

# Wolfensberger

Newsletter of the WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

July 1997, Vol. 3, No. 3

## *The Association Reorganizes*

### Jones, Wolfenbarger, Liddell and Spargur In New WFA Posts

Now in its third year, the Wolfensberger Family Association revised its organization structure in April to deepen and strengthen its leadership.

In a move to guarantee the WFA's continuity in the event of incapacity, the association's Board of Directors voted April 26 to restructure the organization by changing the title of the organization's Executive Director to President and creating three new officers. All positions are unpaid. The changes took effect immediately.

In the new arrangement:

**President** is Lawrence (Larry) M. Jones, former Executive Director of the family association. Larry founded the WFA in 1994, and continues to live in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He is the grandson of Nancy Lucinda Wolfenbarger.

**First Vice President** is Robert J. (Bob) Wolfenbarger of Summit, New Jersey. He founded the WFA newsletter and is a founding director of the organization.

**Second Vice President** is Myrna Liddell of Langley, Washington. Mrs. Liddell was a founding director of the association and is currently engaged in translating the German-language history of the Wolfensberger family. She is the

daughter of Wilma Opal Wolfenbarger.

**The new Secretary** of the Association is William (Bill) F. Spargur of Palmdale, California. He is a retired military officer and was elected a Director in 1997.

### 17 New Members Join Wolfensberger Family

Michael Ray Crabtree (Wolfenbarger), CA  
Betty Lou Bailey (Sparger), LA  
Stephen J. Wolfenbarger, TN  
Thomas Brewster (Wolfenbarger), OK  
James B. Wolfenbarger, MT  
Barbara Durbin (Wolfenbarger), VA  
Sandra Shelton, Owensboro, KY  
Ralph Steve Sparger, NC  
Sarah Spencer (Wolfenbarger), OK

*Continued on page 3*

WFA MEMBERS	NO.
Paid members	259
Honorary members	8
Total members	267
Unpaid '96 members	53

### The Legend Of The Golden Plow And The Maiden

At least one fairy tale has lived on for centuries about the Swiss family Wolfenbarger.

There's a fascinating legend associated with the original Wolfenbarger family estate, a long-vanished medieval stone structure known as the Auldensberg that once lay atop the Wolfenberg, the family's ancestral home in Basna, Switzerland.

#### Guarded by a Snake

Deep in the castle's cellar, as the legend goes, a golden plow lay buried, guarded only by a poisonous snake.

*Continued on page 3*

## INSIDE STUFF

*The Family Photo Album...p. 2*

*Cyberspace Connections....p. 3*

*The 700 Year-Old Family...p. 4*

*1997/98 Reunion Dates.....p. 6*



1



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1. Max Walter WOLFENSBERGER, born 12 May 1923 in Zurich, Switzerland. Former manager for NCR in Switzerland. Elected as counselor for the local governing body serving 12 years in that capacity.
2. Residence of Max and Esther WOLFENSBERGER, located at Zehententrotte 8712, Staefa, Switzerland
3. Richard A. WOLFENBARGER, born 8 March 1933 in Tulsa, OK. A descendant of Rueben W. WOLFENBARGER and Nancy STRANGE. Lives in Tulsa where he is in sales of office furniture and office supplies.
4. Adah Wolfinbarger HENNICK, born 8 May 1910 in Neosho, MO. A daughter of Samuel Lafette WOLFENBARGER and Nellie SHUFF.
5. Left - Jo Clanton WOOLDRIDGE of Wyandotte, OK. A descendant of William Walker WOLFENBARGER and Catherine BROCK. Jo and Millie are sisters.  
Middle - John Emmett WOLFENBARGER, born 29 May 1909 in Neosho, MO. His father was John Peter WOLFENBARGER born in Luttrell, TN.  
Right - Millie Clanton BOOTH of Miami, OK. A descendant of William Walker WOLFENBARGER and Catherine BROCK. Millie and Jo are sisters.
6. Dorothy (Dottie) Mae Newman MULLEN lives in Venice, FL. A grand daughter of Annice M. SPARGER.



## The Golden Plow And The Maiden

*Continued from page 1*

One day, a goat herder noticed a beautiful young maiden walking by the castle walls. Since he'd never seen the maiden before, the shepherd approached her to ask her name. The maiden replied that she was the daughter of the Knight of Wolfenberg and is condemned to live under a spell as a snake.

### Released from Spell

Only once in a century is she allowed to shed her skin and become a living figure, said the maiden. If the shepherd had the courage to kiss her three times, she would be released from her spell, never to return in the guise of a snake.

Smitten by the maiden's beauty, the shepherd didn't hesitate. As he kissed her, she was suddenly transformed into an ugly snake.

Whispering in the beautiful maiden's voice, the snake hissed, "Now you must kiss me as I slide past you as a snake."

As the snake spoke, it rose up to meet his lips for a second kiss. When the shepherd saw the head of the terrible reptile just inches from his lips, he was horrified. Pushing the snake aside, he raced down the mountain, leaving the maiden to sob and scream in disappointment.

The legend is from Swiss family history published in 1996.

### Get The Message?

## Check Cyberspace Connections To WFA Association Members And Other Family Friends

This is the most current list of Wolfensberger Family Association members who can communicate by electronic mail. If you want your name and address included, write Larry Jones at his Internet address, [wolfberg@icon.net](mailto:wolfberg@icon.net), and ask to add your name to this directory.

If you're already in this directory, we suggest you check your address for accuracy. If it's inaccurate, send your corrections to Larry. We'll update it next issue.

Thomas BREWSTER,  
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Joyce BUNCH, (Sparger) AL,  
[rosejoy@mindspring.com](mailto:rosejoy@mindspring.com)

Jim CAMPBELL, (Wolfenbarger)  
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### New WFA Members...

*Continued from page 1*

Charles F. Spargur, OH  
William Wolfenbarger, TN  
Larry L. Spargur, FL  
Frank S. Sparger, NC  
Marvin Spargur, IL  
Holly Y. Vonderohe (Spargur), WA  
Joyce G. Bunch (Sparger), AL  
Dennis Allen Wolfenbarger, TN

Billie Plumlee COX,  
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Christine and Andre JOLY,  
(Wolfenbarger) (daughter of Max  
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Kevin JONES, (Wolfenbarger) OK,  
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*Continued on page 5*

# *How the Swiss See The Wolfensberger Family: 700 Years of Contributions to Zurich Canton*

*This article is adapted from a translation of a German-language history describing the origins of many prominent families in the Zurich Canton of Switzerland. The history, "66 Familiennamen seit 700 Jahren in the Districts of Bachtel, Stoffel and Schnebelhorn", was published in 1996 in Switzerland.*

*We are indebted to Monique Wolfensberger-Coppens for her English translation of this history. She is the daughter-in-law of WFA member Max Wolfensberger of Stäfa, on Switzerland's scenic Lake Zurich.*

## **The Wolfensbergers of Bauma**

The Wolfensberger family originated in a mountaintop farm, the Hof Wolfensberger, located in Switzerland's northeast border region, an area known today as the *Zuercher Oberland*. The region is part of the districts of Bauma and Baretswil in the canton of Zurich. The family's name is derived from the Wolfensberg, a low Alpine mountain just outside Bauma, where wild wolves once roamed. (Except in specific instances, we shall use the Wolfensberger family name.)

In this region of medieval Europe, the border area has been long associated with fierce wolves and bears. Opposite the Wolfensberg, across the Toss Valley and directly below the Hornli, Zurich Canton's highest mountain lies a Bear Valley and a Bear Woods.

Based upon archeological discoveries by the late Jakob Wolfensberger, father of WFA honorary director Heini Wolfensberger, the Toss Valley has been

settled for at least 4,000 years.

There is no record of when the last wolf was driven out of the region, but legend tells us that the last bear was slain on the Hornli in 1532 by three monks from the nearby Ruti monastery, a cloistered sanctuary with a long association with the Wolfensberger family.

The story is told that the trio of monks was summoned to the scene by a crowd of terror-stricken local farmers. One monk poked at the giant bear with a homemade spear, but the bear snapped the lance in two with one mighty swipe of its paw. After a grueling battle, another monk, aided by farmers and their dogs, finally succeeded in stabbing the bear in the throat. The body of the vanquished bear — last of his kind from Hornli — was formally presented to Zurich's parliament.

Wolves of course, were a common scourge in medieval Switzerland. In 1377, so many wolves were sighted in the region that Zurich was forced to close the gates to the fortress. Again in 1594, wolves were reported to have attacked many children in the Zurich area. As late as the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, wolf hunts were a favorite form of entertainment for local Swiss gentry.

## **A Distinguished Nobleman**

History's first Wolfensberger was a knight named Baldebert (known in this account as Baldebrecht), who enters history in 1233 as a distinguished nobleman. According to legend, he apparently earned his knighthood for bravery in a Crusade to save the Holy

Land. The only Crusade in Baldebert's lifetime was the Seventh Crusade, an ill-starred religious march to save Palestine that ended in failure. A patron of the Ruti monastery, he is buried near the cloistered monastery on the River Jona.

As late as the Fourteenth Century, there were at least two established peasant villages on the Wolfensberg slopes. Atop the mountain, the knights of the Wolfensberg, then subjects of the Counts of Rapperswil, maintained a mountaintop castle or tower for a significant period of time in the Middle Ages. The medieval castle, Altlandenbergruine, is shown as a ruins in a 1560 map of the region, one of several atop peaks in the region. (There's no trace of Altlandenbergruine's ruins today, although its site has been discovered.)

## **Battled The Swiss**

Less than a century later, another prominent Wolfensberger knight enters history. In battle against the Swiss, Hermann Wolfensberger of Morgarten, is killed in battle on November 16, 1315. Serving Herzog (king) Leopold of Austria, Hermann is killed fighting on the side of the Austrians against the Swiss. A year later, his widow, Dorethea von Wolfensberg, remarries, this time to an Austrian. But the region eventually becomes uncontested Swiss territory.

In 1392, Herman von Hinwil, then a judge in nearby Greifenburg, apparently sold his interest in the mountaintop castle, the Wolfensberger family home

*Continued on page 5*

# Family E-Mail Addresses ...

*Continued from page 1*

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JDWolfers@AOL.com

*Check it out*

**WFA WEB SITE**

[www.icon.net/~wolfberg/](http://www.icon.net/~wolfberg/)

# Swiss See...

*Continued from page 4*

then known as the Hof zu Oberwolfisberg, for a yearly cash payment and annual payments in grain and oats.

The family castle ultimately fell into the hands of the Ruti monastery in the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1432, the Hof Wolfenberg (another variation of the name) is leased to a Konrad Senn. By 1439, the Wolfensberger association with the castle ends, as does its ties with the Ruti monastery. By then the castle may have become uninhabitable ruin, since it is pictured as a ruin in 1560.

## *Prominent Cantonal Family*

The family, however, remained a prominent Zurich Canton family. A Hans Wolfensberger, a weaver and holder of the intriguing titles of Bosshart of Hornen and Meyer of Bliggenswil, formally becomes a citizen of Zurich in 1446. During the Fifteenth Century's Old Zurich War, canton officials apparently went about the border region offering citizenship to affluent citizens to help finance the canton's defense.

By the end of the Fifteenth Century, the hegemony of the powerful Counts of Rapperswil ends. However, the Wolfensberger family name lives on in a variety of forms. In 1463, records show that a noble-sounding Uli von Wolfysperg zu Wallenwil and Hans Wolfysperg zu Ettenhausen paid land and personal taxes, suggesting the family was no longer regarded as local nobility. Even so, Herman von Wolfensperg, his wife and a maiden named Verena are mentioned in local history just a few years later.

*Continued on page 6*



# IT'S REUNION SUMMER

## WOLFENBARGER-WOLFINBARGER SPARGER-SPARGUR August 9, 1997

Clatskanie, Oregon  
(US Highway 30, about 12 miles  
west of Interstate 5  
from Kelso, WA)

Coordinator  
**Jimmy L. Wolfenbarger,**  
18445 Coop Road,  
Clatskanie, OR 97016

## SPARGER August 16, 1997

Galax, Virginia.  
Coordinator  
**Guy Mitchell Sparger,**  
338 Sparger Road,  
Mt. Airy, NC 27030

## WOLFINBARGER September 6, 1997

Irvine, Kentucky  
Coordinator  
**Dick Gault,**  
PO Box 295,  
Trenton, OH 45067

## WILKINSON-WOLFINBARGER September 14, 1997

Blue Springs, Missouri  
Coordinator  
**Olen Wilkinson,**  
900 West "B" Street,  
Blue Springs, MO 64015

*(Anyone with knowledge of any  
other family reunions who would  
like that reunion date listed here,  
please contact Larry Jones.)*

## There's a 1998 Reunion For The Entire Family

Plans are under way for a May 1998 reunion in eastern Tennessee for the entire Wolfensberger family. Members of all branches of the family, regardless of their surname's spelling, are welcome.

The reunion is scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 1998, in the Gibbs Ruritan Park, ten miles north of Knoxville, Tennessee.

The '98 reunion is being organized by J. C. Wolfenbarger and his sister, George Ella Rogers.  
■ **J. C. Wolfenbarger,** Telephone (423) 525-2936. Home address: 2527 Keith Ave., Knoxville, TN 37921

■ **George Ella Rogers,** Telephone (423) 687-5338. Her address is 7521 East Emory Road, Corryton, TN 37721

## IN MEMORIAM

✓ **Eloise Sparger Sicheloff,** 93, of Winston Salem, NC, died April 23, 1997.

Eloise was born December 5, 1903, in Mount Airy, NC. She is survived by a son James C. Sicheloff and a brother, Collier Bryson Sparger of Venice, Fla. Her husband and siblings Margaret, Mary, Randall and William Eugene preceded her in death. She was the daughter of Joseph Bingman Sparger and Elizabeth Case.

Eloise was buried in Mount Airy, NC.

## Swiss See...

*Continued from page 5*

As the 16<sup>th</sup> Century approached, the Wolfensberger clan could be found living on in the Wolfensberg, in Allenwil and Ettenhausen. Ruodi Woffisberg, a family member and descendant of the Wolfensberger soldiers, is listed as a property owner in Rapperswill.

In addition to these family members, records in the Ettenhausen-Wetzikon district list a number of prominent Wolfensbergers over a period of years. In 1540, for example, Bernhart Wolfensberger lived in Ettenhausen.

In 1615, Hans Wolfensberger became a Bannwart, a local government official. Johannes Wolfensberger of Pfaffikon, who is listed as a minister in 1565, dies three years later in an outbreak of the plague.

### End of Thirty Years War

By the end of the Thirty Years War in 1650, Wolfensbergers are counted as citizens in many Canton Zurich villages. In addition to the villages above, the name appears often in the districts of Bauma, Baretswil, Wetzikon, Hirwil, Gossau and Staefa.

In a later generation, a Hans Wolfensberger (1742-1818) enters history as a prominent cantonal official. In 1770, Hans bought a large estate on the shore of Lake Zurich and built a house and winery there.

He subsequently became a cantonal judge and president. His son, Hans II, also served as judge, president as well as a member of the cantonal parliament.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the family name is found in at least 13 villages in the District of Bauma.



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1. Hubert S. WOLFENBARGER, born 1 June 1919 in Neosho, MO. His father was John Peter was John Peter WOLFENBARGER, born in Luttrell, TN. A brother is John Emmett.
2. Addie E. BEAVERS, born 12 November 1866 in Woodland, IA. G G grand daughter of John WOLFERSBERGER SPARGER (the original SPARGER) and Christina FREY.
3. Annice Malessa Sparger NEWMAN, born 25 August 1859 in Mt. Airy, NC. Daughter of Henry SPARGER and Mary Ann COOK.
4. Lloyd WOLFENBARGER, born and lives in Neosho, MO. Son of James Emory WOLFENBARGER.
5. Earl W. SPARGUR, born 27 June 1905 in and lives in Yukon, OK. The son of James W. SPARGUR born in Hillsboro, OH and Nettie Mae FERGUSON. Earl was a public accountant. The photograph was when he was 59 years old.
6. Frank S. SPARGER the son of Ralph Thomas SPARGER who was born 7 January 1918. Frank is a stock broker in Norwood, NC.
7. Maggie WOLFENBARGER, born 19 August 1902 in Irvine, KY, where she has lived all of her life. She served for over 40 years in elected offices in Estell County, KY.
8. Ora Wolfinbarger KIRBY, born and lived all of her life in Irvine, KY. Served many years in public office. Ora and Maggie are sisters and are descendants of Peter Amos WOLFENBARGER.
9. William Wilson WOLFERSBERGER, born in 1928. A descendant of Philip WOLFERSBERGER, Jr. Bill is a retired Scout Executive that served the area where he lives in Winchester, VA.
10. Karen W. PUCKETT, born and lives in Neosho, MO. Daughter of Samuel Hall WOLFENBARGER.

**NEW MEMBERS RECEIVE EMBROIDERED FAMILY BADGE!**

## ***WFA Membership Application***

The Wolfensberger Family Association is a not-for-profit association formed for the purpose of providing communications about family events, reunions, queries, obituaries, histories and news to families who are descended from the Wolfensberger family of Switzerland. To join, please complete this form:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Membership is open to any family member. 1997 dues will be \$10 per person. Annual memberships expire at the end of each calendar year, although members who register later in the year will receive all four issues of this newsletter. *New members receive a six-color embroidered family badge based on the family's coat of arms. Absolutely free!*

Please circle or write in the name of your family:

WOLFENSBERGER	WOLFENBARGER
WOLFERSBERGER	WOLFENBARGER
WOLFERSPERGER	WOLFENBERGER
WOLFENSBERGER	SPARGUR
SPARGER	

**Registration instructions:** Please complete form and send check for \$10 payable to the Wolfensberger Family Association for one 1997 individual membership. Mail form and check to the Wolfensberger Family Assn., 6400 Ann Arbor Terr., Oklahoma City OK 73132.

**Wolfensberger**  
WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

**WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY ASSOCIATION**

6400 North Ann Arbor Terrace  
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Phone: (405) 721-4383



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