



# WOLFENSBERGER

Newsletter of the Wolfensberger Family Association

February 2001

Vol. 7, No. 1

Page 1

## Translation Completed

The “Wolfensberger Translation of the Deutsch-Schweizerisches Geschlechterbuch” is finally completed in English!

As you have read in past issues of the Wolfensberger Newsletter, an original volume of research on the Swiss ancestors was edited by Dr. Bernhard Koerner, and published in 1929 by C. A. Starke, of Germany. Much of the compilation and research was done by Paul Wolfensberger of Zurich, Switzerland. This book was a part of the “Deutsch-Schweizerisches Geschlechterbuch” Volume 4, aka Volume 65, “Deutsches Geschlechterbuch”. The word Geschlechterbuch means Genealogical Lineage book. It includes the names, locations, dates of birth, death, marriages, and often occupations and residences of these ancestors and their related families. Generally even the names and some vital statistics of the spouse’s parents are included.

The original book was printed with Gothic type, in an older style of the Swiss-German language. Over the past two years, in her part time, our Vice President, Myrna Bingham Liddell, has been transcribing the Gothic type and translating the German to English, so we could all use it for personal research.

In addition to the translation, she has prepared a “Forward” explaining the format of the original text, as well as an “Index of names, with some Locations”.

Only the body of the text is translated, not including the entire original introduction.

Since this is considered a derivative work, permission from the original publisher was required, and granted. This new work is copyrighted in the United States.

The original book includes over 452 pages on the Wolfensberger family, and this translation consists of 306 pages including the Index. Over 6000 names are found in the Index.

(Translation Cont. page 2)

### President’s Letter

## Coming Home This Fall?

Some time this fall - probably a Friday in September or October - your association will dedicate a permanent memorial to the family’s Swiss ancestors at the site of a medieval castle on the Wolfensberg, once the family’s home near the modern-day community of Bauma. Are you interested in coming to the dedication? If so, what dates will be best for you? A four-to-five foot high glacier stone with two plaques in German and English and the Wolfensberger coat of arms embedded will be the centerpiece of the memorial. A picnic area with a grill and wooden benches for picnickers and a hiking path uphill from a nearby road will complement the stone.

### Second WFA memorial

It will be the second memorial to the family on two continents. The first is in the Lutheran cemetery in Schaffers town, Pennsylvania, near Hershey, where a memorial stone marks the burial plot of John and Anna Margaretha Wolfensberger, the Alsatian immigrants who came to this country in 1730.

(Coming Home....., cont. on page 3)

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*Newsletter Editor*  
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\*\*\*\*\*

**WANT TO KNOW MORE!**

**Visit our Web  
Site:**

**[www.members.home.net/  
wolfensberger](http://www.members.home.net/wolfensberger)**

(Translation, cont. from page 1)  
The book begins with those earliest findings of the Wolfensberger (multiple variations) name, and proceeds to show family groups as descendant lineages, beginning before 1414, with Hans Wolfensberger of Wolfsberg. It even includes many of those families who moved away from Switzerland to other countries. In the translation, to assist those persons whose families moved away or whose Wolfensberger ancestors married persons from other countries, a special section in the Index lists "Location(s)" regarding only those persons with foreign locations.

The original Geschlechterbuchs are no longer in print and are available only at certain libraries in reference sections.

C. A. Starke Publisher, is reprinting their Geschlechterbuchs onto CDs (compact discs) at a rate of 8-10 volumes per disc, 1 CD per year. See their website at: <http://www.starkeverlag.de/> (Some libraries may have purchased some of the CDs. FHL in Salt Lake City, Utah has one set for use "in the library" only.) Although the Starke website is in German, they do answer email in English. They do not expect to reprint Volume 65 for several years, and only a few libraries have copies of the original texts in reference sections. There are over 150 volumes by this one publisher and hundreds of others were printed for other Germanic family lines. As explained in a previous newsletter by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger of New York, family lineage books and research became important in the late

1920's as people became aware of the health problems associated with intermarriage within families. (The next project is to load the genealogical data into computer GEDCOM files for use on the internet and at genealogical libraries, as well as our own WFA database. This will take less time to complete, since it is now possible to cut and paste data from one data processing file into the genealogical software of "Legacy", by Mellenia Corporation.

This new Wolfensberger translation is now available for purchase. Since it is considered a derivative work, it is not being offered commercially. We are only charging for costs of producing, i.e., legal fees, printing, binding, and shipping fees and expenses.

**BOOK is Dedicated to Larry Jones**

Myrna has asked that we include his Dedication:  
**"This text is dedicated to Lawrence M. Jones (Larry) of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma for his devotion to the Wolfensberger family, and as founder of the Wolfensberger Family Association. We are proud to call him our "cousin", and stand in awe of his countless hours of service."**

\* \* \* \* \*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We are also indebted to Myrna Liddell for her talented efforts to complete this translation. An order blank is enclosed with this newsletter for those wishing to order copies of this great work. Consider donating a copy to your favorite Library!

RLE

Monument Contributors!

(Coming Home..., cont. from page 1)

This is a list of those who have contributed to the costs of a monument to be put in place near Bauma, Switzerland this year to mark the ancestral home of the Wolfensberger family. This event is fully discussed in this issue of the WFA Newsletter. The Board wishes to sincerely thank each one for your generosity.

\*\*\*\*\*

- Vendrell Spargur
- Arlie Spargur
- Rudolf A. Wolfensberger
- Earl W. Spargur (Calif.)
- Wolf Wofensberger
- L. M. Jones
- Albert H. Creasy
- Mery E. Frazier
- Nancy Kriminger
- Varva Steele
- William T. Wilkinson
- Cindy Blevins
- Mona Riegert
- Elizabeth Beard
- Vendrell Spargur
- Boone Wolfenberger
- Mark Wolfenberger
- Sue Wolfenberger-Davidson
- Marval Geddes
- William F. Spargur
- Richard L. Evans
- W. Frank Wolfenberger
- James M. Spargur
- Robert Joseph Wolfenbarger
- Jessie Wolfenbarger
- Myrna Liddell
- Sherry Wolfenbarger-Davidson

- Emil A. Sparger
- William Wesley Wolfinbarger
- Albert H. Creasy
- Robert F. Herald
- Charles Wolfensberger
- Patricia Ann Jobe
- William A. Sparger, Jr.
- Carrol Gene Wolfinbarger
- Lavene Bell
- Joseph E. Spargur
- Joe A. Wolfenberger
- M. Wayne Bowman
- Nancy L. Rahn
- Shirley L. Sutphen
- Rubie Lee Wolfenbarger
- Albert Brown
- Annette S. Kulesza
- Margaret M. Breurer
- Kahla Jo Gilliland
- Earl W. Spargur (San Jose, CA)
- Janice Wood
- Marilyn Leonard
- Robert J. Wolfenbarger
- Johnni A. Tomerlin

WFA members contributed to construction expenses for both memorials.

I'm very proud of the work done by the WFA committee in Bauma to plan and coordinate the development of the site. Our Swiss relatives did a tremendous job in making the memorial a reality. Unfortunately a 1999 bitter winter storm, one of the strongest in the last century, toppled countless trees around the region, unexpectedly delaying work on the site. Work will begin in the spring on the paths and a probable hiking bridge needed to reach the site. I met with officials of our partners, the *Verkehrsverein* and the *Wanderwege*, the local tourist and hiking associations, as well as Bauma municipal officials. (See article by Bauma Council VP Marlies Jucker.) In our conversations, they promised to do everything possible to complete the project by this fall.

Dedication ceremonies

But even if the project is not complete by that time, we'd like to plan private and public dedication ceremonies this fall. Plans are incomplete, but we are thinking about a private ceremony and luncheon for WFA members, local officials, and others who had a hand in supporting the project. We may hold a public dedication later at the site, located a few miles outside Bauma's center.

Interested in Attending?

If you're interested in attending the Bauma memorial, please let us know. Would you please complete the brief questionnaire included separately in this issue of the WFA Newsletter, then mail it to me at this address:

Robert J. Wolfenbarger  
30 Harvey Drive  
Summit, NJ 07901

.....or E-mail me at:  
*Bobwolfenbarger@worldnet.att.net*

**Visit our Web Site!**

The Wolfensberger Family Association web site is now located at this address:

*http://members.home.net/wolfensberger*

Our mailing address is still:  
*Wolfensberger Family Association  
6400 North Ann Arbor Terrace  
Oklahoma City, OK 73132*

Our e-mail address is:

# Alpine Hilltop Memorial



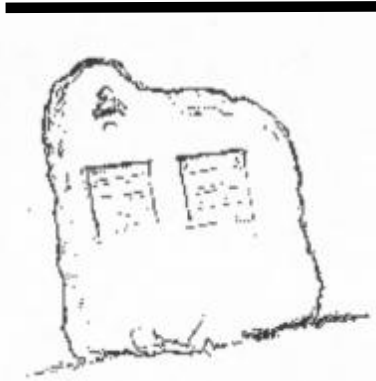
**HIGH** above Bauma, Switzerland, this mountaintop will soon be the site of a memorial stone, hiking path and picnic area marking the ancestral home of the Wolfensberger family. Local government officials who met with Wolfensberger family representatives in November said they would do everything in their power to complete the project during 2001. A dedication of the project will likely be held in Bauma during September or October. All family members are invited to attend.



**ABOVE-***Wolfensberger family members walk the hilltop site of the Bauma memorial project.*

**LEFT-***A stone with metal plaques will commemorate the historic site of the family's castle near Bauma.*

**RIGHT-***Snow covers the picnic area where campers can prepare hot meals out-of-doors.*



# A Quick History of the Family's Swiss Hometown.....

*Statement to the WFA  
Committee by Mrs. Marlies  
Jucker, Vice President, of the  
Town Council of Bauma  
November 17, 2000*

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On behalf of the Town Council, I am pleased to present you a brief history of Bauma.

We are a community of some 4,200 inhabitants that covers a great deal of territory. Bauma covers 20,792 square kilometers, most of which is woods.

Bauma is a modest little town with a large amount of public debt. We have the highest tax rate in Zurich Canton, and the average tax paid by our citizens is very high in comparison to other communities in this region. As a result, the State has to help us with our finances, which means we are largely controlled by the cantonal government in Zurich. Only a few days ago we gave Zurich our preliminary revenue needs for 2001. Let me tell you a little about the development of Bauma.

As early as the Eighth Century, people began to move into this region. Archeologists have discovered crude tools here dating back more than 2,000 years. You will note that most houses - probably including your ancestor's original home - and many small villages in the area are placed high in the hills. The reason why is that the River Toess frequently overflowed its banks, flooding the valley. A little over a

a century ago we corrected the problem, although the threat of flooding is still present.

The town of Bauma was born in 1651 when residents built a church here, removing construction stones from the nearby castle of Alt Landenberg. Bauma's first census, conducted shortly thereafter, listed 826 inhabitants in the new town. Construction of a new church meant that residents no longer had to walk to Sunday church services in Pfaffikon or Baretswil, a fatiguing two-hour walk from Bauma. In the same time frame, local residents built the town's first school.

Since 1661 Bauma has evolved into a regional market town, a legacy that lives on to today. Even now, Bauma holds a market fair every spring and autumn, an event that ranks high in popularity among local inhabitants.

The very first inhabitants of the valley were hunters and later farmers. Most were poor and had many children. They needed the nearby woods not only for cooking and heating but also for wood from which to carve articles such as kitchen utensils. Merchants sold these carvings throughout the region. Famous among these utensils today are wooden kitchen ladles, a product that gives the region the name, "Chelleland". Today, you can buy hand-carved ladles at Bauma's *Heimatwerk*, Switzerland's chain of handicraft shops.



**A RECENT HISTORY** of the Swiss community of Bauma written by Walter Sprenger, advisor to the WFA committee in Bauma.

Women and children were also workers in the region. Most were weavers of high quality materials. The textile industry began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century here, employing women and children for many years. Economic hard times finally shut down the last textile mill in 1988, throwing many inhabitants out of work. You can still find weavers' looms in the area, although today's best source of beautiful hand-woven products of very high quality is the local *Heimatwerk*.

Today, Bauma's biggest industry is the Wolfensberger Foundry, the family's enterprise just outside the town. We also have many shops and tradesmen as well as inns and restaurants. The numbers of small farmers are (cont. page 6, BAUMA)



(BAUMA , cont. from page 5)

dwindling. Most are looking for employment elsewhere

Transportation in and out of the Toess Valley improved dramatically in the 1830s when the first road from Winterthur to Bauma was built. Until then, the propensity of the Toess River to overflow its banks without warning made driving into the valley dangerous. Even today, despite improvements, heavy rains can quickly raise the level of the river.

In 1875 the first railroad service between Winterthur and Bauma was inaugurated. In fact, the original steam engine and the original coaches are still in service for tourists who want to experience railway travel as it existed 125 years ago.

Today, Bauma is a modern little town. Whether you use the railway or buses, or drive your own car, you can be in Winterthur or Zurich in less than an hour. We have a modern water works and a new water filtration plant, and we are energetic environmentalists who dispose of solid waste efficiently and recycle usable waste.

## From the Editor:

By Richard "Buzz" Evans

As I put this newsletter together, I am becoming more comfortable with this assignment and responsibility. Upholding the past excellence of the WFA Newsletter is quite a job and one I do not take lightly. I trust the membership will continue to contribute items for this letter as you have in the past.

I am working on several stories I think you will find very interesting. These are stories about our family members who have great stories to tell about themselves or their ancestors. I hope you will pass along any interesting story or photo about some member on your limb of the family tree.

Larry Jones reports we have had a very successful membership drive this year, but as a reminder, if you have not paid your 2001 dues, please give this a priority so you will not miss a single issue of the exciting Wolfensberger Family Association Newsletter.

## President's Report

*by Bob Wolfenbarger, WFA Pres.*

The WFA Board of Directors celebrated a newly-translated family genealogy and honored the history's author in its quarterly conference call board meeting January 20.

Mrs. Myrna Liddell, vice president of the WFA and a long-time student of family genealogy, was named a Life Member of the association last month. In part, the honor recognizes her recent publication of an English language translation of a Wolfensberger family history originally published in German in 1929, the *Deutsch-Schweizerishes Geschlechterbuch*.

"Editor's Note: Please see the article on page 1, *Translation Completed*".

The original book was commissioned by the Wolfensberger family of Bauma in the late 1920s and has been available in German - or rather, an archaic form of the Swiss-German dialect - in a small volume that is today published by the original publisher, C. A. Starke Verlag in Limburg, Germany.

The English translation, some 300 pages long, traces the family back to Hans von Wolfensberg, born on the Wolfensberg, a mountain within today's boundaries of Bauma, some time before 1414. He lived in the family's castle of Ober-Wolfsberg (site of a WFA-sponsored memorial to be dedicated this year) until 1432.

In other action, the WFA board approved a report by Treasurer Al Creasy showing an Association net worth of \$4,847.71 as of December 31, 2000. He reported that the Association had opened a Swiss bank account to pay the organization's share of the memorial project. The WFA is paying half the cost of the memorial, sharing expenses with a local Swiss tourist information agency and a hikers association.

Al Creasy also reports that 51 WFA members have contributed over \$3,100 toward the memorial project over the past two years. (See list p.3.) Membership chairman and former WFA president Larry Jones reported seven new members had joined the Association between November 15 and December 31, 2000, bringing total paid memberships to 279.

# LARRY'S CORNER

by Lawrence "Larry" Jones

## IN MEMORIAM

**Varva Munford (Griffin) STEELE** - Varva died at her home in Kanab, UT on 12 October 2000 after courageous battle with cancer since 1995. She was born 26 May 1923 in Marshall, TX to Harry MUNFORD and Louise Griffin MUNFORD. She married Ewing Martin "Skeet" STEELE on 2 Aug 1942 in El Paso, TX.

At the age of three, Varva moved with her family to El Paso where she was raised and educated in the El Paso School System. She also attended the Texas College of Mines.

Varva and Skeet were married in El Paso. They remained in El Paso for a short time until Skeet was transferred to Fort Grant, IL, then transferred to Fort Lewis, WA until Skeet was called to join the Armed Forces in the South Pacific. Varva returned to El Paso for the duration of the war.

Varva was a vivacious and energetic lady who enjoyed many activities in nature, wildlife and geology. Her most dedicated interest was in genealogy where she spent in excess of 30 years in researching 20 families of her lineage. She did on-site genealogy research by traveling for the last 20 years to 45 of the 50 states with her husband in their RV.

Varva was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and held the offices of Regent and State Officer in AZ.

She is survived by her husband Skeet of Kanab, UT; daughters Pamela Lee MILK of Paragonah, UT; Michelle HUFF of Kanab, UT; sister Neva MILLER of Hemet, CA; brother, Colonel H. G. MUMFORD of Tiburon, CA; several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

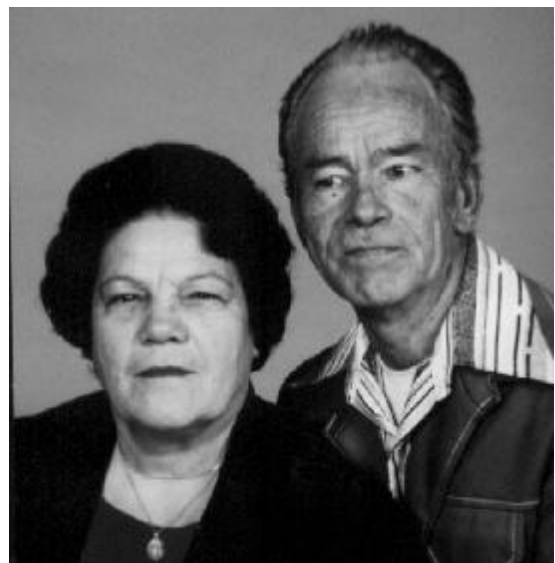
The grandmother of Varva was Louisa May GRIFFIN; great grandmother Artemissia WOLFENBARGER, great x 2 grandfather George WOLFENBARGER; great x 3 grandfather Philip WOLFENBARGER; great x 4 grandfather John WOLFENBARGER, born 1751 in Lebanon, PA; great x 5 grandfather Jacob Frederick WOLFENBARGER born 1731 in the Alsace.

Right..Ernest L. Wolfenbarger and his wife, Irma . Photo taken in 1992 when Ernest was 79 years young.



**Ernest L. Wolfenbarger** - born 1 Oct 1920, Buhl, Twin Falls, ID, the oldest son of Herman Goldie WOLFENBARGER and Sylvia WELLMAN. Ernest lived in North Whittier, CA at the time of his death. He died 24 March 2000. He and his wife Irma CATENO had been married 53 years. They both attended the reunion in Palo Alto, CA.

The grandfather of Ernest was William WOLFENBARGER, born 1868 in Grainger County, TN; great grandfather William WOLFENBARGER, born 16 May, 1823 in Grainger County, TN; great grandfather x 2 Peter Amos WOLFENBARGER; great grandfather x 3 Peter WOLFENBARGER born 1752 in Lebanon, PA; great grandfather x 4 John WOLFENBARGER, Jr., born 1730 in the Alsace



# WFA Membership Application

## Join Now!

Send this completed form and a check for \$10

to: **Wolfensberger Family Association**  
**6400 North Ann Arbor Terrace**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73132**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Please send us a photo of you and your family.

Memberships are for a calendar year.

Annual dues are \$10 per person.

Memberships expire at the end of each calendar year, regardless of when you join.

Members who rejoin later in the year will receive all quarterly issues of this newsletter.

New members receive a six color embroidered family badge based on the Wolfensberger coat of arms. Absolutely free!

Membership is open, but not limited, to members of these families:

**Wolfensberger**  
**Wolfersberger**  
**Wolfersperger**  
**Spargur**

**Wolfenbarger**  
**Wolfinbarger**  
**Wolfenberger**  
**Sparger**

**Wolfensberger**



**WOLFENSBERGER**  
**FAMILY ASSOCIATION**  
10903 Holly Springs Drive  
Houston, TX 77042-1310