

## Wolfensberger Family Association

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## WFA Recognizes Distinguished Family Members.....



The Wolfensberger Family Association HERITAGE AWARD, shown above (for Wm. M. Creasy) was also awarded to Myrtle Mae Wolfenbarger Braun, George Wolfensberger, Heinrich Wolfensberger, and Max Wolfensberger.

## 2005 Heritage Award Recipients are:

### Myrtle Mae Wolfenbarger Braun 1898-1988

Myrtle Mae Wolfenbarger was born 29-10-1898 in Marion, KS. She was the daughter of Serelda Chadwell & Wilkerson Hilton Wolfenbarger who moved from Cumberland Gap, TN to Caldwell, KS about 1885 with their infant first born, a daughter Margaret, bringing along with them Serelda's mother and her 10 children.

Wilkerson drove a stage and freighted over the old Chisolm Trail, but in 1905 Serelda died leaving Wilkerson with the youngest child Willard, then Myrtle, three older sons named Isaac, Wilkerson and Peter, and the oldest child Margaret to rear alone.

Margaret promptly married, and Myrtle's father wanted to take the older boys with him to go west to work on railroads in Colorado and Utah, so asked a neighbor, named Judge

(cont. page 3)



Myrtle Mae Wolfenbarger Braun

Dickerson, to find homes for his two youngest children. Willard and Myrtle were each placed with different farm families miles apart. They were not even in the same country school until they attended high school in town, and that was for only one year. Mother skipped a grade and graduated early from high school then, going to Arkansas City where her aunt and uncle lived, to work as a secretary in an Ice plant. My grandfather Henry Braun of Guthrie, OK owned an interest in that Ice plant and sent his son Heinz to audit their books. As a result, Heinz later asked Myrtle to marry him, and move to Guthrie, OK, where she lived the rest of her life. Heinz was a widower with two children, and after marrying Mother, my sister Elizabeth and I (Bonnie) were born.

Having been separated from her own family at such a young age, Mother put great store in "family", and felt a need to learn more about her ancestors. She spent years researching and gathering material, and co-authored a genealogical book on her mother's family entitled, "Chadwell Heritage". All the while she was also researching her father's ancestors and had compiled voluminous files on Wolfensbergers and families with variations of the spelling, as well as Spargurs, and associated

families, intending to someday publish. Mother had corresponded with [her cousin,] Dr. Wolfenbarger in Florida and learned from him that his son Bob [Robert Joseph] in Germany was to leave there soon to return home. She gave Bob's father the name of a genealogist in Germany with whom she had corresponded concerning my father's German ancestors, and asked that he urge Bob to contact this man to perhaps learn something about the Wolfenbergers. Bob did meet Dr. Fritz Braun (no relation) and found that he had written his thesis about the very ship on which our early ancestor & family sailed to America - "The Thistle of Glasgow". [see article "*Auswanderer aus der Umgebung von Ludwigshafen a. Rh. auf dem Schiff "Thistle of Glasgow" 1730, by Fritz Braun.*] From OUR SWISS ROOTS HAD BEEN DISCOVERED!"

by – Bonnie Aspenson

### **William Murlin Creasy 1868-1939**

was an early compiler of Wolfens-berger family history. Assisted by James Bingman Sparger of Mount Airy, North Carolina, he researched, typed, and published a work titled "Sparger and Allied Families" in the middle 1930s which traced his maternal lineage back to John W. Sparger (born John Wolfenbarger, 1754 – 1840). This work consists of 126 legal size pages, originally typed on onion skin paper using carbon paper-extremely labor intensive, and with no computer to help out. The other families documented in this work are Frey and Binckele. Will was a compulsive family researcher, as he also compiled histories of the Creasy family and his wife's family-Bagby. Copies of all his works are in the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh, North Carolina.

(cont. page 4)



William Murlin Creasy. 1868 - 1939.

Will was born in Surry County, NC (near Mount Airy), and spent most of his adult years in Wilmington, NC. Incidentally, his middle name came from his grandfather Murlin Sparger (1817 - 1877), who was a prominent citizen of Mount Airy. Will began work for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company in the Accounting Department where he eventually rose to the position of Supervisor of Joint Facility Accounts. He married Gertrude Medernach Bagby and they were the parents of William Murlin Creasy, Jr. (a 1926 Creasy, Jr. (a 1926 graduate of West Point and two-star General, head of the Army's Chemical Corps), and Helen Creasy Hunter (a civic leader in Charlotte, NC), now both deceased. Will and his wife are buried in Elmwood cemetery in Charlotte, NC.

by Albert H. Creasy

### George Wolfersberger 1919-1992

George's interest in our family's history started in 1936 when, as a teenager living in Mascoutah, IL, a small town near St. Louis, he saw a wedding announcement for Earl Wolfersberger in the St. Louis Globe Democrat. After checking with family members, he found that Earl was not directly related as far as anyone knew, even though he had the same unusual last name. That got him wondering about the origin of the family and its history.

In 1941, George was stationed at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey as a soldier in the U.S. Army. While there, he noticed that there were several Wolfersbergers listed in the New Jersey and New York phone books. He eventually made contact with two of them, but this only served to deepen the mystery about our ancestry. Neither of them knew much about their heritage and there seemed to be little in common with George's roots.

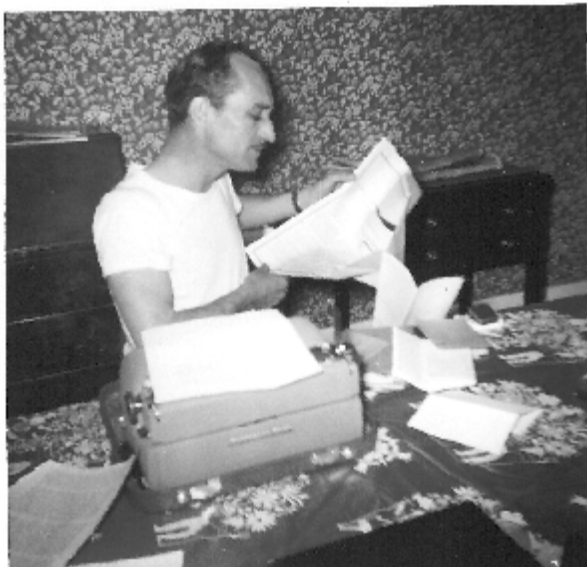
In the mid-1950's George continued his efforts by visiting the Bell Telephone Library in Detroit; they had copies of every phone book in the U.S. After a considerable amount of work, he found thirty-five Wolfersbergers living in fifteen states. He then wrote each person and explained that he was collecting information about the family origins and needed their assistance. This opened the floodgates and the information began to pour in.

The only problem was that the more George learned about our ancestry, the more he realized what he didn't know. He broadened his search by visiting the Burton Historical Collection in Detroit and the Newberry Library in Chicago. He also traveled to Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania to view public records and stopped to visit several cemeteries.

Through correspondence, George found that there were four efforts underway to study our family history. One of those who wrote to him is another recipient of the 2005 Heritage Award - Mrs. Myrtle Braun. Mrs. Braun suggested that he get in touch with Bob Wolfenbarger, an American soldier stationed in Germany [and a past President of WFA], to obtain more information.

(cont. page 5)





George Wolfersberger at work in 1953

(cont. from page 4)

George did this and Bob quickly wrote back to inform him that two brothers, Bob and Heini Wolfensberger (lifetime member), would be taking a business trip to the United States in about a month. They operated a foundry in Bauma and were planning to attend a convention in Detroit, Michigan. They knew a lot about our Swiss origins and would be a good source of information.

When the time arrived, George met the brothers in a downtown hotel and gave them a grand tour of the city. He also arranged a private trip to the Ford Rouge plant foundry and the Ford Livonia Transmission plant where he worked. During their visit, George, Heini and Bob traded family stories back and forth for many countless hours. It was a historic occasion - the first reunion of this family branch in over 450 years!

[George Wolfersberger was the son of Julius Wolfersberger and Julia Laquet. Julius was the grandson of Martin Wolfensberger, who with his wife Katherine and five year old son, Franz, came from Lorraine, France to America in the year 1843.]

by David Wolfersberger

### Heinrich Wolfensberger 1852

Heinrich Wolfensberger [aka Wolfensperger], son of Johannes Wolfensberger and Barbara Bauman, was born 2 April 1852, in Uster, Zurich, Switzerland. He grew up there and learned the jewelers trade. On 25 March 1878, he married Maria Anna Lehman. The couple had five children.

Heinrich and Maria accepted a new religion, and wanted to come to America. As Heinrich's finances were limited, he sent his two oldest sons, Johann Heinrich and Carl, ahead with some friends who were coming to America. In this way Johann and Carl could pay their way over by helping out Heinrich's friends. The rest of the family came to America in 1893, after being delayed longer than they had planned. They made their home in Salt Lake City, Utah

(cont page 6)



Heinrich Wolfensberger

(cont. from page 5)

About 1900 Heinrich moved to Rexburg, Idaho where he set up a jewelery store. He made good at his trade and was known quite well by the people in Rexburg. For some reason Heinrich changed his name from Wolfensberger to Wolfensperger, but his son, Otto, changed it back to Wolfensberger after he returned from a mission in Switzerland. Heinrich was known as "Henry Wolfensperger" to the people of Rexburg.

Heinrich's wife Maria died on 25 February 1914. He married Rosa Clara Bergner on 7 January 1916. Rosa was born 22 September 1876 in Germany. Heinrich spent years doing research on his direct ancestry line, which he documented back to Peter, born in 1548, great grandson of Hans von Wolfsberg born about 1396. He moved to Logan, Utah for a few years, then back to Rexburg. He was active in his church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and served his family faithfully. This line is clearly delineated in the Wolfensberger section of the Geshlechterbuch, Vol 65.

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### Max Wolfensberger

Max Wolfensberger, a retired executive for an American computer firm in Switzerland, played an instrumental role in helping create in September 2001 the memorial to the Wolfensberger family on the historic Wolfensberg, less than a mile from the heart of Bauma.

As the Board of Directors' representative on a Swiss family committee in Bauma, Max played a critical role in helping win village approval of the memorial, obtaining the large memorial stone and putting together the colorful memorial ceremony and luncheon to mark the event. He and Bob (New Jersey) were able to set up a



Max Wolfensberger (background), Son Matthias and Grandson Jeremy

Swiss bank account to pay for the memorial stone project and brass placard. This account was closed after the project was complete.

Max lives on Lake Zurich in Staefa, one of the beautiful communities lining the lakeside east of Zurich, with his wife, Esther. Near his three-story home lives his son Matthias and his wife, a native of New Zealand, and their children. On many days, you'll see the Wolfensberger family flag flying over Max and Ester's home. Under Swiss law, Max is a dual resident of Bauma, as well as, Staefa, Switzerland. He and his Esther winter at Zuos, a village in the Engadine region of Switzerland, east of St. Moritz in the heart of the Swiss Alps.

by Robert J. Wolfenbarger