

Wolfensberger

Newsletter of the WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

April 1996 Vol. 2 No. 2

FIRST WOLFENSBERGERS WILL GET MEMORIAL STONE AT MAY 27 EVENT

Wolfensberger family descendants are invited to celebrate the lives of the first family members to emigrate to America this Memorial Day.

A ceremony to dedicate a new memorial stone for Johannes Wolfensberger and Anna Margaretha Ensminger Wolfensberger is scheduled on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27 at the historic Lutheran Cemetery in Schaefferstown, Pa. The ceremony begins at 10 a.m. at the grave site, located 40 miles east of Harrisburg, the state capitol, in central Pennsylvania.

Your Board of Directors voted last year to erect a memorial stone to the couple of Swiss origins who came to this country in 1730 from Germany to begin the saga of the Wolfensberger family in America. Contributions from association members raised more than \$200 than required for the stone. The stone is being prepared for the Memorial Day event and will be installed in time for the dedication ceremony.

Everyone's Invited

All members of our association are invited to attend this dedication. If you can attend, please contact Association Executive Director Larry Jones by May 12 so arrangements can be made. This invitation is also extended to the Ensminger

family descendants in the area.

Where is Schaefferstown? About eight miles southeast of Lebanon and about 40 miles east of Harrisburg. It's within miles of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

There's good lodging in Myerstown, located six miles northeast of Schaefferstown. We recommend you make reservations at Myerstown's Lantern Inn Motor Lodge, which you can call toll-free at 1-(800) 262-5564. Rates range from \$54 for singles to \$60 and up for double occupancy.

After the ceremony, family members are invited to join attendees at a luncheon and Board of Directors meeting at the Franklin House in Schaefferstown. This meeting will give us all a chance to become better acquainted.

A Revolutionary

After the luncheon, the association is planning a side trip to Campbelltown, some 17 miles east of Schaefferstown, where many family members, including John Philip Wolfensberger, a Revolutionary War colonel in the Continental Army, is buried. John Philip was a son of Johannes and Margaretha

What's Planned For May 27 Dedication Of Memorial Stone?

EVENT:

Dedication of memorial stone to Johannes and Anna Margaretha Wolfensberger, who emigrated in 1730 to the U.S.

DATE:

Memorial Day, May 27, 1996

PLACE:

Lutheran Cemetery, Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania

TIME:

10-11 a.m., followed by a luncheon meeting with WFA Board of Directors.

INSIDE

Heinrich Wolfensberger's Search for Religious Liberty p. 2

Free Grainger County Cemetery List p. 3

1996 Family Reunions p. 4

A Murdered Police Chief is Mourned p. 6

In Pursuit of Religious Liberty, A Second Swiss Family Came to America In 1893

By Larry Jones

Little over a century ago, another Swiss family Wolfensberger left Switzerland for the United States, coming to America -- as have millions of European refugees -- to find religious liberty.

Heinrich Wolfensberger was born April 2, 1852, at Uster in Switzerland's Canton Zurich. He married Maria Anna Lehman on March 25, 1878, in Walenstadt, Switzerland. Maria was born 5 April 1852 in Berne, Switzerland. At that time they were members of the Lutheran Church. Their children were Ida Maria, born 1879 in Uster; Johann Henry, born 1881 in Walenstadt; Carl, born 1883 in Wallenstadt; Otto, born 1884 in Walenstadt and Mary, born in Walenstadt. Walenstadt is a village at the eastern end of beautiful Lake Wallensee, surrounded by rugged Alpine mountains to the north.

Heinrich and Maria joined the Mormon Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, in November 1885. Both Heinrich and Maria worked in a textile factory where he was a mechanic and watch maker. Once Heinrich and Maria were baptized, they began saving to emigrate to America and "Zion". As devout Mormons, their greatest desire was to go to Zion, as Mormon Utah was then known. They saved every extra penny and made many sacrifices to gather the resources. In 1886, Heinrich and Maria had the opportunity to send sons Henry and Carl to Utah with Mormon missionaries who were re-

turning home.

The little boys would live with their Aunt Louisa, Maria's sister who had migrated to Utah in 1880, until the rest of the family could join them. It was hard for a Mother to see her two little boys, three and five, leave and go so far away. Sister Ida did not go because she was needed to tend Otto (and later Mary) while her Mother worked.

The little boys went to Providence, Utah, to stay with Aunt Louisa. Shortly thereafter, disaster struck when Utah declared polygamy illegal. Louisa was probably the third wife of Edmund Schoenhals, a polygamist, and her marriage was dissolved. So she had no means to support herself or the two little nephews.

The two boys were taken to live with two Mormon families. Henry was taken into the Thomas Dobson family, a prominent pioneer family living in Idaho Falls, ID. Henry took the name of Dobson, using as his middle initial "W". Carl was taken into the Gus Backman family, in Salt Lake City where he was raised as Carl Backman

Fire Hastens Departure.

The Walenstadt textile mill burned down in 1891, throwing Heinrich and Maria out of work. This hastened their departure for Utah.

The remaining Wolfensberger family (Heinrich, Maria, Ida, Otto and Mary) left Walenstadt in March 1893, arriving in Salt Lake

City a month later. The family stayed with relatives until they could move into their own apartment.

The family got in touch with their two sons, Henry, now 12, and Carl, now 10. Due to circumstances and the length of time they had been separated from their parents, the boys remained with their foster families.

The family later moved to Rexburg, Idaho, in late 1894 or early 1895. Heinrich, perhaps because of the language difference, spelled his name Wolfensperger. Otto, upon return from his mission to Switzerland, spelled it Wolfensberger.

Log Cabin Austerity

The family first lived in a log cabin at the edge of Rexburg. It was quite a contrast from their big home in Switzerland. Ida stayed in Salt Lake City and lived with a family for whom she did housework. She later went to night school to learn English. Ida eventually came to Rexburg to live. At one time, she saved enough money to buy new shoes for Otto and Mary. The family established a jewelry store in Rexburg.

Although the family had little money for material goods, they, nonetheless, had a good home life. There was lots of love around home. Maria Anna was a fine, gentle person. Heinrich was set in his ways, made all the family decisions.

(Continued on page 3.)

A Second Swiss Family Emigrates

(Continued from page 2)

Ida said her Father was always strict and firm with her, but let Mary have anything she wanted. Heinrich was a hard worker and soon built his jewelry store into a very profitable business, perhaps the leading jewelry store in the area.

Cuckoo Clocks Plus

It was said that Heinrich had many clocks, cuckoos, chimes and others and had them set so that every minute there was a cuckoo, chime, or ding dong of some sort.

Maria Anna died February 25, 1915 of asthma.

Heinrich married Rosa Clara Bergner, of Oelsnitz, Germany, on January 7, 1916. Rosa was born 22 September 1876. Together the couple had one son, John Bernhard Wolfensberger, who was born on June 30, 1918. John was a very active and hard to manage child, and Heinrich and Rosa were older than most parents.

John went to live with his half sister Ida, and her husband, Marion, in 1926. John took the name of John W. Fleming.

After Rosa died on March 25, 1927, Heinrich sold his store in Rexburg and moved to Logan, Utah. He bought a home across the street from Logan's Mormon Temple, and devoted most of his spare time to Temple work.

Heinrich subsequently married a third wife, Mary Schoch Nielson, of Rexburg in 1928. They remained in Logan doing Temple work. Heinrich died 8 August 1933 at Logan and was buried in the Rexburg

Cemetery, beside the graves of his wives, Mary Ann and Rosa.

The Swiss Heritage

Heinrich, born 1852 in Uster, Switzerland; the son of Johannes, born in 1831 in Bauma, Switzerland. Johannes was the son of Heinrich, born in 1785 in Uster; who was the son of Hans Jakob, born in 1756 in Lipperschwendi, Switzerland. Jakob was the son of Jakob, born in 1718 also in Lipperschwendi; the son of Hans Rudolph, born 1665 in Lipperschwendi; the son of Georg born 1629 in Lipperschwandi.

The family line continues backward to include another Hans, born in 1592 in Lipperschwendi; Peter, born in 1538 in hof Wolfsberg, Bauma, Switzerland; Heinrich, born in 1498 in hof Wolfsberg; Hermann zu Wolfsberg, born in 1436 in hof Wolfsberg; and Hans, born about 1395 in hof Wolfsberg.

The information for this article was provided by Bill Wolfensberger of Rigby, Idaho, along with data from the family scrolls given me by Heini Wolfensberger in 1994. Bill's parents were Henry Wolfensberger and Verna Wood.

Henry was born in Lyman, Idaho, in 1913. His grand parents were Otto Wolfensberger and Ruby Sharp.

Otto Wolfensberger was born in Walenstadt, Switzerland in 1884.

Grainger Co. Cemetery List Offered Free

By Shirley Sutphen

WFA Director Shirley Sutphen has prepared a six page list -- available to family members free of charge -- of the Wolfenbarger family members who are buried on the north side of Clinch Mountain in Grainger County, Tennessee.

Included are 124 listings in 21 cemeteries. Instructions for finding cemetery sites are included.

Anyone interested in obtaining the list may contact Larry Jones by letter by writing 6400 N. Ann Arbor Ter, Oklahoma City, OK 73132, by telephone to (405) 721-4383.

Family On Computer File

Any family member interested in an MS-DOS compatible GEDCOM file of the descendants of Hans Wolfensberg, born about 1396, may obtain a copy by sending a check for \$5.00 payable to the Wolfensberger Family Association. Mail your request to Larry Jones, 6400 N. Ann Arbor Ter, Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

The GEDCOM file, copied from a relatively recent file, will include names of approximately 10,000 family members. The file is created using PAF software.

Any one ordering the GEDCOM file should copy it into a separate database instead of an existing database.

It's Family Reunion Time!

- **WOLFENBARGER Family Reunion, Grainger County, Tenn.,** Saturday, June 22. Contact *Donna Long*, 943 Ledgerwood Ave, Knoxville, TN 37917. Telephone (423) 637-1427.
- **SPARGER Reunion, Galax, Va.,** Sunday, August 18. Contact *Ray Webb*, 215 Hawthorn Road, Elkins, NC 28621. Telephone (910) 835-2421.
- **WOLFENBERGER Reunion, Weatherford, TX, Sunday,** August 25. Contact *Lorene Rothrock*, 815 S. Almo Street, Weatherford, TX 76086. Telephone (817) 594-3587.
- **WOLFENBARGER Reunion, Probably Saturday, September 7.** Contact *Dick Gault*, P. O. Box 295, Trenton, OH 45067.
- **WILKINSON-WOLFENBARGER Reunion, Blue Springs, MO,** Sunday 8 September. Contact *Olen O. Wilkinson*, 900 W. "B" Street, Blue Springs, MO 64015. Telephone (816) 228-4183.

There are probably additional families holding reunions. Please notify Larry Jones of any reunions not included that you want publicized to family members. We will make every effort to include them in the next newsletter.

Death Takes 5 Wolfensbergers

✓ **Wolfenbarger, Zula Lee**, of Knoxville, Tenn., died October 30, 1995. She was born 29 March 1913 in Grainger County, Tenn., and is survived by her husband, Johnnie Burchell Wolfenbarger of Knoxville, Michael Dalton Wolfenbarger of Lafayette, Colo., and John Richard Wolfenbarger.

Wooldridge, Bonnie, Wyandotte, OK died January 14, 1996, in Miami, Okla., at 79. He was the husband of Helen Clanton, a descendant of William Walker Wolfenbarger of Newton County, Mo. He is also survived by two sons, Jim and Bill; a daughter, Connie Jo Knowles, a brother, five grand-children and one great-grand

(Continued on page 5)

How To Reach Your Directors

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Mary Edwards Celebrates Her 100th Birthday

Mary Wolfinbarger Edwards celebrated her 100th birthday February 20, 1996, from her hospital bed in Irvine, KY.

Joining her at the celebration were her seven children: Rubye Edwards Strong, Olive Edwards Rogers, James Everett Edwards, Leo Edwards, Mary Edwards Frazier, Margaret Edwards Crawford and Owen Wayne Edwards.

Mary's husband was James Corbett Edwards.

Death Takes 5

(Continued from page 4)

child. Bonnie was buried in the Cayuga Cemetery near Grove, OK.

Wolfenbarger, William, born December 8, 1920, died December 26, 1995. He is buried in Council House Cemetery near Wyandotte, Okla. William was a great grandson of William Walker Wolfenbarger of Newton County, Mo.

Wolfenbarger, Howard C., born July 29, 1915, in Darby, Mont., died February 25, 1996 in Norman, Okla. Howard was the grandson of George Wolfenbarger, born in Grainger County, Tenn.

Sparger, Joy Lou, of Ada, Okla., died March 7, 1996, at the age of 70. Her family connection is unknown.

Please send any obituary information on family members to Larry Jones so it may be included in this newsletter.

Assailants Slash Police Chief As Goldie Watches in Horror

By Linda L. Sutton

Leslie Clarence Wolfinbarger, fifth son of Tillman Filmore Wolfinbarger and Mary Ann Tennessee Moore Wolfinbarger, was born on July 1, 1884, in Mount Vernon, Mo. At 14, he joined the Church of God in Viola, Mo., and at 19, married Mary Ellen McCreary on December 17, 1903, in Oswego, Ks. The couple had two daughters, Goldie and Thelma. Goldie Farol Wolfinbarger was my grandmother.

In 1909, Leslie, Mary Ellen and their young family moved to Collinsville, Okla.

Between 1910 and 1915, Leslie owned a tailor shop and cafe. Later, he joined the Collinsville police force and subsequently was promoted to nighttime Chief of Police.

One Day Left

With one day remaining of his appointment, Leslie was brutally murdered on Collinsville's Main Street by two brothers, Joe and John Davis, as his young daughter - my grandmother -- watched in horror.

The Davis brothers were Collinsville's town drunks. Usually, they were locked in jail overnight to sober up and released the next morning. Since this was Leslie's last night on duty, he chose instead to walk them home rather than put the Davises into jail.

As they walked down the street, one of the Davis brothers slit Leslie's throat and stabbed him numerous times. Leslie died within

minutes. According to accounts, his body from the waist up was literally cut to shreds. He was 30 years old.

A local newspaper eulogized Leslie, declaring him one of the most popular men in Collinsville. "Although an officer of the law, he always strove to prevent law violations with a few words of sound advice to likely offenders. It was this which induced him to take Joe and John Davis to their homes instead of placing them in the city jail when he was called to a place where the Davis brothers had been creating a disturbance. Little did he know that he was to pay for his humanistic theories with his life."

Historic Crime

The town and surrounding communities were shocked by the slaying. Locals called the killing the most regrettable crime in the history of Collinsville. After his death, local residents raised contributions to support Leslie's widow and her two daughters. The document begins with the typed words, "We the undersigned citizens and businessmen hereby give the amounts set opposite our names for the purpose of rendering financial aid to Mrs. L. C. Wolfinbarger".

Contributions ranged from twenty-five cents to five dollars. The majority are marked "paid".

The funeral was to be held at the Baptist Church in Collinsville. Due to the overwhelming attendance, the funeral was moved to a nearby tent. It was said to be the

(Continued on page 6)

Some Fond Reminiscences ...

"Remembering Good People"

She Witnesses Dad's Death From Apartment Window

(Continued from page 5)

largest funeral ever held in Collinsville and the surrounding area. Sadly, his parents, brothers and sister, were unable to attend because of local flooding.

Witnessed Murder

At the time of his murder, Leslie and his family lived above a cafe on Main Street. Grandmother Goldie, ten years old at the time, witnessed his brutal murder from their apartment and the memories remained with her the rest of her life. She rarely spoke of him, but idolized him all life. She kept a small trunk filled with newspaper clippings, documents, letters and memorabilia. I now have the box, and I used its contents to assemble a portfolio chronicling the tragedy.

What happened to the Davis brothers? The newspaper clippings reported they had been caught immediately, jailed and held over for trial without bail. After intensive research, I was able to uncover a quantity of related documents but no transcript of the case. After organizing the documents, I learned that the Davis brother who stabbed my great-grandfather was subsequently convicted and sentenced to 25 years of hard labor.

The trial of the second brother initially ended in a hung

jury. After months of retrials and appeals, he was finally convicted and also sentenced to 25 years at hard labor. Both brothers filed repeated appeals.

For reasons not described in the record, the brother who committed the murder served seven years and was paroled. The second brother served only five years.

Leslie Clarence Wolfenbarger's name and memory continue to live on. The Sheriff and Peace Officers Association and the Oklahoma chapters of the Fraternal Order of Police erected a memorial to fallen comrades in Oklahoma City in 1969. The memorial has a granite shaft set in a garden with smaller monuments placed around it, each bearing the names of fallen officers. Leslie Wolfenbarger's name is prominent among them.

Today my great grandfather is buried in Collinsville, where he rests under a stately, monumental tombstone with a legend that reads, "Someday We Shall Understand".

I am proud to be Leslie Clarence Wolfenbarger's great granddaughter.

If anyone has additional information about Leslie Clarence Wolfenbarger's brief life, please contact Linda Sutton at 114 Pleasant Street, Bryan, TX 77801, or call her at (409) 846-3505.

By Michael D. Wolfenbarger

This the first of a collection of memories of Michael Dalton Wolfenbarger who grew up in Knoxville, Tenn., the son of Johnnie Burchell Wolfenbarger and Zula Lee Dalton.

Michael is the grandson of Huey Walter Wolfenbarger and others who descended from Peter Wolfenbarger, born about 1752 in Lebanon County, Pa.

"I have written these memories so that I will not forget the people that have provided a real substance to my life and made it richer."

DAD'S GROCERY BILL

My father, Johnnie Burchell Wolfenbarger, was born in Harlan, Ky., in 1910. His father, Huey Walter "Buck" Wolfenbarger, was a logger by trade and farmed to provide food for his family of 10 children. My father grew up on a farm and raised almost everything he ate.

When Dad married my mother, Zula Lee Dalton, in 1929, he went to the local country grocer to arrange to buy groceries on credit, as his father had done before him.

He would pay for the groceries when the tobacco, Dad's only cash crop, was sold. The grocer agreed. When Dad sold the tobacco later that year, he paid his grocery bill for the first year of his married life.

The bill came to \$75.

Continued ...

“Remembering Good People”

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

When I was a high school student and the subject of the Great Depression came up, I asked Dad about his memories of the event. I wanted his first hand knowledge of an era that had such tragic consequences on the lives of so many Americans.

Dad told me that he and his neighbors in East Tennessee hardly felt the effects of the Great Depression. Dad explained that the Depression was really about the value of money. People who lived on the farms didn't have much cash.

In the spring, they planted the crops. By the grace of God and hard work, the crops grew and were harvested in the fall. Food was canned or preserved to last through the winter. In the spring the cycle began all over again. If the tobacco crop was good, the farmers made money. If the tobacco crop was not good, then they had less money, or none, and did without.

In my father's mind, there was no direct connection between money and happiness. Since farms were for the most part self-sufficient, money wasn't needed to purchase every-day items. Life could go on without it. It was my impression, from all that I had heard and read at that time, that the Great Depression was devastating to everyone in the United States. I was very surprised to learn that it was not.

Years later my own son ask me, in all innocence, if we were rich. I was proud to say that, yes, we are rich. We just did not have a lot of money.

GOING TO THE COUNTRY

I was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, on January 17, 1948. During the first 10 years of my life, we lived in a large Victorian house set on about 2 1/2 acres of land, surrounded on three sides by tall hedges. The back yard had an opening to the alley. My brother and I were absolutely forbidden to play in the alley.

One night, as my father was coming home from work, he was assaulted by a man with a straight razor. He did not cut my Dad's throat very deep, but he did lay the skin open. With that incident, the alley was placed totally off limits. With that one exception, my mother would tell my brother and me to "Go outside and play." Since it was physically impossible for us to get out of the yard, it was safe for us to play out of doors unattended.

The yard was like a park, with trees, vines and plenty of grass and dirt. A boy could not ask for much more. One summer evening, Dad decided that he was going to build us a sand box. Lord knows why Dad believed we needed a sand box when we had an entire back yard full of dirt, but he started to nail the boards together.

Mother opened the screen

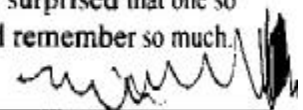
door, and said the supper was ready. Mom had a way about her. Things were supposed to stop for meals. Dad replied that he was going to finish the sandbox for the boys. That meant that we could wait outside with Dad and supervise his work. Supper was a late that night.

During that 10 year period, my life was not disrupted by having to find new friends, or any other "significant emotional event." My life was settled, and the people I knew were limited to my immediate family and to parent's relatives. When we took trips out of the city, it was to "The Country", where we'd visit Aunt Grace and Uncle John, but not always.

My father had ten brothers and sisters. They were all living at the time, and they had children of their own. The result was that I was exposed to a cross section of people and never had to go outside the extended family.

As a young child, I do not remember going to church in the city. My first recollection of church is the Powder Springs Free Will Baptist Church at Powder Springs, Tenn., the church to which Aunt Grace belonged and attended every Sunday. In those days, 1950 - 1958, Brother Price was the Pastor. While I could not remember everything he said on Sunday, I could remember the text of his sermons, often for months at a time.

He was surprised that one so young could remember so much.



Still Not Registered? Do It Now!

This not-for-profit association was formed for the purpose of providing communications about family events, reunions, queries, obituaries, family histories and news of interest to families descended from the Wolfensberger family of Switzerland.

All association memberships expired at the end of 1995. All received a family badge and four newsletters, regardless of when they registered.

To register for 1996, simply fill out this form and return it with a check for \$8 per person per year to the address at the bottom of the form. New members will receive a free six-color embroidered family badge.

The 1996 registration fee will cover the cost of four family newsletters. Those registering after March 31, 1996 will be listed as members by the quarter in which they join.

Name _____
 Address _____

 Telephone _____

Please circle the name of your family:

WOLFENSBERGER **WOLFENBARGER**

WOLFERSBERGER **WOLFENBARGER**

WOLFERSPERGER **WOLFENBERGER**

WOLFENSBERGER **SPARGER**

SPARGUR

or other variations of the family names

I want to join the WFA in 1996
 I want all 1995 WFA newsletters at \$8

Please send check for \$8.00 for a full year's membership in the Wolfensberger Family Association. Make check payable to the

Wolfensberger Family Association and mail with completed form to WFA, 6400 N. Ann Arbor Terr., Oklahoma City OK 73132.

Wolfensberger
 WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY ASSOCIATION ON BEHALF OF THE

WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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 Oklahoma City OK 73132
 Executive Director, Lawrence M. Jones
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Fond Reminiscences of Good People, p. 6

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