years later as the Loveland School). That school got underway in 1848-49 in Section 22, adjacent to what became the Zumbrunnen and Benkert farms. While it served Yankee families at first, by 1853 teacher Andrew Harper’s list of pupils already included 10 of obvious Swiss heritage.⁵³

Although transportation in those days was more difficult and time-consuming, the Biltners and the other Swiss were never completely isolated. Similar Glarner settlements were at New Elm in Winnebago County and New Schwanden in Minnesota. Also, there were fellow Glarner living as close as Madison, Milwaukee and Galena, Ill.⁵⁴

The plan of the Emigration Society was to hold the land while letting the families use it interest-free for about 10 years and then turn it over to the colonists. When land sales at New Glarus and New Bilten were completed in 1855/56, records show that only seven of the original 1847 immigrant families from Bilten obtained the 20 acres of land that they had been assigned. Title to the assigned property – especially in the New Glarus area -- was a subject of intense dispute. The original plan was that the cost of every plot of land would be taken care of by the immigrant’s home municipality. Later the Emigration Society ruled that no deed was to be issued until the home municipality

⁵¹ *Monroe Evening Times*, Oct. 25, 1949, P. 1. Part 4 of “Swiss Cheeseland,” a series of articles marking the 80th anniversary of cheesemaking in Green County, written by Emery A. Odell, late publisher of the newspaper. See also Part 3 on Oct. 24, 1949, for more on the Bilten settlement.

⁵² Also settling at that time in Section 30 was the Johann Georg Bidlingmaier family from Württemberg, Germany. In addition, Henry Zimmerman and his wife, Catharina, came from Pennsylvania.

⁵³ “First Rural School in Smokehouse?” *Monroe Evening Times*, May 18, 1935, P. 4. Edna Zumbrunnen, then teaching at the Loveland School (School District No. 1), relates information from old school records.

⁵⁴ New Elm, in the Town of Black Wolf between Oshkosh and Fond du Lac, was first settled in 1846 by part of another Glarus immigrant group that arrived in Milwaukee in 1845. It was a small but vibrant Swiss settlement for many years, but today is remembered primarily by two small country cemeteries and the former church which is now a private home. New Schwanden was founded in the mid-1850s along the Mississippi River just north of Minneapolis near Champlin, Minn. Today it is mostly remembered by a cemetery and a marker at the site of their church. Elm and Schwanden are both villages in Canton Glarus.

Lehr
N^o 1852, März besizer von Neudorfen

	Wohnort	Bemerkung
1	Peter Klee, Bitten zugefallen	Kereise März, April, 92
2	Jacob Becker & Leuch, wahren in der Verkant	
3	Melchior Schmidtke zugefallen	Kereise Juli 84-95
4	Thomas Knecht zugefallen	Kereise
5	David Ziegler & Dien Bach in Knecht & Bepan Blumen & Bitten	Dien Bach
6	Oswald Blumen & Bitten	Bitten
7	Peter Blumen	Bitten
8	Johannes Blumen Bitten, der lang in der Oberstadt Phe Becker & Bitten Geringe Loh	Bitten
9	Peter Becker	Bitten
10	Caspar Blumen	Bitten
11	Joh Oswald	Bitten
12	Caspar Becker	Bitten
13	Johannes Blumen & Bitten zugefallen	Kereise März, April, 81-9
14	Caspar Salomon	Bitten
15	Friedrich Blumen	Bitten
16	Jacob Blumen	Bitten
17		Kereise
18	Friedrich Zwick & Malles	Malles
19	Niedel Blumen	Bitten
20	Melchior Blumenpfurten zugefallen	Kereise
21	David Simonson & Schwan mit Frau	Schwan
22	Friedrich Bitten	Kereise
23	Heinrich Gyger & Lang	Lang
24		Kereise
25	Niklaus Klee	Klee
26	Heinrich Simonson David	Schwan
27	Peter Klee	Luchsing
28	Math. Speich	Luchsing
29	Matthias Ziegler	Bitten
30	Niedel Knecht mit Frau, der lang in Bepan & Bitten	Bitten

Translation of listing on previous page

Lot	March 1852 Land Possessions at New Bilten	Hometown
1	Peter Elmer of Bilten gave up	Society
2	Jacob Becker of Ennenda probably purchased	
3	Melchior Schindler of Rüti gave up	Society
4	Thomas Kundert gave up	Society
5	David Legler, Diesbach, sold to Caspar Blum, Bilten	Diesbach
6	Oswald Blum of Bilten	Bilten
7	Peter Blum of Bilten	Bilten
8	Johannes Blum of Bilten sold to Joh. Oprecht (son-in-law of Peter Becker of Bilten)	Bilten
9	Peter Becker	Bilten
10	Caspar Blum	Bilten
11	Johannes Oswald	Bilten
12	Caspar Becker	Bilten
13	Emanuel Blum of Bilten gave up	Bilten
14	Caspar Salmen	Bilten
15	Fridolin Blum	Bilten
16	Jacob Blum	Bilten
17		Society
18	Fridolin Zwicki of Mollis	Mollis
19	Rudolf Blum	Bilten
20	Melchior Blum's widow gave up	Society
21	David Zimmerman and wife from Schwändi	Schwändi
22	Cemetery lot	Society
23	Heinrich Geiger of Engi	Engi
24		Society
25	Niklaus Elmer	Elm
26	Heinrich Zimmerman (David's son)	Schwändi
27	Peter Kläsi	Luchsingen
28	Mathias Speich	Luchsingen
29	Mathias Vögeli	Rüti
30	Rudolf Kundert of Rüti sold to Caspar Blum, Bilten	Rüti

-- Document courtesy Gemeindecarchiv Schwanden

was compensated.⁵⁵ Many of the colonists objected to that and the issue of paying for the land became very contentious and was one of the reasons that led to the resignation of Johann Jacob Tschudy as lead agent for the Society. Fridolin Egger eventually was his official replacement.

On April 8, 1855, Egger and Streiff sent a letter to Emigration Society officials focusing on the land situation in New Bilten. "At each public opportunity we suffer insults and offenses of various kinds, and a number of the colonists will never stop," they wrote. "The reason for this letter is that a letter is supposed to have arrived in the last days from the municipality of Bilten. It expressed an order that members

of this municipality are not authorized to have any direct relation with Egger and Streiff and are not obligated to pay for the surveyed land. They reproach us because we can show that we have raised all the sums for Bilten. The rumor closes with the unjust allegation that we raised the money – and also the forest money – only for our interest and the proceeds are not going to either the Society or the municipalities but rather remain in our pockets. One even claims to have received letters confirming this, but we are sure that those houses had no letters. If we acted wrongly for the community of

⁵⁵ Documents in Emigration Society files archived in the museum at the Pulverturm in Schwanden, Canton Glarus, Switzerland, include a bill to Bilten for 10 lots, dated March 17, 1847; a notation from April 1853 saying that land not paid for within the 10-year period would revert to Bilten ownership; an August 1854 letter from Bilten to the society saying that the Bilten colonists have until 1857 to repay the village for the land and another from 1855 saying the colonists still had not paid and Bilten would like to see some money. Other documents show the repayment issue was still unsettled in 1863.

Bilten, we must have misunderstood your instruction that says: 'All lot users have until March 1855 to become paid up, and Bilten is to be treated the same as New Glarus or other communities'.⁵⁶



Fridolin Egger

Of the seven families at New Bilten who obtained their land, most also purchased adjacent plots. Original Biltners obtaining the land were: Johann Caspar Becker, 20 acres (Plot 12); Johann Jacob Becker, 40 acres (Plots 1 and 22); Johann Peter Blum, 60 acres (Plots 15 and two adjacent plots); Johann Caspar Blum, 60 acres (Plots 10 and two adjacent plots); Johann Rudolph Blum, 40 acres (Plots 19 and 20); Oswald Blum, 20 acres (Plot 14); and Johannes Oswald, 40 acres (Plots 11 and 23). All of those settlers except Johann Caspar Becker also purchased colony woodlots in Sections 26 and 27 in the Town of New Glarus. A listing made prior to the sales showed that two of the families owed back property taxes to the Emigration Society: Johann Peter Blum, \$2, and Emanuel Blum,

\$1.98. Recorded land deeds show that generally the same \$1.25 an acre (\$25 for a 20-acre plot) was paid for the property, but whether the purchaser actually paid cash or whether the amount was a credit on the Emigration Society books from the colonist's home community is not known.⁵⁷

Religious feelings continued to play an important role in the community in the 1850s. The evangelical preachers were still visiting the area and holding meetings in homes and in the new schoolhouses. At New Glarus, a German Evangelical Association congregation began to evolve under the leadership of Rev. Andrew Tarnutzer, a single Swiss clergyman in his 20s. That group included some of the New Bilten settlers. In 1859, the congregation built a frame church building on land donated by Henry Hoesly on his farm southwest of New Glarus. Even though some of the followers of the evangelical faith were among the leading citizens in the Swiss colony, there was animosity towards them at first so the group chose to build outside of the village. Their church building was only a couple of miles from New Bilten. Johannes Oswald, who nine years earlier was on the first council of Swiss Church, was the first *schatzmeister* (treasurer) of the evangelical group. Other Biltners participating in the congregation's early years were the families of Caspar Blum, Jakob Blum, Peter Blum, and Peter Elmer. The group formally incorporated as Pisgah Evangelical Church on Feb. 8, 1863, with Rev. John Hammeter as pastor.⁵⁸

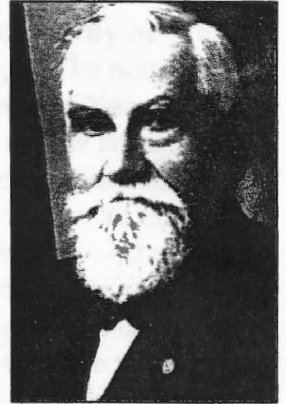
⁵⁶ *Die Welt ist hier weit*. Translated from pages 107-109.

⁵⁷ Purchasers of the remaining 20-acre plots were Abraham Straub, Fridolin Oprecht, Peter Luchsinger, Joshua Wild, George Zwicky, Kaspar Wohlwend, and Fridolin Zwicky. Deeds for six plots were not located, although plat maps show Johann Caspar Becker ended up with Plot 12. Land sales began in 1852 and the final deeds were issued in January of 1856.

⁵⁸ *New Glarus Post*, Oct. 28, 1939, P. 1. Article on 50th anniversary of the former Evangelical United Brethren church building in New Glarus. After opposition faded the congregation obtained land in the village and moved their old church building to the new site. (Joshua Wild's diary notes that it was "dragged" into New Glarus in November of 1865.) The original building was replaced in 1889 with the structure that now houses the Masonic Lodge. Other officers at the beginning were Heinrich Hösli,

Civil War and the Beginning of the Cheese Industry

The next decade was a time of great changes. As the 1860s began, the federal census showed a pronounced difference on the New Bilten farms – many of the families now had at least one team of horses and all had the beginnings of a dairy herd. Besides the ubiquitous large production of butter, at least 10 families were making cheese (especially Jacob Sigrist, Margaret Blumer [Adam Blumer's widow and family], and Johann Caspar Blum). Everyone was growing wheat, with Peter Blum, Caspar Oswald and Jacob Blum the largest producers. Peter Blum also had the largest crops of corn and potatoes, Margaret Blumer the largest crop of oats, and Rudolph Salmen harvested the most hay. Jacob Becker and Fridolin Oprecht were raising significant amounts of barley. The values of the farms had generally increased to about \$10 to \$12 an acre.⁵⁹



As a child, Fred Bloom (Fridolin Blum) helped on his father Peter's farm

Soon the Civil War touched the New Bilten community as it did every part of the nation. Overall, Green County's Swiss colony provided about 100 soldiers to the Northern side during the war, with five of those men having come as children with the original New Bilten settlers. They all enlisted in October of 1861 in the 9th Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The Biltners were Caspar Blum, Fridolin Blum, Jacob Blum, John Blum, and Rudolph Blum. Quite a few others from the Swiss colony were also in the regiment, including John Blumer, whose father farmed at the north edge of the New Bilten land. The 9th, organized in Milwaukee, was the first of two German-speaking units in Wisconsin. The regiment moved out in January of 1862, going by train through Chicago and on to Quincy, Ill. From there they marched across the Mississippi on the ice and then were shipped in railroad cattle cars to Leavenworth. Shortly after, they marched 160 miles to Fort Scott and later to Baxter Springs. Muster rolls show that many in the regiment were sick for lengthy periods. Companies C and K returned to Wisconsin on furlough early in February of 1864.⁶⁰

superintendent, and Peter Jenny, secretary. Copies of some of the early church records are in the archives of the New Glarus Historical Society.

⁵⁹ United States Census Schedule 4 – Production of Agriculture, Town of Washington, Green County, Wis., June 18-19, 1860. At this point the largest farms were owned by Margaret Blumer, Florian Arzethauser, Caspar Oswald, Fridolin Oprecht, and Fridolin Blum. See comparisons on Page 27.

⁶⁰ Many of the regiment's illnesses were due to the incompetence of the unit's first commander, Col. Wier. He marched the troops without supplies or forage into rebel Indian country and left his communications in possession of the enemy. At the request of subordinate officers, Col. Frederick Salomon arrested Col. Wier and took command. When Salomon was promoted to brigadier general and headed the First Brigade of the "Army of the Frontier," Col. Charles Salomon was put in charge of the regiment. Several of the companies took part in a number of skirmishes with the Confederates. In July of 1863 the regiment moved to St. Louis by railroad and was engaged in guard duty until going to Little Rock in November where they went into winter quarters. Those whose terms of service expired in November of 1864 were shipped back to Milwaukee to be mustered out. Details from E. B. Quiner's *The Military History of Wisconsin in the War for the Union*. Clark and Co., Chicago, Ill., 1866, Pp. 540-547.

Other Swiss from the Town of Washington who enlisted in the infantry were: John Schuler and Thomas Klassy, 21st Regiment; Gottlieb Zumbrunnen, 22nd Regiment; and, near the end of the war, Adam Hefty, Fridolin Oprecht, Thomas Streiff, Jost Voegeli, Jacob Zweifel, and Fridolin Elmer in the 46th Regiment. Samuel Wittwer was with the 9th and later the 31st.⁶¹

The years following the war had their own difficulties, including a crime that no doubt seriously shocked the Swiss colony but is only obliquely reported in histories if mentioned at all. On a moonlit Sunday evening, Feb. 5, 1865, a burglar broke into the

farmhouse of Joseph Trogner shortly before midnight. The house was in the Town of New Glarus, north of New Bilten. Trogner, of German descent, came to Green County in 1848 from New York state. He was a prominent farmer and like others of more substantial means made loans within the community. He apparently had just received a large amount of cash. According to later testimony given by his wife, Elisabeth, the intruder entered the couple's

downstairs bedroom and upon making a noise awoke her and her husband. The intruder then struck Mr. Trogner on the head four or five times, apparently with an ax. Mrs. Trogner was struck on her right arm and hip and she feigned that she was dead. The intruder then took a key out of her husband's pants and unlocked a bureau drawer and took about \$1,000. When Mr. Trogner started moving, he was attacked again. The couple's oldest daughter, Elizabeth, testified that she was awakened by the noise and witnessed the events by looking through a stovepipe hole from her upstairs bedroom. Shortly after, Fridolin Blum was arrested for the crime and held in the county jail under \$1,500 bond. Blum, a recently returned Union Army veteran, was 7 years old when he came to New Bilten with his parents Johannes and Anna Blum in the original immigration. Both Mrs. Trogner and the daughter testified that they recognized Blum, although neither had a clear view of him. Blum was later convicted and sentenced to 12 years in the Waupun State Prison. Wisconsin's Gov. William Robert Taylor pardoned Blum after he served 10 years. Census reports show that Blum later lived in the Dakotas.

⁶¹ There are various lists of the veterans, including in Bingham's *History of Green County, Wisconsin*. One soldier from the Town of Washington, John Becker, who at first blush might appear to be from the Swiss colony, was the son of Barney Becker who was of German heritage. John was killed in a battle at Dallas, Ga.

THE SENTINEL.
TOWN AND COUNTY.
Wednesday Morning, February 16.

The New Glarus Treasury.
In the account which we published last week of the burglary in New Glarus, with its horrid accompaniment, there were some inaccuracies, which we will correct to-day. We stated that the burglar entered a room up stairs, in which a young girl was sleeping, and took the money therefrom, and that he made no assault on any one, until Mr. Troegner attempted to stop him as he came down the stairs. Later information shows that this was incorrect—that the burglar first entered the room where the old people were sleeping, on the first floor, and the girl was a spectator of what took place (so far as she could be in the dim light) by looking through a stove-pipe hole in the floor from the room above. On the first sound made by the old people, the burglar struck them with an ax, which he had brought in with him, and did not cease until he had silenced them. Mr. Troegner's skull and face are even worse mangled than we stated last week, and we presume there is no probability of his recovery, though he was still alive last Saturday. Mrs. Troegner's arm was broken in several places, and she was otherwise

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INTERESTING TO FARMERS.—Mr. J. B. Scovell, at his warehouse, south of the railroad depot, has a choice lot of Minnesota Seed Wheat for sale. Also, bags of every variety. See his advertisement.

PERSONAL.—Col. Bindliff arrived home Monday evening on a brief furlough. Judging from his appearance, he bears camp life well.

Lieut. Carr left for Madison yesterday morning with some 20 men for his company—making in all 100 men for his company, beside officers. We learn that the regiment to which he belongs, the 46th, is nearly full, 400 or more being in camp.

DISSOLUTION.—Messrs. Carpenter & Cook, who have been running the Monroe store in company for some months past,

The Trogners survived, with Mr. Trogner dying in Monroe in 1888 at age 86. Three of the Trogner's sons had served in the Civil War, with one dying of an illness and another being wounded in battles near Atlanta.⁶²

Another difficulty was the continued problem with wheat harvests in Wisconsin, where chinch bugs were limiting the crops. It was into this situation that the arrival in Green County of cheese maker Niklaus Gerber provided a timely solution. Gerber, who learned to make cheese in Switzerland and had worked in upstate New York for a number of years, set up the area's first cheese factory in 1868 on the Albert Babler farm in Meadow Valley, north of New Bilten. Babler was an enterprising farmer who had built what has been termed the area's first true cow barn, which could house 15 cows. It was that larger herd that attracted Gerber. The factory produced limburger cheese from milk from six farmers. The following year Gerber set up another factory on Fridolin Streiff's farm, this one making Emmenthaler-style cheese (Swiss cheese).⁶³



The early cheese makers and their tools and supplies (including the first rennet – the enzyme add to the milk to enhance curdling) all came from Switzerland. A key part of Gerber's contribution was the idea of a cooperative factory and that quickly became popular in the area. Cheese making eliminated the need to grow wheat for income, and the Bilten farmers are credited with providing much of the stimulus. Likewise, the Berners were interested because they came from the region of the Emme River – the *Emmenthal* – where “Swiss” cheese in the form of large wheels originated. In the early years the cheese making season lasted from spring, when the cows went out to pasture, until around the end of October when the cattle were back in the barns. This

⁶² “The New Glarus Tragedy,” *Monroe Sentinel*, Feb. 15, 1868, P.4. The weekly paper published the most comprehensive account of the events based on sworn testimony before County Judge Brooks Dunwiddie. The incident had been reported the week before under the heading “Horrible Affair,” but some of the initial information was inaccurate. Both accounts were reprinted in Butterfield's *History of Green County*, Pp. 558-562. Later events were recounted on Mar. 28, 1888, when the *Monroe Sentinel* reported Mr. Trogner's death. Trogner immigrated to the U.S. from Germany in 1830 and lived in Lewis County, New York, for 18 years. The sons who served in the Union army were Joseph D., a private in the 16th Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment who died of illness at Cairo, Ill., on May 5, 1864; John H., also a private in the 16th Wisconsin, who was wounded July 21, 1864, in the battles of Kennesaw Mountain and Atlanta and after recuperation at Camp Randall in Madison farmed in Green County and then worked at the flour mill in Monticello; and George W., a private in the 38th Regiment, who went to the North Woods after the war, established the Neillsville Planing Mills and was widely known for his woodworking and carpentry firms. Gov. Taylor, a Democrat, served one term from 1864-1866. The Rolph family of Monticello are descendants of the Trogners' daughter Mary.

⁶³ The first cheesemaking was done in a log structure and home cellars were used for curing. The next year a new building with a curing cellar was erected nearby. Gerber remained at the Babler factory long enough to train John Pfund to make limburger. At the Freitag factory the patrons besides Dietrich Freitag were Johannes Blumer, Melchior Schlittler, Dietrich Stauffacher and Jost Voegeli – all neighbors in the valley. Gerber ran that operation until the farmers took it over in 1875. In both cases historical markers are all that remain of the pioneering cheese operations.

Comparison of Agricultural Data

From Schedule 4 of United States Census reports

	Biltners			Caspar Becker -Elmer*		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
Acres of Improved Land	83	1,440	2,060	12	90	280
Acres of Unimproved Land	413	1,232	530	38	20	120
<i>Total Acreage</i>	496	2,672	2,590	50	110	400
Value of Farming Implements and Machinery	\$26	\$1,072	\$3,520		\$75	\$700
Horses	0	26	45			6
Milch Cows	9	100	116	1	6	12
Working Oxen	12	22	2	2	2	
Other Cattle	8	99	119	2	7	16
Sheep		0	18			
Swine	24	84	121	5	6	22
<i>Value of Livestock</i>	\$454	\$4,759	\$10,565	\$50	\$238	\$1,340
Wool		30	54			
Wheat (bushels)		3,792	4,735		165	425
Indian Corn (bushels)		1,895	2,594		60	400
Oats (bushels)		1,132	4,160		50	400
Irish Potatoes (bushels)	69	1,525	750	16	60	100
Barley (bushels)		44	120			
Hay (tons)	80	601	441	10	20	60
Butter	685	5,900	9,900	110	200	1,400
Cheese		2,640				
Value of Animals Slaughtered	\$60	\$1,189	\$3,080	\$12	\$40	\$500

*Caspar Becker was a New Biltren settler who remained on his land and was a successful farmer

was before the days of silos and winter feed was not good, so milk production slumped and a lot of the dairy cattle were allowed to “go dry” until the next birthing.⁶⁴

Within several years other factories began operating near the *Biltental* and the *Bernertal*. Records show factories on the farms of Caspar Becker (near the south line of Section 2, south of Hefty Rd.), R. Karlen (Section 16 along Highway N south of the town hall, making Swiss), John Gange (Section 27, near the Loveland School, making American), and Martin Zumbrunnen (the northwest part of Section 34, making limburger). The cheesemaker at the Zumbrunnen factory was Gottlieb Beller (or more correctly, Bähler), a Berner who came to America at age 17. He later made cheese at factories southeast of Monroe and then was the first cheese dealer to locate in Monroe. In 1878 he joined with Gerber, Edward Ruegger and Gottlieb Wittwer in forming the Green County Cheese Manufacturing Co., but lost everything in the crash of the 1880s. Beller had been the first to begin winter speculating in 1879 when there was a surplus of Swiss cheese and the profits declined. He bought up Swiss cheese, put it in an old brewery storage area and cared for it during the winter months. In spring when the market revived he received high prices. While his venture was ridiculed at first, others soon followed.⁶⁵

The evangelical Christians in the Town of Washington finally organized their own church. After the funeral of Jacob Zumbrunnen in 1869, an evangelical church class formed and met at first at the Loveland School. Others appear to have continued to meet closer to the *Biltental* at the Blumer School on Dividing Ridge Rd. Pastors from Monroe, apparently both Reformed and Evangelical, tended to the flocks. Then the Swiss in the area, even though they had somewhat different religious views, joined together to build a church building in 1874. Their building, known informally as the Berner church, was built on land owned by Martin Zumbrunnen (Jacob’s son) near the intersection of today’s Loveland Rd. and Highway N.

The church unity didn’t last long. Records are scarce and memories have faded on what exactly happened, but apparently it was similar to something that already had occurred in Monroe: There was an internal dispute, with some favoring continued use of the Heidelberg Catechism, a traditional explanation of the core of the Reformed Church faith. At Monroe, people favoring that catechism left to join with those building a new sanctuary for St. John’s Reformed congregation. In the Town of Washington, those believers organized Reformation Church, erecting their first building in 1876 along today’s Church Rd. The Emmanuel Evangelical Association continued to use the Berner church, but by 1908 the congregation was down to 12 members. The building was abandoned as a house of worship in 1915 – an Evangelical congregation soon emerged in Monticello – and the ownership was transferred to Otto Loveland in 1918. The church

⁶⁴ Five other farmers besides Babler provide milk, from a total of less than 50 cows. The farmers were Christopher Babler, Johann Caspar Blum Jr., Andrew Hoesly, Balthazar Kundert, and George Legler. The first factories were built by the farmers and leased to the cheesemakers, who bought the milk at a fixed price. At other times, the farmers hired the cheesemaker and divided the net proceeds.

⁶⁵ “Swiss Cheeseland,” *Monroe Evening Times*, Oct. 22-25, 1949, a series of articles marking the 80th anniversary of cheese making in Green County.



The former 'Berner church' can still be seen along Highway N and Loveland Rd.

building is now a farm shed -- though still bearing the inscription *Evangelisch Kirche* above the shed door.⁶⁶

Reformation church, the surviving congregation, was closely linked with Zwingli Reformed Church in Monticello for many years. The congregation's original building was destroyed by fire in 1965. A new building was constructed and Reformation remains an active United Church of Christ congregation in the Town of Washington. There is a cemetery adjacent to Reformation Church, with many of the pioneer Swiss buried there. Others are buried in Union Cemetery, along Loveland Rd., which was the Evangelical Association cemetery. That burial site apparently was also used by members of the former Center Methodist Episcopal Church, which once existed nearby on Center Rd.

The Biltental farms continued to be expanded and that growth is reflected in statistics from the 1870 census. Adam Blumer (Jr.) had the largest dairy herd, milking 22 cows, followed by Peter Blum with 12 and Fridolin Blum-Stuessy and Caspar Becker, both with 10. Jacob Becker and Caspar Becker appear to have cultivated the most additional land. Only Werner Blum was still using oxen. Everyone else had at least one

⁶⁶ *Fostering Faith: A Search for Berner Church*. This monograph by Ulonda Dietmeier, written for the United Methodist Church of Monroe, collects various written records and recollections about the Berner church. A copy is in the Monticello Historical Society archives. The former church is near the intersection of Highway N and Loveland Rd. One old county plat map erroneously lists the building as a German Lutheran church. Some members of the Berner church joined with members of the former Adventist and Methodist congregations in Monticello to form Peace Evangelical Church. That later became Grace church and the congregation was eventually affiliated with the Evangelical United Brethren Church until disbanding in the 1970s. The former Grace church building, originally used by the Advent Church, is at the west side of the old cemetery in Monticello.

team of horses with Adam Blumer, Caspar Becker and Christian Schuler all having three teams. Fridolin Blum-Stuessy was the sheep raiser in the community, having a flock of 18. While we don't know where he sold the wool, a woolen mill had opened east of Monticello in 1866. Most everyone was still harvesting a significant amount of wheat, but oats and corn and hay crops were expanding.

Also changing was the Biltner's integration into local government. Since the organization of town government in 1849 following statehood, their next-door neighbor Elijah Roby was often the town chairman. As the immigrants and their children became more Americanized, some took up roles in local government. Fridolin Bloom Jr. served as town clerk for four years in the 1860s. Jacob Hefty and Jacob Frautschy held the post in the following years. Adam Blumer was appointed chairman in the 1870s to fill an unexpired term and was followed by Fridolin Blum. Fred K. Hefty was a long time county board member and served in the state Assembly.

The uniqueness of New Glarus and New Bilten attracted James D. Butler, a former University of Wisconsin classics professor and widely known lecturer. In the 1870s he wrote about the settlement for the *Chicago Times*:

“A second colony was sent out from Old Glarus in 1847, that is only two years after the first, and before its prosperity was, in its own estimation, well-assured. Both have done well, ‘like kindred drops have commingled into one,’ and have been reinforced by their countrymen migrating individually. The result is that the census of 1870 shows that 1,247 natives of Switzerland were then living in Green County. Their descendants are there so numerous that one-seventh of the population is said to be of Swiss origin.... The 22 20-acre lots within which the colony began have expanded to more than 30,000 acres, all in one body – with manifold outlying farms.”

Butler also noted the early purchase of dairy cows :

“With this start they began cattle-raising and cheese-making, -- the line of work in which they and their fathers, even to the years of many generations, had been engaged. Nothing less than heredity can account for their skill. Their stock and dairy products became famous and lucrative. Such harvests enrich the land which others exhaust.”⁶⁷

While the population of New Bilten continued to change and the original settlers moved away or passed away, the area increasingly became a strong dairy farming region.

⁶⁷ *Chicago Times*, Jan. 7, 1878. A follow-up article with additional detail about the colony's customs ran on Feb. 16, 1878, in the *Madison Wisconsin State Journal*. Butler, who was also a Congregational minister, had joined the Madison faculty in 1858 when it totaled seven people. He held the position until 1867 when the university was reorganized, but he liked Madison so much that he remained there. He traveled extensively and lectured and wrote about his travels and his varied interests. He died in 1905. The morning *Chicago Times* was a Democratic newspaper begun in 1854 by supporters of Steven A. Douglas. By the turn of the century it had been merged into other newspapers.

By 1879, the Swiss community's historian and state legislator John Luchsinger could write that "the Bilten settlement has shared with the main colony in reputation for thrift and industry; and the people, as a class, are doing well." Cheese factories were everywhere, including – in addition to those listed earlier -- factories on the farms of Thomas Hefty, G. Wittwer, J. C. Marty, Adam Blumer, Dick and Karlen, and John Weismiller. Some of the farms had grown quite large by Wisconsin standards.⁶⁸

New Bilten also began to reflect the universal pattern of American migration, with its coexistence of "movers" and "stickers." The majority of Bilten immigrants farmed for a time and then became transient, moving on to new opportunities in the region or hearing the call to pick up and move further west. The others persisted on the land, intermarried and passed on their farms to their children.⁶⁹

Several early Bilten emigrants were buried in the pioneer cemetery located on the south lawn of the Swiss United Church of Christ in New Glarus. Of those burials, one tombstone remains. This is the marker for Ursula (Walliser) Blum Salmen and the marker can be seen at the Swiss Historical Village museum in New Glarus. The other Bilten settlement burials in New Glarus were Barbara Blum-Zwicki, Johannes Blum-Laager, Oswald Blum-Hefti, Verena Blum-Luchsinger, Adam Blumer-Blum, Anna Wittenwyler-Adank, Kaspar Salmen-Lienhard, and children Maria Becker, Jacob Blum, Karl Otto Kaderly, and Regula Oprecht.⁷⁰

As the years moved on into the 20th Century, the last of the 1847 pioneers died. Ownership of some farms stayed within the family for another generation or two, but it appears that none of the farmland is owned by descendants of the original group. And another century later the name that those hearty pioneers applied to their new home has also become but a memory.

⁶⁸ In the 1920s there were 152 factories in Green County, with half producing Swiss cheese. The number dropped to 125 by the 1930s.

⁶⁹ Geoffrey C. Ward. *The West*. Back Bay Books. 1996 Boston. P. 267. The terms "movers" and "stickers" are used as part of a discussion of evolving communities as told in a PBS TV documentary series on the American West.

⁷⁰ See *Burials in the Pioneer Cemetery at New Glarus* by Duane H. Freitag, 2003.

Family Detail

The assimilation of New Bilten into the surrounding communities can be observed by looking more closely at the individual families who left Switzerland together in the spring of 1847 as well as those Biltners who settled in later years. Today these people have hundreds of descendents remaining in the Green County area, as well as countless others scattered throughout the world.

The handwritten ship manifest (including ages at the time) lists the following families as emigrating together:

1. **Johann Caspar Becker, 34, and Anna Elmer, 24.** Caspar and Anna farmed in the New Bilten area for 40 years until retiring to Monticello. They were assigned Plot 12 in the northeast quarter of Section 10 (along today's Little Sugar Lane) and purchased additional land in the area. The couple had married earlier in the year and Anna was pregnant during the emigration, giving birth to their first child, Jacob, on Sept. 21, 1847 – the first birth here among the New Bilten settlement. Agricultural census records show their significant achievements at farming. While they had only 12 acres of cultivated land in 1850, by 1860 it was up to 90 acres and then jumped to 280 acres by 1870. The couple started with one milk cow and by 1870 had 12; their ox team had given way to three teams of horses. Oats, wheat, hay and corn were their principal crops. They also raised a large number of hogs. Johann Caspar died in 1891, shortly after retiring to Monticello. Anna died in 1915 at age 90, living an independent and healthy life until the end. Her obituary noted that she rose as usual on the morning



John Rudolph Blum, Caspar and Anna's son-in-law, at his bar in Monticello, now the Boar's Nest. (See also later entry under Blum's name.)

of her death, but by the end of the day she died of advanced age leaving numerous descendents including two great-great grandchildren. Johann Caspar and Anna are buried in the old Monticello cemetery. Johann Caspar and Anna's children were Jacob, who married Rosina Hefty; Caspar, who married Katharina Zopfi; Peter, who married Anna Elmer; John, who married MaryAnn Karlen; Anna, who first married Johann Rudolf Blum and after his death Christian Streiff; Rosina, who married Jacob Marty; and Verena, who married David Zimmerman.⁷¹

⁷¹ Becker von Bilten Nr. 15 (genealogy records of Landesarchiv in Glarus, Switzerland). Emigration Society land records from 1852 show they were assigned Plot 12 and an 1861 plat map shows them owning the land, however the deed appears to not have been recorded.

2. **Johann Jacob Becker**, 45, and **Anna Barbara Wittenwyler**, 35. They were assigned Plot 2 in the southeast quarter of Section 3, but by 1852 they had already sold their rights to that land. However, they did purchase two other separated 20-acre units from the Emigration Society. Both were south of today's Hefty Rd. By 1860 they had 100 acres under cultivation and by 1870 that grew to 160. Their milking herd was up to 10 by 1870, but they had only one team of horses to replace their oxen. Anna Barbara was born in 1812 in the Canton St. Gallen village of Wildhaus (the birthplace of the Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli in 1484). Their three children and ages at the time of the immigration were: **Anna Barbara**, 13; **Anna**, 11; and **Caspar**, 5. Many members of this family eventually migrated further west to the State of Oregon. Those going to Oregon, probably after the Civil War, included the patriarch Johann Jacob (who died there in 1879); Anna Barbara and her husband, Jacob Kaderly; and Caspar and his wife, Anna Schindler. Caspar and Anna Becker are buried in Belle Passi Cemetery in Woodburn, Oregon. Daughter Anna married Caspar Oswald, son of fellow immigrant Johannes Oswald (#15). They resided in Monroe, Wis. where she died in 1872. She is buried in Monroe's Greenwood Cemetery.⁷²
3. **Johann Peter Becker**, 48, and **Mengadina Luchsinger**, 50+. They obtained Plot 9 in Section 3, south of Hefty Road, but do not show up in any agricultural census and never did buy any of the land. Their three daughters **Rosina**, 18, **Mengadina**, 15, and **Anna**, 10, accompanied them on their journey. Daughter Mengadina married Fridolin Oprecht in 1850 and they farmed in the area for a period of time but later moved to San Jose, California.
4. **Emanuel Blum**, 27, and **Salome Lienhard**, 22. This family was the first of the New Bilten settlers to move away from Green County, going to Dubuque, Iowa, before the 1850 census. The couple was assigned Plot 13 but abandoned it. Their two children and their ages at the time of the immigration were: **Barbara**, 4, and **Magdalena**, 1. Several more children were born in America. Descendents later lived in towns such as Cassville and Potosi, Wis., and Balltown, Iowa. It is not known when Emanuel died. Salome died in 1906. A great-grandson, Harold George Blum, died in Italy in World War II.⁷³
5. **Fridolin Blum**, 45, and **Anna Scharer**, 45. They were assigned Plot 15 in the southeast corner of Section 2 and purchased and farmed that and additional land in that area until at least the 1860s. The 1850 census lists Fridolin as a carpenter and the oldest son, Peter, as a farmer. No agricultural statistics were listed. Their children at the time of the immigration were: **Peter**, 17, **Heinrich**, 8, and **Katharina**, 2. Peter was a child from Fridolin's first marriage in Bilten to Salome

⁷² Becker von Bilten Nr. 14. Deed dated May 15, 1855, and recorded in Vol. 12, P. 49, transferred the S½ of NE¼ of SE¼ of Section 3 and the S½ of SW¼ of SW¼ of Section 2 (including notation of a private road along the east side and land for a "graveyard as it was used before this date.") Jacob paid \$15.19 for his 3 1/3 acre woodlot in the SW¼ of Section 27, Town of New Glarus (along Gmur Rd.) The deed is dated March 4, 1855, and recorded in Vol. 12, P. 48.

⁷³ Blum von Bilten Nr. 119. Additional family information provided by descendent Linda Appenzeller, Platteville, Wis.

Aebli. Peter married Rosina Blum (of the Blum family #6) and they raised a large family of more than a dozen children in the Town of Jordan. Rosina died in 1881 and Peter followed a decade later, leaving two destitute minor children. Heinrich married Katharina Blum (of the Fridolin Blum family listed later under other immigrants) and Katharina married Balthasar Schindler of Monroe. Several members of this family spelled their name Bloom.⁷⁴

6. **Jacob Blum, 38, and Dorothea Becker, 41.** They were assigned Plot 16 but when the land was sold they did not purchase it. They immigrated with three children: **Caspar, 12, Rosina, 10, and Jacob, 8.** Rosina married Peter Blum (of the Blum family #5) and they had 14 children. Jacob married Susanna Scheron, the widow of Sgt. Friedrich Geisser, a Civil War casualty at Gettysburg. Jacob and Susanna had at least 10 children.⁷⁵
7. **Johann Caspar Blum, 42, and Anna Maria Blum, 44.** The couple was assigned Plot 10, along the south side of today's Hefty Rd., and when the Emigration Society sold the land they purchased that property and the 20-acre units to the east and west. By 1860 they had 80 acres under cultivation, a team of horses, six cows and six hogs. By the late 1860s, Johann Caspar Sr. and Jr. were farming in the Town of New Glarus and in 1868 supplied milk to the Limburger cheese factory started by Nic Gerber on the Albert Babler farm. Their hired man in 1870 was 16-year-old J. C. Steinmann, later a prominent Monticello resident. Three children accompanied Johann Caspar and Anna Maria to America – **Johann Rudolf, 16, Anna Maria, 13, and Johann Caspar, 7.** Johann Rudolf married Katharina Allenbrand, Anna Maria married Jacob Trukenbrod, and Johann Caspar married Rosina Streiff. The first two lived in Monroe, the latter in New Glarus. Barbara Werndli, who died 1986 in New Glarus at the age of 107, was a daughter of Johann Caspar and Rosina Blum.⁷⁶
8. **Johann Melchior Blum, 65, and Anna Elisabeth Pfändler, 50.** He died in 1847, possibly even before the group arrived here. An 1852 listing of the plots notes that his widow held a right to Plot 20 but the Emigration Society controlled the land. They were the parents of Johann Rudolf Blum (#10).⁷⁷
9. **Johann Peter Blum, 39, and Maria Elisabeth Schmidter, 34.** They obtained Plot 7 in Section 2 north of Hefty Rd. When the land was sold they purchased another adjacent 40 acres. By 1870 they had 200 acres under cultivation, 13 cows and 12 other cattle, 10 hogs and three teams of horses. Their children at the time of the emigration were: **Jacob, 13, Fridolin, 11, Caspar, 9, Peter, 6, and Katharina, 3.** Son Caspar married Margaret Elmer, daughter of Johann Peter and

⁷⁴ Blum von Bilten Nr. 101. The deed for the original plot, the E½ of SE¼ of SE¼ Section 2 was not located. Additional family information from *The Blum Family*, compiled by descendent Dawn M. Wolfe Bischoff in 1995.

⁷⁵ Blum von Bilten Nr. 110. Their plot was the S½ of NW¼ of SW¼ of Section 2. It was initially purchased by Fridolin Oprecht (Vol. 10, P. 632).

⁷⁶ Blum von Bilten Nr. 103.

⁷⁷ Blum von Bilten Nr. 78.

Anna Katharina Elmer (#14). Son Jacob married Elsbeth Babler of New Glarus. She was a daughter of Fridolin and Dorothea Babler, original settlers of New Glarus. Son Fridolin (generally referenced as Frederick) married Mary Ann Roby. After Mary Ann's early death Frederick married her sister Barbara Roby. (The Roby sisters were daughters of Elijah Roby.) Jacob and Frederick Blum operated a mercantile store in New Glarus from 1867 until 1872 when the store burned. It was a total loss and there was reportedly no insurance. Around 1873 (after the store fire) these Blum families moved on to Nobles County, Minn. Jacob and Elsbeth eventually settled in the Tillamook, Ore. area where their descendents still are found.⁷⁸

10. **Johann Rudolf Blum, 38, and Verena Luchsinger, 29.** They received Plot 19 and in 1855 they purchased that and the 20 acres to the east, which had been assigned to his parents (today it's the southeast corner of the intersection of Washington Rd. and Burr Oak Ln.) By 1860 they were cultivating 70 acres (raising more corn than most) and had a team of oxen and six 6 cows. Johann Rudolf was married three times and Verena was his second wife and mother of his children. They immigrated with two children: **Johann Melchior, 7, and Elizabeth, 2.** Johann Melchior died in 1863. Another daughter, Verena, married Dietrich Norder. In 1900 Johann Rudolf was living with the Norders in Monroe, where he died a year later.⁷⁹
11. **Johannes Blum, 42, and Anna Laager, 40.** They were assigned Plot 8, which was a little south of Hefty Rd. in Section 3. However, they sold their rights to that land to Fridolin Oprecht who apparently then rented it to Peter Becker. Johannes was a cooper in Bilten. He married Anna in 1830 and brought their three children with them: **Anna, 14, Barbara, 12, and Fridolin, 7.** Daughter Anna was recorded as being in the first confirmation class in the New Glarus Swiss Reformed Church in 1851. Glarus records indicate that daughter Barbara (or sometimes referenced as Anna Barbara) married an English-born settler by the name of Emanuel George. They lived in the Town of York and later in Crawford County near Mt. Sterling, Wis. Records of Fridolin are not precise, but he is believed to be the man who assaulted and burglarized Joseph Trogner. After his release from prison, Fridolin apparently lived and died in South Dakota. Johannes died in 1869 and was buried in the New Glarus pioneer cemetery. Wife Anna (Laager) Blum died in the Green County Poor Farm in 1879. There is no further information on daughter Anna.⁸⁰
12. **Oswald Blum, 44, and Barbara Hefti, 40.** They were assigned Plot 6, which they purchased in 1855. The land is in the southern part of Section 2, along today's

⁷⁸ Blum von Bilten Nr. 109. Additional family information from descendent Barbara Nelson of Forest Lake, Minn. David Bloom, a widely known NBC-TV reporter who died in 2003 as a result of deep vein thrombosis while covering the war in Iraq, was a descendant of this couple.

⁷⁹ Blum von Bilten Nr. 107. The SW¹/₄ of the NW¹/₄ of Section 12 was transferred Feb. 26, 1855, in a deed recorded in Vol. 11, P. 321.

⁸⁰ Blum von Bilten Nr. 104. Additional family information from descendant Sharon Lass Field of Cheyenne, Wy.

Burr Oak Lane. Oswald was first married to Verena Iselin and they had two sons, Johann Rudolf and Fridolin. Fridolin married Anna Dorothea Stuessy and farmed in the same area. After Verena's death, Oswald married Barbara Hefti and they had two daughters, Katharina and Barbara. Ages of the children at the time of the immigration were: **Johann Rudolf**, 21, **Fridolin**, 17(?), **Katharina**, 16, and **Barbara**, 15. Except for son Fridolin, no additional information was located about the other children. However, there is circumstantial evidence that the Barbara Blum who married Emanuel George (see #11 above) may be daughter Barbara from the Oswald Blum family.⁸¹

13. **M. Blum**, 30, and **Anna**, 24. This listing on the *Columbia* manifest does not indicate the Christian name of Mr. Blum and it remains a puzzle. It may be Meinrad Blum, who was born in 1816 and would be the same approximate age as "M. Blum". Meinrad was a half-brother of Johann Peter Blum (#9 above) and is known to have emigrated as far as Syracuse, N.Y., where he died in 1857. Syracuse would have been along the route taken by the Biltners. However, Meinrad's wife is recorded in the Glarus Landesarchiv as Elisabeth, not Anna.⁸²
14. **Johann Peter Elmer**, 26, and **Anna Katharina Wollschlegel**, 26. The couple obtained Plot 1 but abandoned it. They had been married in Bilten in 1844 and eventually had six children after arriving in America. In 1850, Peter Elmore (sic) was a blacksmith in Galena, Ill. They returned to New Bilten in 1853, buying land in Sections 8 and 9, but then losing that around 1860. Johann Peter apparently left the family or died about 1859, and Anna Katharina raised the children on a small piece of property about 3 miles west of Monticello. She died in the 1870s and is buried in the Dutch Hollow Cemetery. Their children were: Jacob, Margaret (married Caspar Blum of Blum family #9), Anna (married John Elmer of Dutch Hollow), Jacob Peter (married Euphemia Elmer), Henry, and Ameal (married Florence Walmer). Around 1870, Ameal Elmer, then about 10 years old, trapped three animals living in a den in one of the hills west of Monticello. Thinking they were wolves, Ameal went to Monroe and collected a \$15 bounty. Upon seeing the "wolf" pelts nailed to a shed, Ameal's older brother Peter did not have the heart to inform Ameal that his "wolves" were actually woodchucks.⁸³
15. **Johannes Oswald**, 35, and **Katharina Luchsinger**, 35. The Oswalds were assigned Plot 11 (at the end of today's Sugar River Ln.) and began a farm there, expanding it as the years went on. Johannes was on the original consistory of Swiss Church and later was involved with the German Methodists. By 1850 his parents, Johann Jakob and Anna Maria (Rosenberger) Oswald came to live with their son and family. In 1850 he already had two teams of oxen and four milk cows. In 1860 he had eight cows and a team of horses to replace the oxen. Later

⁸¹ Blum von Bilten Nr. 97. Oswald is listed as Rudolf Blum on the ship manifest.

⁸² Meinrad Blum is Blum von Bilten Nr. 124.

⁸³ Elmer von Bilten #15. The land purchase from Cyrus Woodman is recorded in Deeds Vol. 7, P. 466, and was the NW¼ of NE¼ of Section 8 and the NW¼ of NW¼ of Section 9.

Johannes and Katharina moved to Monroe, where he worked as a carpenter. Katharina died there in 1879 and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery. Glarus records say Johannes died in 1892 in Oregon (presumably the state). Their children were: **Caspar**, 12, and **Anna Maria**, 10. Caspar farmed at first near his father and later moved to Monroe, where he was the proprietor of the 21-room Monroe House. He had married Anna Becker – of Becker family #2. Later Caspar ran a bakery and restaurant on the courthouse square. Anna Maria married Heinrich Geiger of New Glarus after his first wife and children died of cholera while coming to Wisconsin.⁸⁴

16. **Caspar Salmen**, 30, and **Barbara Knobel**, 24. They were assigned Plot 14 in the southern part of Section 2, but were living in Monroe (or the Monroe area) at first according to the 1847 census. Apparently they did farm in New Bilten for a while and then at some point prior to 1860 moved on to Dodge County, Minnesota. That county, particularly around Concord and Mantorville, was being settled by Swiss people with Glarus and Bern roots and one of their communities was named Berne. Barbara and Caspar (known as Solman in Minnesota) died in 1873 and 1895, respectively, and are buried in the Evergreen Cemetery, Mantorville, Minn. It was their son **Fridolin**, 1, who had died en route to New Bilten.⁸⁵

Other Immigrant Families from Bilten

In addition to the original 1847 immigrants, and others previously mentioned, these people from Bilten were also linked to New Bilten:

Johann Georg Becker and daughter **Rosina Becker**. Johann Georg was an older brother of Dorothea (Becker) Blum and Johann Caspar, Johann Peter, and Johann Jacob Becker, all original settlers of New Bilten. He was married to Maria Magdalena Luchsinger in Bilten. Of the three children born to them only Rosina lived to adulthood. She married Abraham Kundert of the Town of Jordan. Johann Georg died in 1877 in New Glarus.

Peter J. Becker and **Anna Magdalena Stüssi**. This couple and their family immigrated to America in 1864 on the bark *Stella*. They lived in the area for a time and are recorded in the 1870 Town of Washington census. Their farm had 65 acres under cultivation, with a team of horses and three cows and four pigs. They produced 1,500 pounds of butter that year. The couple moved west to the Dakota Territory by 1876. Peter died in 1908 in Beresford, S.D., a village where many Glarner families had settled. His father, Johann Heinrich Becker, was a brother of the Becker siblings mentioned in the previous paragraph.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Oswald von Bilten Nr. 45.

⁸⁵ Salmen von Bilten Nr. 38.

⁸⁶ Becker von Bilten Nr. 17. Johann Heinrich was Becker von Bilten Nr. 11.



Location of the Bilten farm land in relation to more current land owners.

– Plat map published by Rockford Map Publishers

Fridolin Blum and Anna Becker: They and several children emigrated to the U.S. in 1866 on the *Sierra Nevada* from Le Havre to New York City. He was known as Fridolin Wagner Blum. Anna was a sister of Peter J. Becker (above) and a relative of the other Beckers in the New Bilten settlement. Some of their children stayed in the Monticello area, while others went to Swiss colonies around LuVerne, Iowa, and Dodge County, Minn. Fridolin and Anna are buried in the old Monticello cemetery. Their children were Ursula (married Heinrich Kubly), Katharina (married Heinrich Blum – of family #5 above), Anna (married Heinrich Babler), Rosina (married Heinrich Rhyner), Fred W. (married Emma Blum – of family #6), Rahel (married Jacob Baumgartner), and Magdalena (married Fred Blatti). It has been mentioned that this family immigrated via Knoxville, Tennessee. This would be an unusual route for immigrants to take, however it may make sense since Fridolin Blum's sister Rosina was married to Peter Staub. Staub was a Bilten native and became a successful businessman and later Mayor of Knoxville.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Blum von Bilten Nr. 123.

Fridolin Blum and Sybilla Kundert: These Blums left Bilten around 1865 and farmed in the Town of Washington. One of their children was Fredericka (married Fridolin Schindler). The Fridolin Blums are buried in Monroe's Greenwood Cemetery.⁸⁸

Johann Rudolf Blum and Anna Becker: Johann Rudolf emigrated from Bilten around 1864. He married Anna Becker (from Becker family #1 above) in 1873. They had three children: Johann Rudolf, Anna (married Ernst Robert) and Casper (married Della Hyde). Blum was a saloon keeper in Monticello.⁸⁹

Werner Blum: Werner Blum was the son of Heinrich Blum and Ursula Walliser of Bilten. According to his obituary, Werner Blum immigrated to the United States in the early 1850s and had worked in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Lafayette, Ind., prior to settling in the Town of Washington. In Green County, he married Barbara Zwicky, a native of Mollis, Canton Glarus, whose family had settled with the Biltners in Section 12. Werner and Barbara had 7 children – Rosina (married John Benkert), Werner (married Elsbeth Kuenzie), Fridolin (married Caroline Theiler), Ursula (married John Benkert the widower of her sister), Jacob (married Rosina Theiler), Verena (married John Blumer), and Adam. The children's marriages in this family attest to the integration of the Berner and Glarner families of the Town of Washington.⁹⁰

Melchior Marti and Anna Maria Salmen: While nearly all of the various Marti/Marty families in Green County hail from Matt or Engi in the Sernftal of Canton Glarus, this is a Bilten branch of the Marti family. The progenitor was Matheus Marti (born 1609), who became the first Marti recorded in Bilten. Melchior and Anna Maria immigrated to America in 1851 or before. According to census information, their first two children were born in New York state and the last three children were born in Wisconsin. In 1870 their 120-acre farm had 80 acres under cultivation, a team of horses and five cows and 10 hogs. Melchior and Anna Maria are buried in Washington Reformation Cemetery. Their children were Louisa (married Henry Klassy), Charles Rudolf (married Anna Legler), Johann Caspar (married Rosina Hefty), Anna (married Gottfried Karlen), and Jacob Fridolin (Maria Bertha Steiner and Barbara Legler Zentner).⁹¹

Johann Caspar Salmen and Columbina Lienhard: They were the parents of Anna Maria (Mrs. Melchior Marti above) and Johann Caspar (below). It appears that Johann Caspar Sr. died in this area in 1869 for it is recorded that he is buried in the pioneer cemetery in New Glarus in 1869. It is not known when Columbina died.

Johann Caspar Salmen, son of Johann Caspar and Columbina (above), married twice and had 16 children spanning the years 1861 to 1896. According to census data, this Salmen family was in Brookfield, Wis., in 1860 and the Town of York, Green County, in 1870. It is not known if they ever lived in the New Bilten settlement. Salmen

⁸⁸ Blum von Bilten Nr. 139.

⁸⁹ Son of Rudolf Blum (Bilten Nr. 113) and Anna Maria Oswald (a sister of Johannes Oswald #15).

⁹⁰ Blum von Bilten Nr. 137.

⁹¹ Marti von Bilten Nr. 25

later settled in Sutton, Clay County, Nebraska, where descendants still live. And like Jacob and Verena Sigrist (see below), he is buried in the Farmers Valley cemetery in Hamilton County, Nebraska.⁹²

Rudolf Salmen and Ursula Walliser: Ursula was the widow of Heinrich Blum and the mother of Werner Blum (above) and Verena Zweifel (below). In 1860 they were getting by on just 20 acres of farmland, of which 15 was cultivated. They had only two cows. Ursula died in 1874 and was buried in the New Glarus pioneer cemetery. Her tombstone, which gives her names as Ursula Walliser, is now among those saved in the New Glarus Historical Society's museum cemetery – the only Biltner in that collection of more than 40 historic headstones.⁹³

Jacob Schlittler and Waldburg Luchsinger: Little is known of this couple who show up in the 1870 Town of Washington census along with a son, Henry. Waldburg was a sister of Katharina Oswald (family #15) and these sisters are buried next to each other in Monroe's Greenwood Cemetery. The 1870 census shows they had a farm with 77 acres under cultivation, with a team of horses and four cows and four hogs.⁹⁴

Christian Schuler and Rosina Blum and Benedickt Kaderli and Maria Margaretha Blum: Rosina and Maria Margaretha were the daughters of Caspar and Maria Margaretha (Schmid) Blum of Bilten. Schuler children included Jacob (married Verena Zweifel), Mary Ann (married Fred S. Blum – grandson of Oswald #12), and John (married Maria Moritz).⁹⁵

Matthias Wittenwyler and Rosina Becker: Matthias was born in Canton St. Gallen in 1814. Rosina was also born in 1814 in Bilten. The Wittenwylers immigrated to the United States in 1853 aboard the ship *Fanny*, traveling with his mother, Anna (Adank) Wittenwyler, and sons Mathias (married Augusta Mellenthin) and Jacob (married Maria Fredericka Krueger). Another son, John Ulrich (married Anna Voegeli), was born in Wisconsin. Their farm had 168 acres under cultivation by 1870, with two teams of horses, nine cows and 15 other cattle and 10 hogs and producing one of the larger oat crops. Mathias and Rosina are both buried in the Evangelical United Brethren Cemetery at the western edge of New Glarus. Grandmother Anna was buried in the New Glarus pioneer cemetery. Rosina was a younger sister of the Beckers who were 1847 New Bilten settlers.⁹⁶

Jacob Zweifel and Verena Blum: Verena was the sister of Werner Blum (above) and the daughter of Ursula Walliser (above). The Zweifel children were Katharina (married Abner Drake), Johannes, and Ursula (married Franklin Kleckner).⁹⁷

⁹² Salmen von Bilten Nr. 34

⁹³ Salmen von Bilten Nr. 37

⁹⁴ Schlittler von Niederurnen Nr. 219

⁹⁵ Schuler von Glarus Nr. 84 and Kaderli von Bilten Nr. 1 and Blum von Bilten Nr. 102.

⁹⁶ Wittenwyler von Bilten Nr. 1. Additional information from descendent William Zimmerman as listed on RootsWeb.

⁹⁷ Zweifel von Bilten Nr. 42.

Other Canton Glarus Emigrants Listed on the 1847 Columbia Manifest

Fridolin Blum, 23. Possibly the son of Heinrich Blum and Ursula Walliser, and the brother of Werner Blum.

N. Blum, 20.

Johannes Dürst, 32.

Wernet Elmer, 34, and **Anna Maria Elmer**, 34. The Elmers were from Elm, Canton Glarus, and were accompanied by their children **Verena** (married J. Jacob Ott), 9, **Anna Maria** (married John Tascher), 7, **Werner** (married Anna Barbara Duerst), 5, **Jacob** (married Anna Streiff and Emma Weissmiller), 4, and **Euphemia** (married Niklaus Zentner), 2. The Elmers purchased farmland in 1847, eventually owning 400 acres 2 miles north of New Glarus.

Wolfgang Freitag, 21. Possibly the son of Walter Freitag and Rosina Elmer of Elm.

Abraham Kundert, 21. There were many Abraham Kunderts during this era, and this one is probably the brother of Thomas Kundert (below). He is believed to have later lived in Iowa.

Thomas Kundert, 34, and **Amelia Schindler**, 26. Amelia (or Amalia) was the daughter of the Melchior Schindlers above. The Kundert children who accompanied their parents were **Melchior**, 7, **Abraham**, 5, and **Anna**, 3. Melchior married Sophie Schreiner, Abraham married Louisa Hoehn, and Anna married Marcus Hoesly. Several more children were born in New Glarus.

David Legler, 44. Legler was a widower from Diesbach, Canton Glarus. His wife, Barbara Streiff, had died in 1845. David was accompanied by children **Andreas** (married Elsbeth Glarner), 15, **Katharina** (married Melchior Stuessy), 12, **Ursula** (married Daniel Keleher), 10, and **David** (married Regula Schindler), 6. In New Glarus, David Legler Sr. married Elisabeth Schürch and had several more children.

Fridolin Luchsinger, 27. Possibly the son of Johann Kaspar Luchsinger and Anna Barbara Aebli of Bilten.

Jacob Marti, 21. Most likely this is the Jacob Marty of Engi, Canton Glarus, discussed earlier in this report with respect to the early development of Monticello.

Matheus Marti, 34, and Verena Ackermann, 34. This Marti couple was from Matt, Canton Glarus, and emigrated with daughter **Maria, 6.** They later lived in Madison, Wis.

Caspar Salmen, 20, and Fridolin Salmen, 17. Likely the sons of Jacob and Barbara (Leuzinger) Salmen of Bilten. Their older brother was Rudolf Salmen, mentioned above, who was married to Ursula Walliser Blum.

B. Schindler, 23.

Melchior Schindler, 57, and Anna Heitz, 48. The Schindlers were accompanied by their son, **David, 16.** David had a mental illness and was listed in early census records as an "idiot". The Schindlers were New Glarus residents for the rest of their lives.

Jacob Sigrist, 22, and Verena Steinmann, 20. The Sigrists chose land in the New Glarus colony rather than the Bilten settlement. They obtained Plot 12 (west of New Glarus along today's Durst Rd.) and lived in the Town of New Glarus and then Washington until about 1865, when they moved to Mason County, Ill. (north of Springfield). In 1876 they moved to Hamilton County, Neb., where they ultimately settled to raise their family. Jacob was born in Leuggelbach, and Verena's parents were from Niederurnen and Bilten, all in Canton Glarus. Jacob and Verena are buried in the historic Farmers' Valley Cemetery outside of Stockham, Neb., on the banks of the Big Blue River. The Sigrists were accompanied on the voyage by their daughter **Cleophea, 2.**⁹⁸

Any additional information, family stories, photographs, etc. as well as questions, comments or corrections regarding the people and places mentioned in this report are encouraged. Please feel free to contact:

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⁹⁸ Sigrist von Luchsingen Nr. 11. In 1853 they sold their Town of New Glarus land to Christopher Babler (Deeds Vol. 8, p. 88). The land was the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$, the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 33. Additional family information from descendant Betty Sigrist Walker of Lincoln, Calif.