



WOLFENSBERGER

Newsletter of the Wolfensberger Family Association

February 2003

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LARRY JONES SUFFERS HEAD INJURY

WFA founder and Past President "Larry" Jones fell victim to the bad winter weather in Oklahoma City in mid-February when he apparently slipped on the icy walk, fell and severely injured himself. Larry's son, Reynold, found him inside his home with severe trauma to his head. Larry had been able to get back inside the house. He was immediately taken to the hospital where a cat-scan showed the severity of his injuries. Larry is in the critical care unit of Mercy Health Center hospital in Oklahoma City.

Many years ago, Larry developed an interest in his family history and began a career of research which led him to his Wolfensberger family connection. His grandmother was Nancy Lucinda Wolfenbarger who was the daughter of William Walker Wolfenbarger. Wm. W. Wolfenbarger was born in Tennessee and settled in Missouri where he raised his family. Wm. W. was a direct descendant of Johannes and Anna Margaretha Ensminger Wolfensberger who came to America from the Alsace District of Europe about 1730.

Larry began to accumulate the family data from other descendants that he contacted by phone or visited personally. With these personal contacts, Larry began the early association that eventually became the Wolfensberger Family Association. It was certainly these personal contacts that encouraged the formation of our Association. His phone bills and travel expenses must have been quite large as he attended family reunions and other get-togethers across America. It was Larry's great interest in the family and his thoughtfulness in getting acquainted with various family members that prompted many of us to join him in the Wolfensberger Family Association.

Larry was instrumental in the drive to mark the graves of our original ancestors in Shaferstown, PA and to begin the efforts to erect the monument dedicated several years ago on the Wolfsberg near Bauma, Switzerland. One of his greatest disappointments was his inability, due to his wife's illness, to attend the dedication ceremonies in Switzerland.

The Doctors attending to Larry feel his recovery will be prolonged and he will be unable to live alone in the future. He is unable to receive flowers in the Critical Care unit but cards and get-well notes may be sent to him at his home or to the hospital. The hospital's address is: Mercy Health Center, 4300 W. Memorial Rd., Oklahoma City, OK 73120-8304.



Lawrence "Larry" Jones
Oklahoma City, OK

WFA Pres. Bob Wolfenbarger and Vice Pres. Myrna Liddell are keeping in touch with the family and keeping other Board members advised by e-mail. We need to keep Larry and his family in our prayers during this difficult recovery period. RLE

Do You Have a Neat Ancestor?

Share your outstanding and interesting ancestor with us. Drop a line via mail or e-mail to me, Buzz Evans, of the WFA Newsletter.

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Year 2003**

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HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

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Lawrence M. Jones

**WFA ORGANIZATION
CHANGES**

Beginning this year, 2003, changes will be made in who one will contact in the WFA for the various matters of interest. Our Past president and current Hon. Life Member, Larry Jones is not able to continue to handle all the aspects of our organization as he has in the past. He has been a driving force in keeping contact with our large membership and keeping the historical records of our family. This latter responsibility has been growing as more members become computer familiar and want to add their limb to our family tree database or to tap into our data to learn more about their family. We believe that we should make our data more available to the membership of the WFA and to prospective members around the world.

Below we are listing the areas of responsibility and the address, phone number and e-mail address of the person to contact:

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Estill County Says Goodbye

Wolfenbarger was a Clerk for nearly a quarter-century

By Tish King

CV&T Lifestyle Editor

(We are indebted to WFA Member Wilma Kircher of Cincinnati for this clipping about "Cousin" Maggie Wolfenbarger. RLE)

Most people called her 'Miss Maggie' and very few knew her given name was Margaret. Either way, she was a well known and well liked person in the Estill County community.

Maggie Wolfenbarger, who died last Thursday, was born Aug. 19, 1902 and reached the century mark in her life on Aug. 19, a benchmark reached only by very few people. She was a resident at the Irvine Health and Rehabilitation Center at her death.

She was born in the Wagersville community to P.A. and Susan Elizabeth Paret Wolfenbarger. Being a carpenter, her father moved the family to Irvine where he worked in his capacity for the Estill County Board of Education. When Maggie was five years old she and her four sisters and four brothers enrolled in the Irvine Graded School. At the age of nine, she was ready for the seventh grade.

Soon the family moved to South Irvine and she enrolled in the Wisemantown School District. She had to ford Station Camp Creek to get to Wisemantown, and on occasion spent the night with Flora Scott Miller and the Miller children. It was at the Miller's house she learned to pray, and developed a deep love of her religion that lasted throughout her life.

After attending school at Eastern 'Normal' (EKU) and Bowling Green Business, she worked for a year as a volunteer at Oakdale Free Methodist School in Breathitt County. She was appointed postmaster of the Ravenna Post Office and held that position for 14 years. She then worked four years in the sheriff's office for Estill County Sheriff C.T. Williams.

Her interest turned to politics and she decided to run for county clerk. She won that election in 1942 and served in that position for six terms until 1966.



Maggie once explained there were three reasons she was elected to six terms. First, she prayed daily. Second, she was honest, and finally, she always tried to treat everyone with fairness. Since she never had a car, Maggie rode to work with others. She once said that she rode to work with everyone from the garbage man to the mayor.

Maggie lived on Plum Street with her mother for many years and cared for her while she worked. After the death of her mother, she moved into an apartment on Main Street at the home of Elizabeth Witt. She later lived in her own apartment in West Irvine.

She was an active member of Irvine Free Methodist Church for 70 years. In 1969 she was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel and was inducted into the Estill Development Alliance's Hall of Honor in April, 2000.

On her 100th. birthday, she received a key to the city of Irvine from Mayor Tom Williams, and was recognized with a plaque from President George W. Bush. Her hobbies included sewing and reading.

When she was inducted into the EDA Hall of Honor, Maggie summarized her life by saying, "In every walk of life I prayed and God has guided me day by day. Down through my life I have trusted our Savior, who has never failed me."

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The ink sketch shown above is a photocopy of the original made by Dr. Friedrich Wolfensberger in 1937 while visiting the Wolfsberg together with Paul Wolfensberger of Zurich, the composer of the Wolfensberger genealogical data in Bernhard Koerner's Deutsches Geschlechterbuch of 1929. Dr. Friedrich Wolfensberger was the father of WFA Board member Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger of Syracuse, NY. We are indebted to Dr. Wolfensberger for sharing this beautiful sketch with us. WFA Vice-President Myrna Liddell has worked tirelessly to translate Paul Wolfensberger's Deutsches Geschlechterbuch into English.



Wolfensberger Bookmark



SWITZERLAND



Robert J. Wolfenbarger, Pres.
Wolfensberger Family Association

From The President.....

Six years ago a stranger named Larry Jones phoned me to ask if I was the Wolfenbarger who visited Switzerland many years ago to meet the Wolfensberger family of Bauma. I said I was. I told him I visited Heini Wolfensberger and his father in 1962 – the first member of the American clan to visit the region.

We parted, feeling quite certain that our two families were related through a descendant who had left Switzerland some three centuries earlier. Until that visit, the best information we had about our family's origins was a hunch that it was probably German. But from where?

That fateful visit to Switzerland stirred my imagination. In a sense, I was glad that our family did not have German roots.

Would I be willing to meet, Jones asked. He was touring the country to visit family members, and he'd like to hear the story of my visit. Frankly I hadn't retold the story in more than 30 years, but for a clan whose American origins went back only to 1730 it opened a new window on our past.

Larry and I talked about our common heritage for a long time that day. He said he was planning to organize a family association. Would I help him create one?

(cont. above)

(cont)

The rest, as they say, is history. We worked together to found a Wolfensberger Family Association. Six years later, we have a strong, vibrant organization with roots in the United States and in Europe.

But Larry Jones is neither strong nor vibrant. He lies silent and comatose in an intensive care unit in the Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City. A slip on ice at his home in late February brought him to the hospital in critical condition.

Larry's grandson, Dr. Kevin Jones, tells us that he spends most of time asleep or under light sedation. He is responsive to pain and touch, especially on his left side. There's little activity on his right side. His body is dealing with pneumonia on a daily basis. Recovery will be a slow, arduous process, but at least there is some change for the better.

But Larry has built a family association with a strong interest in genealogy that has built memorials in eastern Pennsylvania and northern Switzerland to the family. In each of us there is strong urge to locate our roots and understand our history. Our roots lie in the Alpine foothills of northern Switzerland, where the first Wolfensbergers settled, and in the rolling meadows of Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, where the first immigrants to this country came in 1730.

Our family has a long and remarkable history in this country, as it has in Switzerland. Larry's legacy is that we know where we come from. And we know something about our forbears who settled here before the American Revolution.

To those who know more about their family in America, we ask if you'd share your knowledge about our descendants through this newsletter. Or save it for a book of family histories we are planning for the future. Larry wanted us all to understand our rich history. He helped us learn. Now it's up to others to teach us about our family.

RJW

ANOTHER LIMB OF THE TREE

WFA member Karyn Cross-Sarabia of Anderson Island, WA has provided us with photos and the history of another limb of our large family tree. Her g-g-grandfather was William A. Sparger (shown at right), son of Murlin and Bethania (Cook) Sparger of Surry County North Carolina. Murlin was the son of John W. and Sarah (Lyon) Sparger and grandson of John W. Sparger who shortened his name to Sparger from Wolfersperger and was the founder of our Sparger family.

In 1874, William A. and Mary Eliza (Fulton) Sparger moved their family to Bristol, Sullivan County TN where he became a successful farmer and industrialist. In the book *Goodspeed's History of East Tennessee*, it states that William Sparger founded the Bristol Cotton Mills in Bristol in 1875. This was only the second cotton mill to operate in the US. The mill consumed about 500 bales per year and had about 30 employees and operated there for many years.

Among their large family, son Winston Murlin Sparger was born in 1876. He is shown at top right in an old photograph with his first wife, Mollie (Wood) Sparger and probably their first child, Murlin W. Sparger. Mollie died in 1913 soon after the birth of their third child and Winston married Karyn's g-grandmother, Lola Bruce Smith (shown at the right). Winston and Lola's children, daughter Nellie Grace was born in 1920 and son, Yancey Wyatt in 1924. Winston is also shown in his uniform at middle right.

Nellie Grace Sparger married Orb Martin Cross and their first child, son Jerry Martin Cross (shown at right) was born in 1944. Daughter Lana Gail followed in 1947. Karyn is the daughter of Jerry Cross.

Karyn is shown in the lower picture with her husband, Jorge A. Sarabia and their daughter, Ariana, who is four years old. Karyn will graduate this spring from Evergreen State College with a BA degree and plans to attend graduate school this fall.

RLE



Wm. A. Sparger



Winston & Mollie Sparger and their child



Winston Sparger in uniform



Lola Smith Sparger



Jerry M. Cross



Karyn, Ariana, and Jorge Sarabia



WFA TREASURER

Al Creasy
Tryon, NC

Since September 2000, I have served as Treasurer of WFA and handle all financial matters of the Association. All moneys destined for the Association are channeled to me for deposit in our local bank account. In similar fashion, bills for the expenses of the Association come to me for payment.

The first of 2003, as further changes were necessary, I also assumed the maintenance of the membership data. I'm the person you need to let know when you have a new postal address so we can continue to be in touch with you. Your renewal checks should also be sent to me now. My address is 500 Beau Valley Lane, Tryon, NC, 28782 and my phone number is (828) 859-0208

One tidbit: My Great Uncle, William Murlin Creasy, in conjunction with James Bingman Sparger, wrote and published "Sparger and Allied Families" in the 1930s. This was one of the earliest works tracing the line back to our immigrant Wolfensberger ancestor, and it has been widely circulated.



WFA NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Richard " Buzz" Evans
Houston, Texas

For the past few years, it has been my pleasure and responsibility to publish the quarterly Wolfensberger Family Association newsletter. This job has permitted me to become acquainted with many members of our Association by personal visits, phone conversations and especially e-mail. I believe the Newsletter is the glue that holds us together and I urge all our members to consider becoming contributors.

In a 10 page newsletter, we cannot publish the whole family tree at one time because we have many thousands of names in our family database, but we can do articles about your part of the family going back several generations. I'm sure each of you have many interesting ancestors and photos that you could share with all our readers in this publication.

I appeal to all our readers to let me hear from you about your part of the WFA family by a personal visit, phone call or an e-mail letter. My address, phone number and e-mail address is listed elsewhere in this and all issues of the newsletter. Also, we would like to hear from you about all the reunions, births, and other family events. Let's keep the WFA Newsletter full of family stories.

RLE

*Wolfensberger Family Association
2003 Membership Drive*

YOU'RE IN THE FAMILY.

**TIME TO RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP.**



(If you haven't already joined for 2003)

-----Clip and mail this renewal form today-----

Mr. Albert H. Creasy, Treasurer
Wolfensberger Family Association
500 Beau Valley Lane
Tryon, NC 28782

Don't know if you have paid your dues?

Contact Al Creasy, phone (828) 859-0208 or
e-mail: trebla1@alltel.net

Enclosed is a check payable to the WFA for \$_____ for an individual membership in the WFA. I realize that that membership costs are discounted, depending on the number of years for which I join:

_____ \$10 per year

Name

_____ \$18 for two years

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_____ \$26 for three years

City, State, Zip code

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located at this address:

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Our mailing address is now:

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WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Wolfensberger